

The Summum Bonum

The Life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Canto 10



Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva

Translation: Anand Aadhar

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Introduction

The Summum Bonum, this book, is about the life and times of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a central divine personality, an earthly manifestation or *avatāra* of the Indian god of maintenance and transcendence, Lord Viṣṇu. He appeared about 5000 years ago at the end of the old Vedic civilization and heralded the beginning of our modern 'age of quarrel', the 'iron age' or Kali-yuga, as the Hindus call it. Kṛṣṇa constitutes the highest good, the ultimate goal, the Absolute Truth, for the establishment of the values and principles of this classical culture of knowledge of ancient India, of domination before the great war of Mahābhārata took place that ended that honorable societal Vedic order.

Hinduism is nowadays known as a hybrid culture in remembrance of that old civilization, which fuses a diversity of religious beliefs around a brahminical, intellectual, central core, to which renunciation, devotion, study of the scripture and sacrifice are key disciplinary functions in society. Hindus, 'people living in the land behind the Indus', consider themselves rather *Āryans*, civilized people in respect of a classical system of classes and stages of life - the so-called *varṇāśrama dharma* - in pursuance of the Vedas. That is a set of four sacred books containing mantras, hymns and prayers for the support of their beliefs and practices. Next to this central Vedic core there is a body of knowledge called the Purāṇas, books also called the fifth Veda, filled with classical stories about the ancient civilization, specially designed for the common people to remember and understand the values, standards and philosophy of their ancient Vedic ways. The Summum Bonum is the tenth book (*Canto*) of the twelve books of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, that constitutes the most important one of these collections also called *samhitās*. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, or Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, is the quintessential Purāṇa in which the cream of all Vedic knowledge was laid down by the family sage and grandfather Vyāsadeva (also called Bādarāyaṇa) who condensed the entire culture in these (and also other) books, so that that glory of humanity would never be forgotten. The true divine nature of this Vedic prince called Kṛṣṇa, 'the dark one' because of his dark blue-grayish skin, was not known to everyone in His lifetime, not even to His friend Arjuna before the war or to His many wives. Another ancient grandfather of the noble dynasty of the time named Śrī Bhīṣmadeva at the end of the Mahābhārata war, dying on the battlefield, revealed Kṛṣṇa's true identity to the listening nobles sitting

around him by saying: 'He [*Kṛṣṇa*] who inconceivably moves among the *Vṛṣṇi* family, is no one else but the Supreme Lord, the original, primordial, supreme enjoyer *Nārāyaṇa* who bewilders the world with His energies.' Long before that occasion, before the war, He was already recognized by many as the most important personality of the civilization, for He, together with His brother *Balarāma*, had excelled in heroism fighting all the bad elements of the time, also within His own family, while protecting, with the sweetest kindness and care, the cows, the brahmins and all common people of devotion. Even though not fully recognized by everyone as an incarnation of *Viṣṇu* during His earthly presence - He had to defeat quite a few enemies - His story leaves no doubt about His divine nature. He is truly the mythical Godhead about whom everyone is bewildered, up to the greatest creator Lord *Brahmā* and the most benevolent Lord *Śiva*, the destroyer.

In the *Summum Bonum* the story begins with the person of king *Parīkṣit*, the last emperor of the old order, who after its demise has set the rules for the present age of *Kali*. He asks the son of *Vyāsadeva*, *Śukadeva*, a brahmin sage, questions concerning his impending death because he was by a brahmin's son cursed to die within a week because of having offended his meditating father. He inquires with the sage about the ancient culture, thereby making this book, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a treasury trove and compendium of this so highly important form of classical sacred knowledge and wisdom. His questions and the answers *Śuka* gives, make the book a perfect guide for all people in *Kali-yuga* to find their way through the dense forest of modern illusion, in which so many lose their way, falling victim to the illusory influence of material nature called *māyā*. The *Summum Bonum*, the longest narrative within this *samhitā*, this collection of books, tells in perfect chronology, in prose faithful to the Sanskrit source (word for word derived from originally rhythmical verses), without much philosophy, all the mythical, mystical, wondrous and delightful pastimes, as they are nowadays still remembered by many devotees of *Viṣṇu*, called *Vaiṣṇavas*, in India and throughout the world. The book is the crown jewel of several schools of the international *Vaiṣṇava* movement for the promotion of *Kṛṣṇa*-consciousness. This *Summum Bonum* does not dilate about the practices and characters of the diverse disciplic successions concerned, but still we owe them our respects for bringing to the West this invaluable repository of all wisdom in the form of the story about Him, He who is called *bhāgavata*, for being His book, for being His devotee and for being, of course, Himself not in the least. Because the *bhāgavata* is both the book and the Lord, one should try to relate to this book as one would try to relate to Him in person. After all, a

constructive relationship with Him is the salvation of one's life. Kṛṣṇa by the example of His life demonstrated that anyone living a spiritual life of principle, virtue and meditation on His name and Person, may enjoy the full protection of the refuge of His Personality, Vedic knowledge and lotus feet. In fact there is no other story in this world about an appearance of the Highest Divinity in a human form, that is as glorious, blissful, loving, kind, heroic, wise, miraculous and inspiring as this narration. All the divine qualities one may think of can be found in Him, the One Second to None, whose echo is bound to be heard worldwide throughout the entirety of Kali-yuga, for the sake of awakening of every sleeping soul from his materialistic ruminations and misery of endless karmic repetitions. He is the Lord of Liberation purifying His devotees with a single glance or the whisper of His name. His special blessing for this difficult age of Kali is that, contrary to the previous ages, only in this age it suffices to repeat His holy names in meditation, to find Him in full revealed in one's heart, where He liberates one from all one's impurities. Thus one successfully can find, in the blissful core of one's heart, His inner presence as the guardian protecting one's life and love divine.

With love and devotion,
Anand Aadhar
Enschede, The Netherlands
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Chapter 1

The Advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa: Introduction

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'Your Lordship extensively described both the dynasties of the kings of the sun god and the moon god, as also the most wonderful deeds of their members [*]. (2) Please describe to us the heroic acts of Lord Viṣṇu who [together with His plenary expansion Sāṅkarṣaṇa in the form of Baladeva] appeared as an incarnation in [two] different parts in the line of the most dharmic and virtuous Yadus, whom you also described to us, oh best of the *munis*. (3) Be so kind to tell us all about the actions of the Supreme Lord, the Soul of the Universe, the Cause of the Manifestation, after He descended in the Yadu dynasty. (4) [By the disciplic succession or the *paramparā*] listening to the pleasing vibrations of the glorification of the Lord Praised in the Verses, constitutes the proper medicine for the mind to be released from the material disease of its desires. Unless he is a killer of animals, a person can become free [from the falsehood, see also B.G. 2: 44] by listening to and voicing such descriptions. (5-7) When in the past, on the battlefield, my grandfathers [the Pāṇḍavas] were fighting with imperishable warriors, like Devavrata [Bhīṣma] and other great commanders who were like *timingilas* [shark-eaters], they crossed the so very difficult to overcome ocean of Kaurava soldiers in the boat that He is, as easily as one steps over a calf's hoof print. This body of mine, the only seed left of the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas, was scorched by Aśvatthāma's weapon when I resided in the womb of my mother, but it was by Him, [Kṛṣṇa,] holding the *cakra* in His hand, protected because my mother sought His protection [1.8: 11 and 1.12: 7]. Oh man of learning, please describe the glories of the Lord who, by His own potency, appeared as a normal human being, of Him, the Giver of Death and Eternal Life, as one calls Him, of Him who manifests Himself in physical forms bound to time, of Him, the Original Person who is present both inside and outside of all the embodied beings. (8) We know from you about Balarāma, who is Sāṅkarṣaṇa, that He is the son of Rohiṇī. How could He, without assuming another body, be connected with the womb of Devakī? (9) Why did Mukunda, the Supreme Lord move from the house of His father to [the house of Nanda in] Vraja, and where did He, the Master of the devotees, live with His relatives? (10) What did He do when He lived in Vraja and when He resided in the city of Mathurā? Why did He, the killer of Keśī, kill His uncle Kāṁsa, His mother's brother? Is

that not something completely at odds with the scriptures? (11) For how many years did He, who assumed a human body, live with the Vṛṣṇis and how long lived He in the city of the Yadus [Dvārakā]? How many wives had the Master? (12) Oh sage, you know everything. You are the one to tell us about Lord Kṛṣṇa's activities. Please describe this all in detail to me so full of faith and surrender, as also everything more to say. (13) Now that I drink the nectar of the talks about the Lord that emanate from your lotus mouth, it is not even difficult to bear the hunger [of my fasting] or my forsaking of water.'

(14) **S**ūta [see 1.1] said: "Oh son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka], after the mighty son of Vyāsa, the purest of all devotees, had heard his pious questions, the devotee of Viṣṇu paid his respects. Next he began to describe the topics of Kṛṣṇa that put an end to the darkness of Kali-yuga [compare 1.7: 2-8]. (15) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh best of the wise kings, because of your lasting attraction for the stories about Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa as the son of Vasudeva], your intelligence has developed a firm determination. (16) The way the world is purified by the [Ganges] water that flows from His toes [5.17: 1], the three persons of the speaker, the inquirer and the one attending are purified by questions concerning the stories about Vāsudeva. (17) When mother earth was overcome by an unbearable burden of countless numbers of conceited Daitya military forces [9.24: 67] and their so-called nobles, she [one day] went to Lord Brahmā to take shelter. (18) Assuming the form of a cow she, greatly distressed weeping piteously, appeared before the Almighty One [see also 1.16: 18] and submitted her complaints. (19) Lord Brahmā, with understanding for her predicament, thereupon together with her, the godly souls and the Three-Eyed One [Lord Śiva], approached the shore of the milk ocean [wherein Viṣṇu resides, see also 8.7: 41]. (20) Reaching there they, fully attentive, with the help of the [Puruṣa-sūkta] hymns worshiped the Original Person, the Supreme Personality, the God of Gods and Master of the Universe, who takes care of all.

(21) **T**he lord of the Veda [Brahmā] heard in his trance a vibration of words in the sky [see also 1.1: 1]. He said to the servants of the three worlds, the demigods: 'Hear further from me about the order of the Original Person, oh immortal souls. Execute these instructions immediately, do not delay. (22) Before we came here, the Personality of Godhead knew already about the distress of mother earth. Together with your good selves as His parts, He wants to manifest Himself by taking birth in the family of the Yadus. He wants you to be there with Him [for the fulfillment of His mission] for as long as He, the Lord of Lords, with His potency of Time, moves around on this earth to

diminish the burden of the planet. (23) The Supreme Lord, the original transcendental person, will personally appear in the house of Vasudeva, and He also wants all the wives of the demigods to take birth to please Him. (24) Before Lord Vāsudeva appears, first the part of Hari, known as the fully independent Ananta with the thousands of hoods [Sañkarṣaṇa, see also 5.25], will appear [as Baladeva] with the desire to please [Him]. (25) By the Master being ordered to appear and to manage His affairs [the grace of Viṣṇu known as the female incarnation of His potency called] Viṣṇu-māyā will also appear together with all her different potencies, she who is as good as the Supreme Lord Himself and who captivates all the worlds [see also B.G. 9: 12 & 13].'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'After thus having pacified mother earth with sweet words and having informed the immortals, the supreme master of the founding fathers returned to his supreme abode. (27) In the past Śūrasena, the king of the Yadus [see 9.23: 27], lived in the city of Mathurā, from where he ruled the different districts Māthura and Śūrasena. (28) Mathurā, the city intimately connected with the Supreme Lord Hari, from that time on was the capital for all the kings of Yadu [see also the *bhajan* Sāvarana Śrī Gaura Mahimā]. (29) It was in that place that one day the divine character of Vasudeva, after having married Devakī, together with his bride mounted a chariot to return home. (30) Kāṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, held, in order to please his sister on the occasion, the reins of the horses in the midst of thousands of golden chariots. (31-32) When she left home, king Devaka, who was fond of his daughter, had given a dowry of four hundred elephants with golden garlands, ten thousand horses together with eighteen hundred chariots, and a hundred young and attractive maidservants complete with jewelry. (33) My dearest King, when they departed, conch shells, bugles, drums and kettledrums vibrated in concert to wish the bride and bridegroom all the best. (34) Being on their way, a voice from beyond addressed Kāṁsa who held the reins: 'The eighth child of this girl you are carrying with you, oh fool, will put an end to your life!'

(35) **T**hus being addressed he, who mischievous and sinful in the past had degraded the Bhoja family, took up a sword against his sister and grabbed her by her hair with the intention to kill her. (36) In order to pacify him who was ready to commit such a heinous and shameless crime, Vasudeva, that greatly fortunate soul, addressed him. (37) Śrī Vasudeva said: 'A man of so many praiseworthy qualities, such a brilliant star among the heroic Bhojas like you, how can you kill your own sister, a woman, especially at the time of her marriage [see also

1.7: 53-54]? (38) Death is included with the body that was born. Whether one dies today or in a hundred years, ultimately every living being is sure to die [see also B.G. 2: 27-28]. (39) When the body has to return to the five elements the indweller automatically, according to his own karma, receives a new body upon abandoning the old one. (40) The way a person as he walks, changes from one foot to the other, and the way a caterpillar, on a plant [moves from one leaf to another], a living being likewise has to experience the consequences of his karma [see also B.G. 2: 22 and 2: 13]. (41) Just as one in a dream, being endowed with the qualities of a material body, is subjected to that what the mind is thinking and one's consciousness is fully absorbed by that what one hears and sees, one is the same way forgetful in one's present body [about the body and karma acquired in a previous life, see also 4.29: 60-79 and 5.26]. (42) The mind, impelled by fate and deliberation, moves from one position to the next, so that the embodied soul, after the demise of its physical frame, obtains a birth and arrives at a [new] body in accordance with the material quality [and the evolution] he was experiencing [B.G. 13: 22, 14: 14-15 and 6: 34-35]. (43) The way the reflection of the luminaries, as one may observe them in water or other liquids, being moved by the wind offers distortions in different shapes, the person, the living entity, likewise, in the situation that was created by his own imaginative power in association with the natural modes [the world with its changing qualities], gets bewildered depending his attachments [to different bodies or distortions of his form. See also 5.5: 4 and B.G. 9: 12-13, 12: 5]. (44) Therefore everyone, to the interest of his own welfare [and good rebirth], should not harm anybody, for the evil-doer has to live in fear for others himself [the 'golden rule']. (45) This innocent woman, your younger sister, completely depends on you like she was your own daughter - do not kill her. She means good to you and she deserves your care and compassion!"

(46) Śrī Śuka said: 'He, feeling no pity, could, by these attempts of good advise, not be stopped or pacified, oh son of Kuru, for he followed the course of the man-eaters [the Rākṣasas]. (47) Seeing his determination, Vasudeva thought deeply about how he, with this immediate threat of death, could stop him, and thus he arrived at the following alternative. (48) [He thought:] 'An intelligent person should, as long as he is in control of his mental and physical faculties, ward off death, but when someone is faced with the inevitability of death, this rule does not apply. (49-50) If I promise to deliver my sons to this man of doom, I might set my innocent Devakī free. Perhaps I do not get any sons or maybe he will die beforehand. That might happen or

the contrary. Who knows what fate has in store for us? That is difficult to say. Even though the threat remains hereafter, I, at least for the moment, may avert her death. (51) When a piece of wood for some reason escapes from a fire, that is decided by providence and nothing else. Even so one cannot determine why a living being assumes or abandons a [particular] body.' (52) After contemplating this way to the best of his ability, the God-fearing man paid the sinner his obeisances and submitted the proposal to him with the greatest attention. (53) With a big lotuslike smile on his face but with anxiety and sorrow in his heart he then spoke to the cruel-hearted, shameless man. (54) Śrī Vasudeva said: 'You have, according to what the voice from heaven vibrated, nothing to fear from Devakī indeed. Her sons gave rise to your anxiety and I shall deliver them therefore all to you.'

(55) Śrī Śuka said: 'Kāmsa, understanding the essence of what he said, was for the time being stopped from killing his sister. With him more at ease, Vasudeva then was happy to come home [unharmed]. (56) Thereafter in due course of time Devakī, the mother of all divinity [see 4.31: 14 and B.G. 10: 2], year after year gave birth to indeed [as said in 9.24: 53-55] eight sons and a daughter. (57) Most afraid to break his promise Ānakadundubhi [or Vasudeva, see 9.24: 28-31] with great pain handed his first born baby, Kīrtimān, over to Kāmsa. (58) What would be too painful for a saint, on what would a sage depend, what would be forbidden to a bad person and what would for someone holding on to the soul be too hard to forsake? (59) Oh King, when Kāmsa saw that Vasudeva was equanimous, truthful and certain of himself, he, satisfied about that, with a grin on his face said: (60) 'You can take this child back, my fear does not concern him, my death was predicted from the eighth pregnancy you have with your wife.'

(61) 'Very well', Ānakadundubhi said, took his son back and left without attaching too much value to the words of that untruthful character lacking in self-control. (62-63) Oh scion of Bharata, beginning with Nanda [Kṛṣṇa's foster father] all the inhabitants of Vraja, all the cowherds and their wives, as also all the Vṛṣṇis beginning with Vasudeva and Devakī, and the Yadu women, in truth were gods from heaven indeed. And also the relatives, friends and well-wishers following Kāmsa were of that nature [see also verse 22 and B.G. 6: 41-42]. (64) This was all communicated to Kāmsa by the all-powerful Nārada [**], who paid him a visit in order to tell him that all the Daityas who burdened the earth were going to be killed [see verse 17 and also 9.24: 56]. (65-66) After the ṛṣi had left Kāmsa thought that all the Yadus were divine and that therefore any child

born from Devakī could be Viṣṇu. He thus in fear of his own death arrested Vasudeva and Devakī, confined them at home in shackles and killed, one after the other, each of their newborn sons, not knowing whether it would be the 'Never-born' Lord or not [***]. (67) Kings like him who on this earth are driven by animalistic pleasures and greed, usually put to death mothers, fathers, brothers, friends or anyone else. (68) He had understood [from Nārada] that he, in a previous life as the great Asura Kālanemi, personally had been killed by Viṣṇu [see 8.10: 56]. Therefore he, born again in this world, became an enemy of the Yadu dynasty [that carried the blessings of Viṣṇu]. (69) He, the almighty ruler, subdued [and imprisoned] his own father Ugrasena, the king of the Yadus, Bhojas and Andhakas, so that he could enjoy the states of Śūrasena all by himself.'

*: To recall what was described in the previous chapters: Lord Rāma appeared in the *sūrya-vamśa* of Ikṣvāku or sun dynasty and Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the *candra-vamśa* or moon dynasty.

** : An additional verse in this chapter of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is accepted by the Madhvācārya-sampradāya, represented by Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha. The verse is as follows:

*atha kaṁsam upāgamyā
nārada brahma-nandanah
ekāntam upasangamyā
vākyaṁ etad uvāca ha*

Word-for-word:

atha: in this way; *kaṁsam*: unto Kāṁsa; *upāgamyā*: after going; *nāradah*: the great sage Nārada; *brahma-nandanah*: who is the son of Brahmā; *ekāntam upasangamyā*: after going to a very solitary place; *vākyaṁ*: the following instruction; *etat*: this; *uvāca*: said; *ha*: in the past.

Translation:

"Thereafter, Nārada, the mental son of Lord Brahmā, approached Kāṁsa and, in a very solitary place, informed him of the following news."

***: Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'Formerly an Asura named Kālanemi had six sons, named Hamsa, Suvikrama, Krātha, Damana, Ripurmardana and Krodhahantā. They were known as the Ṣad-garbhas, or six Garbhas, and they were all equally powerful and expert in military affairs. These Ṣad-garbhas gave up the association of Hiranyakaśipu, their grandfather, and underwent great austerities to satisfy Lord Brahmā, who, upon being

satisfied, agreed to give them whatever benediction they might desire. When asked by Lord Brahmā to state what they wanted, the Ṣad-garbhas replied: "Dear Lord Brahmā, if you want to give us a benediction, give us the blessing that we will not be killed by any demigod, Mahā-roga, Yakṣa, Gandharva-pati, Siddha, Cārana or human being, nor by great sages who are perfect in their penances and austerities." Brahmā understood their purpose and fulfilled their desire. But when Hiraṇyakaśipu came to know of these events, he was very angry at his grandsons. "You have given up my association and have gone to worship Lord Brahmā" he said, "and therefore I no longer have any affection for you. You have tried to save yourselves from the hands of the demigods, but I curse you in this way: Your father will take birth as Kaṁsa and kill all of you because you will take birth as sons of Devakī." Because of this curse, the grandsons of Hiraṇyakaśipu had to take birth from the womb of Devakī and be killed by Kaṁsa, although he was previously their father. This description is mentioned in the Hari-vamśa, Viṣṇu-parva, Second Chapter. According to the comments of the Vaiṣṇava-toṣanī, the son of Devakī known as Kīrtimān was the third incarnation. In his first incarnation he was known as Smara and was the son of Marīci, and later he became the son of Kālanemi. This is mentioned in the histories.'

Chapter 2

Prayers by the Demigods for Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Womb

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'Under the protection of the mighty king of Maghada, Jarāsandha [see 9.22: 8], with the assistance of characters like Pralamba, Baka, Cāṇūra, Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura, Muṣṭika, Ariṣṭha, Dvivida, Pūtanā, Keśī, Dhenuka and Asura kings like Bāṇa, Bhaumāsura and more of those, there was a systematic persecution [by Kāmsa] of the kings of Yadu. (3) Being harassed they sought shelter in the countries of the Kurus, the Pañcālas, the Kekayas, the Śālvas, the Vidharbas, the Niṣadhas, the Videhas and the Kośalas. (4-5) Some of their relatives though followed the policy of the son of Ugrasena [Kāmsa]. When Kāmsa had killed six of the children born from Devakī, the seventh one, a plenary expansion of Viṣṇu who was celebrated with the name Ananta, therefore as an embryo in the womb of Devakī gave rise to both pleasure and sorrow. (6) When the Supreme Lord, who is also the Supersoul of each living being [see also B.G. 10: 11], learned about the fear for Kāmsa of the Yadus who had accepted Him as their refuge, He instructed His spiritual potency [Yoga-māyā] as follows: (7) 'Oh Devī so good for all living beings, please go to Vraja, that beautiful place with its cowherds and cows, where Rohiṇī and the other wives of Vasudeva in seclusion, out of fear for Kāmsa, are living in the cowherd community [the *gokula*] of Nanda. (8) In the womb of Devakī there is the embryo known as [Ananta-]Śeṣa who is a plenary expansion of Me. Take care of a smooth transition from her womb to the womb of Rohiṇī [*]. (9) At that time I will, with all My different parts [with My full potency], become Devakī's son, oh all-auspicious one. Meanwhile you will appear as the daughter of Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda. (10) The people [the *śāktas* as opposed to the Vaiṣṇavas] will worship you, with incense, in different forms of sacrifice as being the best Goddess for all desires, for you, with bestowing your blessings, fulfill every wish. (11-12) Depending on the place on earth [**] you will be celebrated with different names like Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā [or Kanyā-kumārī], Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānī, Śāradā and Ambikā [***]. (13) Because He changes wombs [from Devakī to the womb of Rohiṇī] the people of the world will address Him with the name Saṅkarṣaṇa, because He

brings pleasure to the people [of Gokula] He will be called Rāma, and because of His great physical strength He will be named Balabhadra.'

(14) **T**hus being instructed by the Supreme Lord she accepted His words with the mantra 'Om'. After next circumambulating Him she went away to execute exactly what was told [compare B.G. 16: 24]. (15) When Devakī's embryo, owing to the slumber of yoga [raised by Yoga-māyā, see B.G. 2: 69], was transferred to Rohiṇī, everyone lamented: 'Alas, the baby is lost' [thinking it was a miscarriage]. (16) The Supreme Lord, the Soul of All, who always puts an end to the fear of His devotees, then with His full potency entered the mind of Vasudeva [see also 3.2: 15]. (17) Carrying [within himself] the effulgent shelter of the Original Personality, Vasudeva shone like the sun, and he thus for everyone became difficult to behold or approach. (18) He, the Blessing of the Complete Universe, who is Infallible in All His Parts, was thereafter by the son of Śūrasena [Vasudeva] in full transferred from mind to mind to his *devī* [Devakī], so that she, preserving the Supreme Soul and Cause of all Causes, bloomed of happiness like the eastern sky. (19) Devakī with in her womb the Sustainer of All the Universes, could not freely radiate her light, being confined in the Bhoja house like the flames of a covered fire or like the knowledge of a man unable to express himself [****]. (20) But Kamsa saw her radiating with the beauty of having the Invincible One within her womb, and that she cleared the entire atmosphere with her brilliant smiles. He said to himself: 'The one who now has entered the womb of Devakī must be the Lord who is going to kill me. She never before looked like this! (21) What should I do now, not to neglect my self interest? I assume that the Example of Virtue will not give up His ways. The killing of a woman, my sister, especially when she is pregnant, will for ever tarnish my reputation and opulence, and will shorten my life span. (22) That person is dead being alive who lives his life with much cruelty. When the body is finished everyone will condemn him. With his physical concept of life [see also 7.5: 30 and 5.5: 5 and B.G. 16: 18-21] he will certainly enter the deepest darkness [Andhatama, see also 3.20: 18 and 5.26: 9].'

(23) **T**hus contemplating the ghastly idea of killing [the mother] he refrained from it and kept himself under control. Persisting in enmity he awaited the moment that the Lord would take birth. (24) Whether he sat or lay down, wherever he was, he ate or went, he [filled with hatred] thought about Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord of the Senses. He meant the entire world to him. (25) But Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva assembled there, together with the sages, Nārada and other divine personalities and their followers, in order to please Him, the Strongest

Man of All, with prayers: (26) 'You are the truth of the vow [see 9.24: 56 and B.G. 9: 22], the truth of the Supreme and the truth of the threefoldness [of e.g. the past, present and future]. You are the source of all truth who pervades all truths, You are the truth of everything that is held true, the original truth of each truth that meets the eye, and the truth of all that pertains to the Supreme Soul, of You, whom we offer our full surrender. (27) The original tree [of this universe, our body], in which one finds two birds [the soul and the Supersoul], is one in its dependence [on matter], is two in its fruits [of happiness and grief], is three in its roots [the three modes], is four in its tastes [the *puruṣārthas*, the civil virtues], is five in its knowing [by the senses], is six in its conditions [of lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst], is seven in its layers ['the bark' or the *koṣas*, the different bodies], is eight in its branches [the elements, mind, intelligence and ego], is nine in its apertures and is ten in its foliage [or the ten airs, see 7.15: 42]. (28) You as the One and All are the Original Source of this visible universe [this tree]. You are the mercy [the conservation] when we are thrown in despair [meet destruction]. Those whose intelligence is covered by Your *māyā* and miss the vision of the devotees and scholars, cannot see You behind the diversity. (29) For the sake of every living being, moving or not moving, You watch over the soul and beatitude, in assuming all sorts of forms consisting of pure goodness, that bring transcendental happiness to virtuous souls, and that time and again put an end to those who are wicked. (30) Fully engaged in a constant meditation on You as the abode of the complete consciousness, oh Lotus-eyed Lord, by that one-pointedness as practiced by the greatest, one gets on board of the boat of Your lotus feet that reduces the great ocean of nescience to [the size of] a calf's hoof print [compare 10.1: 5-7]. (31) Once they personally have crossed the so difficult to pass ocean of darkness, oh Light of the World, they [the experienced devotees] who, because of Your mercy for the truth loving souls, are full of goodwill [to help], leave behind the boat [the method] of Your lotus feet in this world [see also B.G. 6: 44]. (32) All others who neglect Your feet, oh Lotus-eyed One, are caught in an illusion of being liberated and have, bereft of You, an impure intelligence. Even though they are successful in severe practices [of penance and such] they, from their elevated position, fall down again back into the material world [see also B.G. 8: 15-16 and 5.6: 11]. (33) They who follow You in devotion, oh Mādhava, unlike the non-devotees, do not fall away from the path. Because they are fully attached to You, they are protected by You and move without fear over the heads of those who march against them, oh Master [see also 1.5: 17 and B.G. 18: 78]. (34) For the purpose of maintaining [Your rule], Your Lordship, existing beyond the modes, assumes a

form for the benefit and welfare of all embodied souls, so that human society, in accordance with the Veda, by [bhakti] yoga and penance being absorbed in Your worship, may be of sacrifice [see also B.G. 3: 9 & 18: 3]. (35) How could we have arrived at Your wisdom, that drives away the ignorance, if the purity of existence, oh Source of the World, would not be this constancy of You [being present]? The ignorance is completely vanquished when that quality of Yours is awakened by Your Lordship manifesting Yourself, and for that there is no alternative. (36) Oh Lord, on the path of the words and assumptions of those who look after the mind only [the impersonal intellect], Your name, form, qualities and actions cannot be ascertained. You are only realized when one [actually] puts Your name and form into practice [with ceremony and song; see also 1.3: 37-38, 4.18: 5, 7.15: 58 and B.G. 6: 24 & 18: 55]. (37) Constantly hearing, reciting, remembering and contemplating Your auspicious names [see 7.5: 23-24] and forms, he, who is of an undivided attention in service at Your lotus feet, no longer is capable of losing himself in the material world [see also 6.17: 28-31]. (38) In having this planet earth as the place of Your feet oh Lord, it is our fortune to see the Asura burden removed by You. Due to the causeless mercy of Your manifestation as the Controller of All, we may enjoy the fortune of witnessing, both in heaven and on earth, the marks of Your transcendently decorated lotus feet [the conch, the lotus, the club and the disc]. (39) For You, who directs our lives, there exists [actually] no such thing as being born [or dying, like we have to face]. However, it suffers no doubt that the cause of one's being born cannot exist without the pleasure [of Your liberating pastimes]. You after all are with the being born, maintaining and dying of us normal souls - which is arranged by the external energy - our safe haven against all fear. (40) In the form of a fish, a horse, a tortoise, a lion, a boar, a swan [or self-realized sage], a king, and as a man of learning among the God-fearing souls [like Lord Vāmana], Your Lordship has appeared as *avatāras*. Now please save us and the three worlds, oh Controller, diminish the earth's burden, oh best of the Yadus, we dedicate all our prayers to You [see also 1.3]. (41) [and towards Devakī they prayed:] To our fortune, oh mother, the Supreme Personality with all His energies can now be seen in your womb. The Supreme Lord is full of mercy for everyone. Fear therefore never the master of the Bhojas [Kāmsa], who wishes to be killed by Him, the protector of the Yadu dynasty, who will become Your son.'

(42) Śrī Śuka said: 'After thus having offered their prayers unto the Original Personality whose form is Transcendental, all the demigods, led by Brahmā and Śiva, returned to their abodes.'

*: Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'Symbolically, mother Devakī's constant fear of Kāmsa was purifying her. A pure devotee should always fear material association, and in this way all the Asuras of material association will be killed, as the Ṣaḍ-garbhāsuras were killed by Kāmsa. It is said that from the mind, Marīci appears. In other words, Marīci is an incarnation of the mind. Marīci has six sons: Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy). The Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in pure devotional service. This is confirmed in the Vedas: *bhaktir evainam darśayati*. Only bhakti can bring one in contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared from the womb of Devakī, and therefore Devakī symbolically represents bhakti, and Kāmsa symbolically represents material fear. When a pure devotee always fears material association, his real position of bhakti is manifested, and he naturally becomes uninterested in material enjoyment. When the six sons of Marīci are killed by such fear and one is freed from material contamination, within the womb of bhakti the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears. Thus the seventh pregnancy of Devakī signifies the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After the six sons Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya are killed, the Śeṣa incarnation creates a suitable situation for the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, when one awakens his natural Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa appears. This is the explanation given by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.'

** : The names by which Māyādevī is known in different places have been listed by Vallabhācārya as follows. In Vārāṇasī she is known as Durgā, in Avantī she is known as Bhadrakālī, in Orissa she is known as Vijayā, and in Kulahāpura she is known as Vaiṣṇavī or Mahālakṣmī (the representatives of Mahālakṣmī and Ambikā are present in Bombay). In the country known as Kāmarūpa she is known as Caṇḍikā, in Northern India as Śāradā, and in Cape Comorin as Kanyakā. Thus she is distributed according to various names in various places.

***: Śrīla Vijayadhvaja Tīrthapāda, in his Pada-ratnāvalī-ṭīkā, has explained the meanings of the different representations. Māyā is known as Durgā because she is approached with great difficulty, as Bhadrā because she is auspicious, and as Kālī because she is deep blue. Because she is the most powerful energy, she is known as Vijayā; because she is one of the different energies of Viṣṇu, she is known as Vaiṣṇavī; and because she enjoys in this material world and gives facilities for material enjoyment, she is known as Kumudā. Because she is very severe to her enemies, the Asuras, she is known as Caṇḍikā, and because she gives all sorts of material facilities, she is called Kṛṣṇā. In this way the material energy is

differently named and situated in different places on the surface of the globe.

****: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in Bhagavad Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land." (Cc. Madhya 7.128)

Chapter 3

The Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

(1-5) Śrī Śuka said: 'Then there was the supremely auspicious hour that, with the constellation of Rohiṇī rising, was endowed with all qualities. All the stars and planets stood in a favorable position. There was peace all around, all the stars twinkled in the sky, and the cities, towns, pasturing grounds and mines were at their best. With the rivers crystal clear and the lakes beautiful with lotuses, with the flocks of birds and the swarms of bees sweetly singing their praise in the blooming forests, the breezes fragrant and free from dust blew with a gentle touch, while the fires of the brahmins burned steadily and undisturbed. The minds of the virtuous souls, who were oppressed by the Asura [Kāṁsa and his men], cleared up when in that situation the kettledrums resounded together to celebrate the birth of the Unborn One. (6) The Kinnaras and Gandharvas [the excellent souls and the singers of heaven] sang, the Siddhas and Cāranas [the perfected souls and the demigods] offered prayers and the Vidyādhara women [the wives of the scientists] danced in great jubilation together with the Apsaras [the dancing girls of heaven]. (7-8) The sages and the demigods joyously showered the finest flowers, and the clouds rumbled silently like the ocean waves, when, at the darkest hour of the night, Janārdana, the World's Well-wisher, appeared from the divine form of Devakī. Lord Viṣṇu, He who resides in the heart of everyone, manifested Himself in full, like the full moon rising in the east. (9-10) That wonderful child, with its lotuslike eyes and its four arms that held different weapons [and other attributes, like] a conch, a club and so on, was decorated with the Śrīvatsa mark, with the shining Kaustubha jewel around its neck, with yellow garments and with a beautiful hue like that of rain clouds. Vasudeva saw Him [the Lord] beautifully decorated sparkling with a with *vaidūrya* (tiger's eye) studded helmet, with rings in His ears, with luxuriant scattered locks of hair, with an exquisite belt around His waist, and with armlets and bracelets on His arms. (11) Ānakadundubhi was amazed to see the beautiful appearance of the Lord as his son. Overwhelmed by great jubilation he lost himself in dreams of holding a festival to the occasion of the descent of Kṛṣṇa, a festivity where he would donate ten thousand cows to the brahmins.

(12) Oh son of Bharata, understanding that the child definitely was the Original Personality, he lost all his fears. Having arrived at that conclusion he, enraptured by His majesty, fell down with folded hands to offer prayers to Him who illumined His birth place in every direction. (13) Vasudeva said: 'You, my Lordship, are the Original Person Himself, transcendental to material nature, You are the absolute understanding and blissfulness [*sat-cit-ānanda*] in its true form, the intelligence that watches over each. (14) You, for sure, we know as He who, after in the beginning by His personal energy having created this world consisting of the three modes [see B.G. 7: 4-6], next seems to have entered [as *avatāras*], but in reality You did not do so [see also 7.12: 15 and B.G. 9: 11]. (15-17) It is like the notion of the material elements [earth, water, air, fire and ether] that have not changed at all, even though they are caught in many combinations of different separated energies [of organisms or molecules], that together form the complete of the universe. After in their association having appeared, it seems that the primal elements have entered creation later on, but that entering of this world never took place since they existed there before. The same way, oh my Lord, reasoning from true intelligence and such attributes, You, despite being in touch with the objects of the senses and the modes of nature, are not determined by those material qualities at all. You after all [being the complete], are not covered by them. Because You are the root of everyone and everything, there is no such thing as a within and a without to You, the Supersoul of all existence [see also 7.12: 15 and B.G. 9: 4-6]. (18) Anyone who, in the position of being recognizable as a material body, continues to act as if he would have an existence for himself, separate from the original self or soul, is a fool. He is a person who, in his false identification, will be rejected as being stupid for lacking in proper analysis and missing the full consideration of 'that' [or *tat*. See also B.G. 18: 16, B.G. 7: 4-5 and *]. (19) Oh Almighty Lord, the birth, the maintaining and the ending of this all, is there, so conclude the scholars, because of You, who are free from inclinations, free from changes, and free from the modes. This is not contradictory, because You, who are both the Lord and the Supreme Brahman, constitute the solid foundation for the fundamental qualities of nature [see B.G. 9: 10]. (20) You therefore [as that basis, as that transcendence], in order to maintain the three worlds with Your energy, assume a white form from the Soul [in goodness and knowledge], assume the color red belonging to the passion of creation [the movement], as also assume the form of darkness [of ignorance] for the purpose of the ultimate destruction. (21) You, now here present, oh Mighty One, have appeared in my home as the Completeness of Control, with the wish to protect this planet and punish all the demoniac men and their armies

who, unenlightened, by the millions, all over the world pose as kings and statesmen [see also B.G. 4: 8]. (22) But he who is so godless [Kāmsa] and who, after hearing about Your taking birth in our home, has killed all the brothers who were born before You, oh Lord of the God-fearing souls, will be informed by his lieutenants about Your appearance, and undoubtedly immediately take up his arms.'

(23) Śuka said: 'After having seen that their son was endowed with all the characteristics of the Supreme Personality, Devakī, who had been afraid of Kāmsa but now was most [happily] surprised [about the arrival of Kṛṣṇa], offered Him prayers. (24) Śrī Devakī said: 'Being the *'tat'* form [or the substance of our oneness in diversity], You are sometimes called the imperceptible one, the original one, or Brahman, the light, the freedom above the modes, the changeless one and pure existence [the measure of goodness and perfection]. You are the undivided one free from material motives, who is directly Lord Viṣṇu, the light of the Supersoul [compare B.G. 14: 27]. (25) When, after millions and millions of years, the cosmos runs at its end, the primary elements merge with their primal forms, and everything that manifested, by the force of Time, turns into the unmanifest, You, oh Lord with the Many Names, are the only one to remain. (26) This so powerful Time factor, by which, from the smallest measure of time up to the measure of a year, this entire creation works, is said to be Your action, the movement of You, the secure abode, the Supreme Controller, whom I offer my surrender. (27) The mortals, afraid of the serpent of death, flee in all directions but cannot shake off the fear. Only when they happen to obtain Your lotus feet, they sleep undisturbed and have death running away from them. (28) Oh Lordship, can You, in Your form as the One dispelling the fears of Your servants, protect us against the terrible son of Ugrasena we fear so much? And please, can You, as this Original Personality we attend to in meditation, make it so that You are not directly visible to those who consider You as having a physical form [compare B.G. 11: 8]? (29) Oh Madhusūdana, off balance because of Kāmsa, I am plagued by fear with Your appearance. May Your taking birth from my womb escape the attention of that great sinner. (30) Please, oh All-pervading One, withdraw this supernatural four-armed form, that is equipped with the attributes of the conch, lotus, disc and club. (31) The entire creation, with everything that belongs to it, is by You, oh Lord, oh transcendental Original Personality, easily sheltered and kept within Your body at the time of devastation. But to see You now having entered my body, is something unimaginable in the human world, oh Godhead!'

(32) **T**he Supreme Lord replied: 'In a previous age you became known as Pṛṣṇi, oh chaste lady, and he [Vasudeva] at the time was a Prajāpati called Sutapā, an impeccable person. (33) When Lord Brahmā told you both to create offspring, you were thereafter of severe austerities to keep your senses under control. (34-35) Enduring the rain, the wind, the blistering sun and the severe cold and heat of the seasonal changes, you, by practicing restraint, freed your mind from contaminations. Eating fallen leaves and air only, you became pure and peaceful, performed My worship in serenity and prayed for a boon from Me. (36) While you, with your mind fixed on Me, thus in severe penance practiced the most difficult austerities, twelve thousand celestial years passed. (37-38) By this determination of heart and constant, faithful service and penance, oh sinless souls, I, proclaimed to be the most favorable bestower of boons, being very satisfied with the both of you, then appeared in this form. Eager to fulfill your desires I told you to think about a boon for yourselves, whereupon you asked for a son just like Me. (39) You, who as a man and wife without a son, disappointed sensually, were so strongly attracted to My divine energy, never asked Me for being liberated from this world [see also 4.9: 30-35]. (40) After you received the benediction and I had left, you enjoyed sexual intercourse, whereupon the two of you achieved the desired result of having a son like Me. (41) Because I did not find anyone else in this world with your noble character and qualities, I became your son and am thus known as Pṛṣṇigarbha [see also 11.5: 26]. (42) Through Kaśyapa born from Aditi, I again appeared from the two of you with the name Upendra, and was also called Vāmana because I was a dwarf [see 8.17-22]. (43) True to My word, for the third time appearing in this manner in a form like this, I again took My birth from the two of you, oh chaste lady. (44) I showed you this [four-handed] form to remind you of My previous appearances. With the transient form, the spiritual understanding of My identity would otherwise not arise [in you]. (45) When you treat Me with love and affection, the two of you, in your constant awareness of Me as being both your son and the Absolute Truth, will thus attain My transcendental abode.'

(46) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'Thus having spoken, the Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, was silent, and directly He, before the eyes of His parents, from His inner potency assumed the form of an ordinary human child. (47) When thereafter the son of Śūrasena, as instructed by the Supreme Lord, carefully wanted to carry his son away from the place of delivery, precisely at that time Yogamāyā [see 10.2: 6-12], the one [of transcendence who factually is] never born, took her birth from the wife of Nanda. (48-49) By her influence the

guards and the rest of the people, being fast asleep, had lost consciousness of all their senses. As soon as Vasudeva carrying Krishna approached, all the heavy doors and gates, sealed with bolts and chains, opened wide out of their own, like darkness dissipated by the sun. The slightly rumbling clouds showered rain, but Śeṣa Nāga followed them and stopped the rains with His hoods spread out. (50) The surface of the deep waters of Yamarāja's younger sister, the Yamunā, was foaming because of Indra's constant showers. The waters whirled agitated, but the waves of the forceful, fierce stream gave way, just like the ocean did before the Husband of Sītā [Lord Rāma, see 9.10: 13-15]. (51) The son of Śūrasena reached the cow-village of Nanda, and found all the cowherds there fast asleep. While they slept he put his son on Yaśodā's bed, took up her daughter and then returned home. (52) There he placed the little girl on Devakī's bed, and put the shackles back on his feet so that he remained bound as before. (53) Yaśodā, Nanda's wife, delivering her child had no idea what it precisely looked like, because being overwhelmed by sleep from the hard labor, she lay unconscious.'

*: Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'If we regard this world as false, we fall into the category of Asuras, who say that this world is unreal, with no foundation and no God in control (*asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīśvaram*). As described in the sixteenth chapter of Bhagavad Gītā, this is the conclusion of demons.'

Chapter 4

The Atrocities of King Kāmsa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'With all the outer and inner doors of the building closed as before, the guards of the prison woke up when they heard the newborn child cry. (2) They hurried to report it to the king of Bhoja who fearfully awaited the time that Devakī would deliver. (3) He quickly got out of bed and said: 'The Time has arrived' and went perturbed, with his hair on his head disheveled, immediately to the place of birth.

(4) The chaste Devakī, miserably and full of pity, said to Kāmsa, her brother: 'All good fortune to you, this girl will be your daughter-in-law. You should not kill a woman. (5) Following the voice from above you have killed many children brilliant as fire, my brother. Please allow me this one daughter. (6) I am still your poor younger and childless sister, is it not? Oh master, dear brother, hold back, you owe me this last child.'

(7) Śrī Śuka said: 'In tears clasping her baby, she pleaded most piteously, but he most cruelly with a growl tore it away from her hands. (8) Having abandoned all his familial affection, he took the newborn child of his sister by its legs and wanted to smash the daughter against the stone floor. (9) But it slipped midair out of his hands and appeared that very instant in the sky as Devī [Durgā], the younger sister of Viṣṇu, with her eight mighty arms complete with weapons [see also 8.12: 40]. (10-11) Adorned with sandalwood pulp, flower garlands, valuable jewels and being nicely dressed, she held a bow, a lance, arrows, a shield, a sword, a conch, a lotus and a disc. With different presentations being worshipped by the Siddhas [the perfected souls], the Cāranas [the venerable souls], the Gandharvas [the singers of heaven], the Apsaras [the dancing girls], the Kinnaras [the souls specially talented] and the Uragas [the 'divine snakes'], she said the following: (12) 'What's the use of killing me, oh fool! He, your former enemy [see 1.68] who will kill you, has already been born [and is now] somewhere else. Stop this unnecessary murder of poor little babies.'

(13) After the Goddess of the immense power of *māyā* thus had spoken to him, she [disappeared and] became known in different

places on earth under diverse names [such as Annapūrnā, Durgā, Kālī and Bhadrā, see 10.2: 10 & 11]. (14) When Kāmsa heard the words she spoke, he was struck with wonder and forthwith released Devakī and Vasudeva, saying humbly: (15) 'My dear sister and brother-in-law, I, because of my sins behaving like a cannibal eating his own kids, have alas killed your many sons. (16) I am really such a one who, mercilessly cruel, denies his relatives and friends their life. What kind of world is someone, who engages like a brahmin-killer, heading for, here or in the hereafter? (17) Not just human beings, but also heaven can be misleading. Just because I believed the prophecy, I most sinfully killed all my sister's children! (18) Oh blessed souls, do not lament over your sons, for all who are born are burdened by their own deeds [in a previous life, see footnote 3 ch. 1]. Living beings have to abide by their fate and cannot always live in the same place. (19) Everything on earth, and all which is produced from earth [like pots], appears and disappears again. This physical body similarly undergoes change, but the soul, just like the earth element itself, does not [compare 10.3: 15-17]. (20) When one without knowledge of this difference [between body and soul] does not properly identify with the true self, and one thus falsely being united with the body is of separation [in one's heart and society], one cannot break through the repetition of one's conditioned life [viz. one can only unite in consciousness]. (21) Because everyone unwillingly has to face the consequences of his own actions, you, my dear sister, should not lament over your sons killed by me. (22) As long as one does not know oneself [as a soul] and one, with a mistaken notion, thinks of oneself as someone who kills or gets killed [thus as being a body], one is an ignoramus running into the pains of material distress [see also B.G. 3: 9 & 18: 17 and *nitya-mukta*]. (23) Please forgive me my atrocities, you are both saintly, humble and loving souls!' Saying this he clasped the feet of his sister and brother-in-law, with tears rolling down his cheeks.

(24) **T**rusting the words of Durgā he released Vasudeva and Devakī from their shackles, and thus proved his heart for the family. (25) Because he showed remorse, Devakī was relieved of her anger with her brother, and Vasudeva also gave up his anger. He said to him with a smile: (26) 'What you said about embodied souls in the grip of ignorance is correct, oh man of great fortune, one thus makes a difference between one's own interest and that of others. (27) When people consider everything as existing separately, they go at each other's cost and are filled with lamentation, lust, fear, hate, greed, illusion and madness. Discriminating like that, one does not see one's continuity [the 'thread', the soul, one's connectedness].'

(28) Śri Śuka said: 'Kāṁsa, thus free from impurities being answered by the appeased Devakī and Vasudeva, took leave and entered his palace. (29) After the night had passed Kāṁsa called for his ministers and informed them about everything that the 'Slumber of Yoga', Durgā [or Yoga-māyā], had said. (30) Upon hearing what their master had to say the Daitya opponents of the demigods, who resented them and were not that skilled, replied [see also B.G. 9: 12]: (31) 'Well, in that case, oh King of Bhoja, let us right now kill all the children about ten days old or younger, in every town, village and pasturing ground. (32) What can the demigods do in their fear to fight? They are terrified by the sound of your bowstring! (33) Facing your many devoted arrows, hitting them from all sides, they left and right fled from the fight to save their lives. (34) Some of those inhabitants of heaven, with their hair and clothing in disarray and bereft of their weapons, folded miserably their hands before you while saying: 'We are so afraid of you!' (35) And you killed none of them when they were scared to death, when they had lost their chariots, they did not know how to use their weapons anymore, when they wanted other things than fighting or when their bows were broken and they could not respond any longer. (36) What to say about the position taken by the so very powerful gods? Away from the fighting they can boast! And what of Lord Hari? He is hiding in the heart! Should we fear Lord Śiva then? He is living in the forest! And Indra then? He is not much of a hero either! And Brahmā? He always meditates! (37) Still we think that the demigods because of their enmity should not be overlooked. Engage us, your faithful followers, therefore to uproot them! (38) Just like a disease of the body that, once neglected, in its acute stage by men cannot be treated anymore, and like senses disregarded [that later on cannot be controlled], similarly a great enemy that became too strong cannot be removed. (39) Lord Viṣṇu is the foundation of the demigods. He lies at the bottom of the traditional religious duties and the brahminical order with its cows, its scholars, its penances and the sacrifices that require compensation [see also 7.5: 31]. (40) We therefore by all means, oh King, will endeavor to put an end to the brahmins and their brahminical talk, those repenters so busy with their sacrifices and their cows that deliver the ghee! (41) The scholars, the cows and the Vedas; the austerity, the truthfulness and the sense control; the equanimity, the faith, the mercy and the tolerance, as also the ceremonies, are all part of Hari. (42) He is the leader of all the Suras and the enemy of the Asuras. He is in all hearts. At His feet all the demigods are found, including their controller [Ś'iva] and the four-faced one [Brahmā]. Really, the only way to prevent Him is to persecute all His sages, devotees and saints.'

(43) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus rather ignorantly deliberating with his evil counselors, Kāṁsa, who as a demon was ruled by the Lord of Death, thought that the best thing he could do was to persecute the brahmins [and their followers]. (44) After he gave the Dānavas, those adherents of violence and destruction who could assume any form, permission to fight all the repenters in the world, the demons spread in all directions. Kāṁsa then returned to his quarters. (45) Filled with a passion of the deepest darkness they bewildered, with the shadow of death hanging over them, engaged in the persecution of the virtuous souls. (46) Of a person trespassing against great personalities, the benedictions of a long life, beauty, fame, religion, talents and a place in heaven, are all destroyed.'

Chapter 5

Kṛṣṇa's Birth Ceremony and the Meeting of Nanda Mahārāja and Vasudeva

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'Nanda was a man of great devotion. Overjoyed that a son had been born, he invited the scholars conversant with the Veda, cleansed himself with a bath and dressed himself up. In order to celebrate the birth [with a *jātakarma* ceremony*] as was prescribed, he took care that the mantras were chanted, and also arranged for the worship of the forefathers and demigods. (3) To the brahmins he donated countless fully decorated milk cows and seven mountains of sesame seed, masses of jewels and gold-embroidered cloth. (4) Material things are purified by time, by washing and bathing them, by rituals, by penance, by worship, by charity and by contentment, but the soul is purified by self-realization. (5) The scholars, the storytellers, the reciters and the singers uttered words that purified everyone and everything, while the *bherīs* and *dundubhis* [drums] sounded constantly. (6) All of Vraja was swept, the doorsteps, the courtyards and the interiors were sprinkled with water, and a variety of festoons and flags decorated gates that were made with garlands, pieces of cloth and mango leaves. (7) The cows, bulls and calves were smeared with turmeric oil and decorated with a variety of mineral colors, peacock feathers, cloth, golden ornaments and flowers. (8) Oh King, the cowherds [the *gopas*] gathering there, carried all kinds of gifts and were dressed in the most precious garments, with costly ornaments, coats and turbans. (9) The cowherd wives [the *gopīs*] were also glad to hear that mother Yaśodā had given birth to a boy, and personally gave their best by appearing in festive dresses with eye make-up and wearing jewelry and such. (10) With their lotuslike faces most beautifully decorated with saffron and fresh *kuṅkuma*, they with offerings in their hands hurried hither with swaying bosoms and hips. (11) The *gopīs* wore brilliantly polished jeweled earrings, strings of golden coins around their necks and colorfully embroidered clothes. It was a feast to the eye to see them, with their swinging bangles, earrings, breasts and garlands, thus being dressed going to Nanda's house, while a shower of flowers fell from their hair. (12) They all for a long time pronounced blessings for the newborn child, like '*pāhi*' ['be protected'], and sprinkled the Unborn Lord with turmeric oil while saying prayers. (13) With Kṛṣṇa, the

Unlimited Controller of the Entire Universe, arriving in Nanda's cow community, many different musical instruments vibrated in a great festival. (14) The *gopas* rejoicing, threw curds, milk and buttermilk at each other and smeared with butter. (15-16) In order to offer his child the best prospects and to satisfy Lord Viṣṇu, Nanda, that noble soul, warm-heartedly honored the *gopas*, the storytellers, the reciters, the singers and all those who found their livelihood by their education, with whatever they could wish for and could use as for clothes, ornaments and cows [see also 7.14: 17]. (17) The greatly fortunate Rohiṇī [the mother of Baladeva, see 10.2: 7] was congratulated by Nanda and Yaśodā, and she also, beautifully dressed and adorned with a garland and a necklace, moved around busily [being engaged in receiving guests]. (18) Oh King, from that time on the cow lands of Nanda became opulent with all riches, for they, now being the residence of the Lord, were by His transcendental qualities transformed into a place for the pastimes of Ramā [the Goddess of Fortune, see 8.8: 8].

(19) Nanda thereafter entrusted the protection of Gokula [the cow village] to his cowherd men and went to Mathurā to pay Kāmsa the yearly taxes over his profit, oh best of the Kuru dynasty. (20) Vasudeva, who heard that his [younger step-]brother Nanda [**] had arrived [in the city] - as it turned out to pay his tribute to the king, thereupon went to his camp. (21) When Nanda all of a sudden saw him before his eyes, he very pleased rose to his feet as if his body had found a new life. Overwhelmed by love and affection he embraced his dear friend. (22) Welcoming him respectfully with all regards, he assigned him a seat and informed about his health. Vasudeva, attached as he was, then asked about his two sons, saying the following, oh ruler over the world. (23) 'Dear brother Nanda, advanced in age and having no son, you were desperately longing for one. What a great fortune now to have gotten a son! (24) What a great fortune also to see you here today, it is like a rebirth. Despite being around in this world of birth and death, it is so very hard to meet again your loved ones! (25) Like things that afloat in a river are carried away by the force of the waves, we, intimately living together, do not stay [together] in one place, because our karmic ways are diverging. (26) Is everything alright with your cow business? Is there enough water, grass, plants and such in the great forest, where you are living now with your friends? (27) Oh brother, does my son who with His mother [Rohiṇī] lives in your house, consider you His father and is He a sweet boy under your loving care? (28) A person's three goals of life as described in the Vedic literatures [the regulation of one's lusts, income and rituals], find their consequence and belief when one is together. But

that is not so when that togetherness has become difficult, then they lose their meaning.'

(29) Śrī Nanda said: 'Kāṁsa killed, alas, the many sons you had with Devakī, and also the one remaining child, the youngest, a daughter, went to heaven. (30) Fate determines the end of all things, providence is elevated above every living being, and the unseen is the ultimate truth of all souls. He who knows this will never get bewildered.'

(31) Śrī Vasudeva said: 'Now that you have paid the king his yearly taxes and we have met, the both of us should not spend more days together in this place. Something might have happened in Gokula!' (32) Śrī Śuka said: 'After that advise of Vasudeva Nanda and the *gopas* excused themselves, yoked their oxen to their bullock carts, and then left for Gokula.'

*: The *jātakarma* birth ceremony, which can take place when the umbilical cord, connecting the child and the placenta, is cut, entails the touching of the tongue of the new-born trice with ghee preceded by introductory prayers. The birth ceremony for Kṛṣṇa is also called Nandotsava. The day of yearly celebrating His birth is called Janmāṣṭamī [the eight day of the month of Bhādra or Śrāvana (August-September)].

** : The *paramparā* elucidates: 'Vasudeva and Nanda Mahārāja were so intimately connected that they lived like brothers. Furthermore, it is learned from the notes of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya that Vasudeva and Nanda Mahārāja were stepbrothers. Vasudeva's father, Śūrasena, married a *vaiśya* girl, and from her Nanda Mahārāja was born. Later, Nanda Mahārāja himself married a *vaiśya* girl, Yaśodā. Therefore his family is celebrated as a *vaiśya* family, and Kṛṣṇa, identifying Himself as their son, took charge of *vaiśya* activities like the care for cows (*kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam*, B.G. 18: 44).'

Chapter 6

The Killing of the Demon Pūtanā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Nanda on his way [home] thought that the words of the son of Śūra [Vasudeva] were not said unjustly and therefore he, apprehensive of difficulties ahead, took shelter of the Lord. (2) Kāṁsa [see 10.4: 43] had sent a ghastly murderess who roamed the cities, towns and villages to kill babies. (3) Wherever one manages to listen and all of that [in bhakti], and one performs one's duty, there cannot, because of the Protector of the Devotees, be any question of murderous ogres and bad elements. (4) She who was called Pūtanā and could move through the air, one day flew to the village of Nanda. There she converted herself by her mystic power into a beautiful woman and, moving about at will, penetrated wherever she wanted. (5-6) With her hair arranged with mallikā [jasmine] flowers, with her very big breasts and hips that outweighed her slim waist, with her nice clothes and the earrings she wore, with the brilliance and great attraction of her face that was surrounded by her black hair, and with the appealing glances she threw at everyone, she as a beauty attracted the attention of everyone in Gokula. In the eyes of the *gopīs* she, so ravishing with a lotus in her hand, seemed to be the goddess of beauty who had arrived to see her Husband. (7) The baby murderess, unchecked, entered the house of Nanda, looked for children and saw there the Child that Puts an End to All Untruth lying in bed. Its unlimited power was covered, just like a fire that lies hidden under ashes. (8) Understanding that she was bent on killing babies, He, the Unlimited Soul of All That Lives and Not Lives, closed His eyes when she, unaware, like someone who takes a sleeping snake for a rope, placed Him - her own death, on her lap. (9) With an evil mind acting most pleasantly, she was like a sharp sword in a nice scabbard. The mothers [Yaśodā and Rohiṇī] though who saw her in the room were so impressed by the conspicuous, beautiful woman that they stood rooted to the spot. (10) The terrible woman placed Him on her lap and on the spot pushed her breast into His mouth. The breast was smeared with a strong poison, but the Supreme Lord in response squeezed her painfully hard with both His hands and vehemently sucked both the poison and the life out of her. (11) Completely being exhausted she cried, from the core of her being, 'stop, stop, enough!', and severely perspiring opened her eyes wide and violently struggled, kicking all around with her arms and legs.

(12) The very deep and powerful sound she produced, made the earth with its mountains, outer space with all its stars above, and the worlds below, tremble in all directions. People who felt the vibrations feared to be hit by lightning and fell flat to the ground. (13) Thus squirming being tormented at her breasts, she, with her mouth wide open and all of her arms, legs and hair spread out, gave up her life. Thereupon she expanded to her original demoniac form and collapsed on the pasturing grounds, oh King, just as when Vṛtrāsura was killed by Indra's bolt [see 6.12]. (14) As her body fell down it smashed all trees twelve miles around, oh King, for it was wonderfully gigantic.

(15-17) **T**he *gopas* and *gopīs*, who in their hearts, ears and heads were already shocked by the loud yelling, were terrified to see that massive body. The mouth had fearful teeth as high as a plow, the nostrils were as big as mountain caves, the breasts were like huge boulders, the scattered hair looked like copper, the deep eye sockets were like overgrown wells, the thighs were like river banks, the limbs resembled dams, and the abdomen looked like a dried-up lake. (18) And on top of it the child was fearlessly playing. It was quickly picked up by the approaching *gopīs* who were all greatly excited. (19) Together with Yaśodā and Rohiṇī they waved a cow's tail around the child in order to assure it of full protection against all dangers. (20) The child was thoroughly washed with cow's urine and further covered with dust thrown up by cows. Next for the protection of the child the Holy Name was applied with cow dung in twelve places [*]. (21) The *gopīs* took a sip of water [*ācamana*] and after placing the letters of the [following **] mantra on their bodies and two hands, they proceeded with the child: (22-23) 'May Aja protect Your legs, may Maṇimān protect Your knees, may Yajña protect Your thighs, may Acyuta protect You above the waist, may Hayagrīva protect Your abdomen, may Keśava protect Your heart, may īśa protect Your chest, may Sūrya protect Your neck, may Viṣṇu protect Your arms, may Urukrama protect Your mouth, and may Īśvara protect Your head. May Cakrī protect You from the front, may the Supreme Personality of Gadādhari, the carrier of the club, protect You from the back, and may the killer of Madhu and Ajana, the carrier of the bow and the sword, protect Your two sides. May Lord Urugāya, the carrier of the conch shell, protect You from all corners, may Upendra protect You from above, may [the One riding] Garuḍa protect You on the ground, and may the Supreme Person of Haladhara protect You on all sides. (24) May Your senses be protected by Hṛṣīkeśa and Your life air by Nārāyaṇa, may the Master of Śvetadvīpa protect Your memory and may Your mind be guarded by Yogeśvara. (25-26) May Pṛṣṇigarbha protect Your intelligence, may Your soul be protected by Bhagavān,

may Govinda protect You when You play, and may Mādhava protect You in Your sleep. May the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha protect You when You walk, may the Husband of the Goddess of Fortune protect You when You sit down, and may Lord Yajñabhuk, the fear of all evil planets, protect You when You enjoy life. (27-29) The demoniac women, devils and haters of children that are like bad stars, the evil spirits, hobgoblins, ghosts and spooks, the ogres, monsters and witches like Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Mātrkā and Pūtanā who drive people mad, are the ones who bewilder the memory and hinder one's body, life air and vitality. May those nightmarish beings who cause so much trouble for both old and young people, all be vanquished, may they all be scared away by the chanting of Lord Viṣṇu's names.'

(30) Śri Śuka said: 'Bound by their maternal affection, the elderly *gopīs* thus took all measures to ward off evil. His mother thereupon nursed Him and put her son in bed. (31) The *gopas*, headed by Nanda, in the meantime had returned from Mathurā, and when they saw Pūtanā's body in Vraja they were all struck with great wonder [and said]: (32) 'Oh friends, Ānakadundubhi appears to have grown into a great master of yoga. Otherwise, how could he have predicted the kind of situation we see now?' (33) The inhabitants of Vraja cut the mass of the body into pieces with the help of axes. Then it was thrown away in a distant place, covered with wood and burned to ashes. (34) When they cremated the body, the smoke produced turned out to be as serenely fragrant as *aguru* incense. Being sucked by Kṛṣṇa, that body had been instantly freed from all contaminations [see also 1.2: 17]. (35-36) If Pūtanā, that child murderess and she-devil hankering for blood, despite her lust to destroy, could attain the supreme destination after offering her breast to the Lord, then what may those expect who with faith and devotion, just like His affectionate mothers, offered the one most dear, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality, what [He needed]? (37-38) The Supreme Lord embraced her breast and trod her body with His lotus feet, the feet the devotees always have in their hearts and are held in devotion by those praised everywhere [like Brahmā and Śiva]. When she, by assuming the position of a mother, went to heaven, despite being a murderess, then what would that mean for the motherly cows that by Kṛṣṇa were sucked for enjoying the milk? (39-40) Oh King, for all women from whose love for the child the milk was flowing that He, the Supreme Lord, the bestower of Oneness, Giver of Liberation and son of Devakī, drank to His satisfaction, for all those who constantly made Kṛṣṇa their maternal concern [the *gopīs*], it can never be so that they have to return to the material ocean where one lusts in ignorance [see also B.G. 4: 9].

(41) **S**melling the fragrance of the smoke that emanated, all the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi wondered: 'Where does it come from?' Thus talking to each other they reached the cow village. (42) Getting there they were greatly surprised to hear what the *gopas* all had to say about the havoc Pūtanā had created, how she had died and everything that was done for the sake of the baby. (43) The gentle-minded Nanda took his son on his lap as if He had returned from death, smelled His head and achieved the highest peace, oh best of the Kurus. (44) Any mortal who with faith and devotion listens to this wonderful Kṛṣṇa childhood pastime about the salvation of Pūtanā, will grow fond of Govinda ['the Protector of the Cows']!

*: Waving a cow's tail around a child is an occult rite in which the tail of a cow is regarded the seat of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Fortune. This is also true for the urine, dust, the milk and dung of the cows that with their products are held sacred. The urine has antiseptic qualities, the dung serves as fuel and the milk brings all health and wealth.

** : With the mantra [*aṅga-nyāsa* and *kara-nyāsa*] one assigns the first letter or seed-letter of the names of the Lord mentioned in the next verse, followed by *anusvāra* and the word *namah*.

Chapter 7

Kṛṣṇa Kicks the Cart, Defeats Tṛṇāvarta and Shows Yaśodā the Universe

(1-2) **T**he honorable king said: 'The different pastimes of the *avatāras* of the Supreme Lord that offer us the image of the Lord, our Controller, are most pleasing to our ears and inspiring to our minds, oh master. Whoever hears about them will find his existence very soon purified from the propensity for dissatisfaction and, as a person who is devoted to the Lord, also find friendship with His people [Vaiṣṇavas]. If you like, please speak to us about everything pertaining to Him. (3) Tell us more about the wonderful pastimes of Kṛṣṇa who, imitating the human way, in the form of a child assumed His position on this earth.' [*]

(4) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'One day, when the moon stood in the constellation of Rohiṇī [after three months], He could turn Himself on His back in His crib. To celebrate this the mothers organized a celebration with a washing ritual. They gathered with music and song, and while mother Yaśodā performed the bathing ceremony, hymns were chanted by the brahmins. (5) After Nanda's wife and the other members of the household had finished the bathing, the brahmins, who performed their auspicious mantras, were respectfully honored with food, garments, garlands and cows. Seeing that the child had become sleepy, it was laid aside for the time being. (6) While busily engaged for the *utthāna* [or 'turning upward'] ceremony she, providing the guests from all over Vraja to their liking, did not hear any of the cries of her child that, wailing to be fed, angrily kicked around its legs. (7) The cart underneath He was put was hit by His delicate feet that were as tender as a new leaf. It turned over so that all the bowls, plates and the sweetness they contained fell to the ground, the wheels and axle got dislocated and the pole was broken [**]. (8) All the men and women of Vraja who, being invited by Yaśodā and Nanda, had assembled for the *utthāna* ceremony, witnessed that wondrous event and wondered how the cart out of its own could have been damaged so badly. (9) The children told the dumbfounded *gopas* and *gopīs* that it suffered no doubt that, as soon as the child started to cry, it with one leg had dashed it apart. (10) They, unaware of the inconceivable power of that small baby, could not believe it. The *gopas* thought that

all that they had heard was but child prattle. (11) Mother Yaśodā, picked up her crying son and offered Him her breast. Thinking it had been an unfavorable planet, she called for the brahmins to perform a ceremony with Vedic hymns. (12) After a couple of strong *gopas* had reassembled the cart and had placed the pots and everything back on it, the priests with curds, rice, kuśa grass and water performed the rituals for the fire sacrifice. (13-15) The blessings of those who endowed with the perfect truth are free from discontent, untruth, false pride, envy, violence and self-conceit, never go in vain [see also B.G. 18: 42]. With this in mind Nanda took care of the child by asking those fine brahmins to sing auspicious hymns and purify it according to the Sāma, Ṛg and Yajur Veda with the help of water mixed with herbs. When the child had been bathed he, the leading cowherd, held a fire sacrifice and devoutly served the souls of rebirth a most excellent meal. (16) To assure his son of all of the best, he - to the blessing they also gave him - donated in charity the best quality milk cows that were nicely decorated with flowers and golden chains. (17) The scholars being joined with whatever they pronounce, bring one, as experts in the mantras, all the blessings because the valid words they use never at any time will be fruitless.

(18) **O**ne day [with Him about a year old] when Yaśodā fondled Him as He sat on her lap, she could no longer bear the child's weight because He became as heavy as a mountain peak. (19) Astonished about the pressing weight the *gopī* put the child on the floor. Next she turned to Nārāyaṇa and engaged herself in her worldly duties. (20) The child sitting there was swept away [though] by a demon named Tṛṇāvarta, a servant sent by Kāṁsa who had assumed the form of a whirlwind. (21) Producing a tremendous noise it massively roaring covered all of Gokula with dust that penetrated every nook and corner so that everything was hidden from sight. (22) For an hour or so all of the cow land was plunged in darkness by the heavy dust. Yaśodā could not find her son on the spot where she had put Him down. (23) The people could not see themselves or each other anymore because of the sands blown up and were disturbed and confused. (24) The woman, helpless because of the dust clouds of the strong whirlwind, saw nothing and thus she in fear about her son lamented pitifully and fell to the ground like a cow that has lost her calf. (25) When the fierce dust storm of the whirlwind had ceased and she could not find Nanda's son, the other *gopīs*, with their faces full of tears, all in sympathy wailed along with her crying. (26) After Tṛṇāvarta had assumed the form of the whirlwind and thus had swept away Kṛṣṇa, he, reaching the top of the atmosphere, could not get higher with Him getting heavier and mightier and so he lost his strength. (27) Taking Him who

strangled his neck for an incredibly heavy rock that exceeded his power he could not get rid of this wonderful child. (28) Grasped by the throat he was powerless. His eyes popped out while he choked and lifeless, together with the child, fell down to the ground in Vraja. (29) The gathered sobbing *gopīs* saw him, fallen out of the sky, lying on a slab of stone with all his limbs broken, like Tripura pierced by the arrows of Śiva [see 7.10]. (30) They were totally surprised to find Kṛṣṇa in good health sitting on the chest of the man-eater who had transported Him through the sky. All the *gopīs* and *gopas* rejoiced most happily that He was saved from the mouth of death and that they had gotten Him back. (31) [They said:] 'How greatly wonderful this baby that, being seized by the ogre, left us but has returned unscathed! Now that this nasty and violent demon has been killed because of his sins, the innocent, even-minded people are relieved of their fears. (32) Of what austerity have we been, what was our worship for the One in the Beyond? What was the pious work, the public service, the charity, or any other benevolent activity for our fellow man that we performed, as a result of which the child, that was practically lost, is present here again to the fortune and pleasure of all His folk?' (33) Having witnessed all these different wonderful events in the great forest, the herdsman Nanda over and over stood amazed how true the words of Vasudeva had been [see also verse 10.6: 32].

(34) **O**ne day the mother pulled the little boy on her lap to nurse Him from her breast, from which because of her great love the milk was oozing. (35-36) Oh King, when He was done and mother Yaśodā, patting softly to help Him, looked the satisfied and smiling child in the face, she had, when He yawned, the following vision: she saw the sky, the planets and the earth, the luminaries in all directions, the sun and the moon. She saw fire, the air and the seas with the continents, the mountains, their daughters the rivers, the forests and all creatures moving and not moving [see also B.G. 11]. (37) Thus all of a sudden seeing the entire universe, oh King, she in great amazement stifled with deer-like eyes and started to tremble all over.'

*: At the beginning of this chapter, two extra verses sometimes appear:

*evam bahūni karmāṇi
gopānām śam sa-yoṣitām
nandasya gehe vavṛdhe
kurvan viṣṇu-janārdanaḥ*

"In this way, to chastise and kill the demons, the child Kṛṣṇa demonstrated many activities in the house of Nanda Mahārāja, and the inhabitants of Vraja enjoyed these incidents."

*evam sa vavrdhe viṣṇur
nanda-gehe janārdanaḥ
kurvann anīśam ānandaṁ
gopālānām sa-yoṣitām*

"To increase the transcendental pleasure of the *gopas* and the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa, the killer of all demons, was thus raised by His father and mother, Nanda and Yaśodā."

Śrīpāda Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha also adds another verse after the third verse in this chapter:

*vistareṇha kārūṇyāt
sarva-pāpa-praṇāśanam
vaktum arhasi dharmajña
dayālus tvam iti prabho*

"Parīkṣit Mahārāja then requested Śukadeva Gosvāmī to continue speaking such narrations about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, so that the King could enjoy from them transcendental bliss."

***: Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'Kṛṣṇa had been placed underneath a household handcart, but this handcart was actually another form of the Śakathāsura, a demon who had come there to kill the child. Now, on the plea of demanding to suck His mother's breast, Kṛṣṇa took this opportunity to kill the demon. Thus He kicked Śakathāsura just to expose him. Although Kṛṣṇa's mother was engaged in receiving guests, Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to draw her attention by killing the Śakathāsura, and therefore He kicked that cart-shaped demon.'*

Chapter 8

The Name Ceremony, His Pranks and Again the Universe Within His Mouth

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Garga, the family priest of the Yadus, a man of great penance, oh King, on the request of Vasudeva went to Nanda's cow community. (2) Nanda, very pleased to see him, stood up to welcome him with folded hands. Knowing him to be someone elevated above the senses [*Adhokṣaja*], he out of respect prostrated to offer his obeisances. (3) With the greatest hospitality and the sweetest words he offered the sage a seat and said, after thus having pleased him: 'Oh brahmin complete in your self-realization, what can I do for you? (4) When great souls [like you] move towards simple-minded householders, one must never think that such a thing would happen for any other reason than their best interest. (5) You are the author of a book concerning the transcendental knowledge of the movement of the luminaries, [an astrology book] from which any one directly may learn about the reason and consequences of his fate. (6) You are the best of all the knowers of Brahman, a brahmin who by his birth [*] is a spiritual master for all society. With you having arrived at my home, please, perform the sacred ceremony [the *saṁskāra*] for these two boys [Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma].'

(7) Śrī Garga said: 'Everyone knows that I am the teacher of example of the Yadus. In this world I always perform the purification rite for every son [of that family]. If I perform this ceremony for you, your sons would be considered the sons of Devakī. (8-9) Kāṁsa, that great sinner, knows about your friendship with Vasudeva. He also knows that the eighth child of Devakī cannot be a girl, while he took notice of Devakī having a daughter [Durgā 10.4: 12]. He thus might consider to kill these children and therefore it is not wise for us to do this.'

(10) Śrī Nanda said: 'Then please perform, without him or even my own relatives knowing about it, right here in this remote place, in the cow shed, the purificatory rites for a second birth by reciting the benedictory words.'

(11) Śrī Śuka said: 'The man of learning thus urgently requested, in secret seclusion performed the name-giving ceremony for the two boys for which he had come. (12) Śrī Garga said: 'He, this son of Rohiṇī, with His transcendental qualities will be the pleasure of all his folk. Therefore He will be called Rāma. Because of His extraordinary strength He will also be known as Bala, and because of not existing separately from the Yadus [see also 10.2: 8], He will further be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa [the unifier]. (13) And this one [the son of Yaśodā] according to the *yuga* has accepted forms with a white, a red or a yellow color. Now He is Kṛṣṇa [of a dark complexion, see **]. (14) This child previously was born somewhere else as the son of Vasudeva, and therefore the souls who know this will speak about this child of yours as the glorious Vāsudeva. (15) There are many names and forms according to the qualities and activities of His appearances. These are known to me, but the common people do not know them. (16) Being a *Nanda-Gokula* cowherd this child will always act to what is most beneficial to all of you. With His support you will easily overcome all dangers [*3]. (17) Oh King of Vraja, in the past, when there was a faulty regime, He has protected pious souls who were disturbed by rogues so that they, with those bad elements defeated, could flourish [see also 1.3: 28]. (18) Just like those faithful to Viṣṇu have nothing to fear from the Asuras, those who are as fortunate to associate with this child in love and affection, will not be overcome by enemies. (19) Therefore, oh Nanda, take the greatest care raising this child. As for His qualities, opulences, name and fame, this son of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa!'

(20) Śrī Śuka said: 'After Garga thus fully had informed them about the Supreme Soul [the way He had manifested in the form of the two boys] and had left for his place, Nanda, being blessed with all good fortune, considered himself most happy. (21) Shortly thereafter Rāma and Keśava [Kṛṣṇa] were crawling around in Gokula on Their hands and knees enjoying Their childhood. (22) Crawling like snakes through the mud of the cow place while dragging Their feet behind them, They produced a sweet sound with Their ankle bells, but when They, charmed by those sounds, enthusiastically followed [the ankle bells of] other people, They became afraid and quickly returned to their mothers. (23) When Their mothers closed Their, by the mud charmingly colored, bodies in their arms, they allowed Them to drink from the milk which, because of the great love for each of their sons, flowed from their breasts. And when they, while They were sucking, looked into Their mouths they were delighted with the greatest ecstasy to discover that Their teeth were growing. (24) From within their houses watching the children play outside in Vraja, they laughed and

forgot their household, being amused to see how the two boys caught the ends of the calves' tails and were dragged around by them. (25) When the mothers during their household duties could not find a way to check Them being engaged in Their tireless play with the cows, with fire, with sharp-toothed animal beaks [of dogs and monkeys], with knives [lying around], water, birds and thorns, they were unsettled. (26) Rāma and Kṛṣṇa very soon, without the help of their knees, oh King, with ease began to walk around on their legs alone in Gokula. (27) The Supreme Lord, together with Balarāma playing with the other kids in Vraja, thus awakened a heavenly bliss in the ladies of Vraja. (28) The *gopīs*, who with their eyes on Kṛṣṇa were eager just to hear time and again about His childish pranks, assembled in the presence of His mother and said: (29) 'Once He untimely released the calves and smiled about the commotion that gave rise to. Some or another way He stole the palatable curd, milk and butter from the pots, ate from it and also gave every monkey a share. When they refuse to eat [having enough], He breaks the pot, and when He cannot find any [food to feed the monkeys], He gets angry at the people of the house and goes around pinching the babies. (30) [With the pots] hung out of reach, He devises a way by piling up things or turning over a mortar, and then finds His way to the contents by making a hole in the hanging pot. Awaiting the time that the *gopīs* are busy with their household affairs, He, with the necessary light from the radiating jewels on His body, manages to find His way in a dark room! (31) He is so naughty that He sometimes freely urinates in a clean spot in our houses, and that cunning, resourceful thief now sits there like a nice boy!' The *gopīs* present there discussed all these matters, but when they saw Him sitting in front of them, looking afraid with His beautiful face, the *gopīs* were happy to see Him. They with their complaints against Him truly could not be angry with Him and, having a good time, had to smile only. (32) One day, when He was a little older, Balarāma and the other kids of the neighborhood came to tell His mother: 'Kṛṣṇa has eaten dirt!'

(33) **Y**aśodā, anxious about His well-being, chided Kṛṣṇa, took Him by the hand and looked worried into His mouth to inspect Him. She said: (34) 'Why, You unruly boy, did You secretly eat dirt? What are Your older brother and all Your playmates saying?'

(35) **N**ot true at all mommy, I did not eat any dirt. If you think it is true, then look right here into My mouth!

(36) **I**s that so? Then open wide!' she told Him, and He, the Supreme Personality, the Lord whose opulences are unlimited, in His

pastime of acting like a human child, opened His mouth. (37-39) Within His mouth she [for the second time, see 10.7: 35-37] saw the entire universe with all beings moving and not moving, the sky in all directions, the mountains, the continents, the oceans, the surface of the earth, the blowing wind, the fire, the moon and the stars. She saw the planetary systems, the waters, the light, the firmament with all of outer space and all [divinities] bound to change, the senses, the mind and the three modes. Seeing that diversity, along with the time of living of each soul, the natural instincts, the karma, all that is desired, the different subtle bodies, as also Vraja and herself within the wide open mouth of her son's body, she was struck with disbelief: (40) 'Is this all a dream, a divine phantasmagoria or maybe a delusion of my own intelligence, or would that what I so see differently be some yogic phenomenon natural to my child? (41) Let me therefore surrender at the feet of Him beyond my range of vision whom I may not understand, who escapes my consciousness, mind, action and words, and under whose control I live and may return [home, back to Godhead]. (42) With the notion of myself as being the wife of this spouse having that son, as being the queen of Vraja owning all the wealth with authority over all the *gopas* and *gopīs* with their cows and calves, I have it all wrong, since only He is my purpose in life [see 5.5: 8, 7.9: 19 and B.G. 5: 29]. (43) After mother Yaśodā thus had received this understanding of His reality, He, the master of illusion, the mighty Viṣṇu, manifested for her again the magic of the love for her son. (44) With the memory [of the vision] instantly faded, the *gopī* placed her son on her lap with a heart filled with the same intense affection for her son as before. (45) The Lord is glorified in all His greatness with the help of the three [Vedas], with philosophical exercises [the Upaniṣads], with yogic analysis [*sāṅkhya-yoga*] and with other devoted literatures, but she simply thought about Him as being her son.'

(46) **T**he honorable king said: 'Oh brahmin, what were the pious activities [see B.G. 7: 16] performed by Nanda and Yaśodā from whose breast the Lord drank His milk? How did they achieve the highest perfection of such a blessing? (47) Not even His own father and mother could enjoy the magnanimous activities of the young Kṛṣṇa who eradicates the impurities of the world, actions that even today are glorified by the transcendentalists!'

(48) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Droṇa, the best of the demigods [the Vasus], determined to carry out the orders of Lord Brahmā, together with his wife Dharā said the following to him: (49) 'May we, being born on this earth, be devoted to the Supreme Godhead, the Master of the

Entire Universe, the Lord who is the ultimate goal under whose care one can easily avoid a miserable life.' (50) 'So be it', was the answer [given by Brahmā]. Droṇa thereupon took his birth in Vraja and became the Great One [the Bhagavān to Bhagavān], the highly distinguished and celebrated Nanda, and she, Dharā, appeared as Yaśodā [compare 10.3: 32-45 and see *4]. (51) Oh son of Bharata, for that reason there was from both the parents and all the *gopas* and *gopīs*, the constant [love of the] devotional service unto Him who had appeared as their son, the Lord our well-wisher. (52) To substantiate the words of Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa then, together with the almighty [Bala-]Rāma, resided in Vraja to perform His pastimes [His '*līlā*'] to the delight of all.'

*: The Sanskrit says here 'by birth', but the *paramparā* stresses the *second birth* or initiation. Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'No one is born a *brāhmaṇa*; everyone is born a *sūdra*. But by the guidance of a *brāhmaṇa* and by *saṁskāra*, one can become *dvija*, twice-born, and then gradually become a *brāhmaṇa*. Brāhmanism is not a system meant to create a monopoly for a particular class of men. Everyone should be educated so as to become a *brāhmaṇa*. At least there must be an opportunity to allow everyone to attain the destination of life.' Next to this second birth there is also the third birth one has from one's sacrificial activities: independence is achieved with the internalization of the guru (see also 4.31: 10, 7.11: 35).

**: The word '*kṛṣṇa*' means more than just 'dark'. Svāmī Prabhupāda comments: 'If we analyze the *nirukti*, or semantic derivation, of the word "Kṛṣṇa," we find that *ṇa* signifies that He stops the repetition of birth and death, and *kṛṣ* means *sattārtha*, or "existence." (Kṛṣṇa is the whole of existence.) Also, *kṛṣ* means "attraction," and *ṇa* means *ānanda*, or "bliss." 'His colors are discussed later on in Canto eleven under: 11.5: 21, 24, 27 en 34.

*3: One of the mantras the Vaiṣṇavas use to offer their food to Kṛṣṇa is:

brahmaṇya-devāya
go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya
govindāya namo namah

'My obeisances unto the godhead of the brahmins always concerned about the cows, the brahmins and the entire universe; unto Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, my respects.'

*4: Concerning this difference between the privilege of being the actual parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, and being His foster parents, Nanda and Yaśodā, Prabhupāda explains that there are two types of *siddhas*, perfected or liberated souls: *nitya siddhas* and *sādhana siddhas*: those who are eternally liberated, like Nanda and Yaśodā, who are eternally Kṛṣṇa's associates or expansions of Kṛṣṇa's personal body, and those ordinary human beings who acquire a special position by enduring *sādhana*, the spiritual practice of executing pious activities and following the regulative principles of devotional service.

Chapter 9

Mother Yaśodā Binds Lord Kṛṣṇa

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'One day, when the maidservants were otherwise engaged, mother Yaśodā, Nanda's queen, was churning and making her curd. During the time she was churning the butter, she sang songs about everything she could remember her son had done. (3) Clad in linen held together by a belt around her shaking hips, her breasts, which at the nipples were wet because of her love for her son, moved as she was churning. And with that movement the bangles on her wrists and her earrings moved along in harmony. Meanwhile the perspiration, because of the labor of pulling the churning rope, ran down her face and fell down together with the jasmine flowers from her hair. (4) The Lord, desirous to drink milk, approached her as she was churning and then stopped, being sweet to His mother, the churning rod by taking hold of it. (5) She sweetly allowed Him on her lap to drink from her overflowing, loving breasts and watched with a smile how happy He was. When she saw how a pan of milk was boiling over, she had to put Him aside quickly and left, but He was not yet satisfied. (6) Having gotten angry He, biting His full red lips and with false tears, with a stone broke the pot in which the butter was churned and began, hidden from sight in an adjacent room, to eat from everything that was churned. (7) The *gopī* rescued the boiling hot milk from the stove and returned to her workplace, where she discovered that the churning pot was broken. Not seeing her child she with a smile concluded that it had been His work. (8) Standing on top of a mortar He had turned over, He, anxiously looking around, from a hanging [storage] pot to His pleasure handed a share of the milk goodies out to a monkey. From behind watching these activities, she very slowly approached her son. (9) Seeing her approaching with a stick in her hand He quickly climbed down and fled away, like He was afraid, with the *gopī* after Him - He who could not even be reached by the greatest yogis of penance who try to get access in their meditation [see also B.G. 18: 55]. (10) Even though the quickly chasing mother, with the flowers falling from her hair and with her heavy breasts to her thin waist, had to slow down, she nevertheless finally managed to capture Him. (11) Catching the little scoundrel by the hand, she chastised Him with a threatening pose, and then saw Him with fearful eyes remorsefully crying and with His hands rubbing the black ointment of His eyes all over His face. (12) With a good heart for her

son understanding His fear, she threw away the stick though and wanted to bind Him with a rope. But she had no clue what kind of power she dealt with.

(13-14) **H**e to whom there is neither an inside nor an outside, neither a beginning nor an end, is both the beginning and the end, both the inside and the outside of the universe. He constitutes the complete of the universe. And He, the One Unmanifest, the One Unseen present in the form of a mortal being, was by the *gopī* taken for her son and bound to a mortar, like one does with a normal child. (15) When the rope she used to bind her naughty child fell short with a length of an inch, the *gopī* tied another rope to it. (16) When even that one fell short she tried another one that, joining and joining, would not suffice either to bind Him staying short with [again] an inch. (17) Yaśodā thus proceeded with all the ropes in the household, but failing that way she, being struck with wonder, had to laugh, together with all the *gopīs* taking part in the fun. (18) Seeing His mother sweating and getting tired, and all the flowers falling from her loosened hair, Kṛṣṇa was so gracious to allow her to bind Him. (19) My best one, the Lord factually thus exhibited how He, Kṛṣṇa, despite being the controller of the entire universe with all its demigods, is controlled by the servant of His own command [His devotees. Compare 7.3: 14-21]. (20) Neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, nor the Goddess of Fortune, albeit residing at His side, received from the Giver of Final Liberation the mercy the *gopī* obtained. (21) They who adhere to the physical concept of life [the *karmīs*], as also the *jñānis* [the book people, the transcendentalists] and they who go for the soul only [the escapists, the impersonalists], cannot win as easily the Supreme Lord, the Son of the Gopī who delivers this world, as those can who are convinced of bhakti [of devotional service, see also B.G. 11: 54 and 18: 16].

(22) **W**hile His mother was very busily engaged in her household, the Lord observed two arjuna trees outside who had been demigods [Guhyakas]. They once were the sons of the bestower of riches [Kuvera]. (23) They were back then known as the very prosperous Nalakūvara and Manigrīva, but because of their conceit they had been cursed by Nārada to become trees.'

Chapter 10

The Deliverance of the Sons of Kuvera

(1) **T**he king said: 'Oh powerful one, can you please describe the abominable act because of which the *devarṣi* got angry and the two [sons of Kuvera] were cursed?'

(2-3) Śrī Śuka said: 'Very proud of being elevated to the association of Rudra, they who were born from the Keeper of Wealth, [one day] walked around in a beautiful park at the Mandākinī river [upper-Ganges] near Kailāsa [Śiva's mountain]. In that garden full of flowers they most bewildered, with their eyes rolling intoxicated from drinking *vārunī*, were together with women who sang songs to them. (4) Because they wanted to enjoy themselves, they in the company of the young girls entered the Ganges full of lotus beds, like two male elephants with their she-elephants. (5) It so happened that Nārada, the almighty *devarṣi*, got to see them, oh son of Kuru, and from the demigods' maddened eyes could understand what state they were in. (6) Seeing him their adherents [the girls] were ashamed and, afraid of being cursed, quickly covered their naked bodies with their garments. But the two guardians of Kuvera's treasures [the Śiva guhyakas], who were also naked, did not. (7) Seeing the two being drunk and blind with their prestige and wealth, he, in order to teach the two sons of the light a lesson, pronounced a curse against them saying the following. (8) Nārada said: 'For the one who in the mode of passion enjoys the things of the world, there is nothing as perplexing to the intelligence as the arrogance of wealth, a good birth, [a nice body, learning, riches] etc., in which one feels attracted to women, wine and gambling. (9) In that position killing animals, merciless people out of control with themselves, think that this body, which is doomed to perish, would not age and would not die [see also 7.15: 7, B.G. 9: 26]. (10) The body, however deemed to be divine, after death serves the worms and turns into stool and ashes. Does someone with such a selfish attitude towards other living beings know what hell he is heading for [see also 5.26: 17]? (11) Does this body belong to the one providing the food, to oneself, to one's father, to one's mother, or does it belong to one's father-in-law, to a state authority, to a buyer, to the fire or even to the scavengers? (12) The question is: who would thus that knower actually be [that proprietor] of the body that manifested from the unmanifested nature and vanishes again? Who else but a fool would

take the body for the real self and kill [other] living beings [see also 4.11: 10]? (13) For fools blinded by pride about their wealth, poverty is the best ointment for their eyes. A poor man is better capable of seeing others as equal to himself [*]. (14) Someone who is pricked by a pin does not wish anybody with a likewise body to experience such a pain, but not so a person who was never pricked by a pin. (15) A poor man is free from all conceit associated with the falsehood of the self. The great difficulty [of poverty] that one by providence may encounter in this world, is for him the best austerity. (16) Always being hungry the senses of the slim body of a poor person eager for food [**], become less and less dominant and also the violence [that is the counterpart of the lust to eat] ceases. (17) [As opposed to the rich] the poor can [easily] associate with the saints [who keep to the vow of poverty and are] equal minded towards all. The [mental] cause of their suffering as also their [physical] hankering is reduced by meeting such honest people, so that purification is quickly achieved as a consequence [see also 10.8: 4]. (18) Why would one avoid the equanimous renouncers of the world [the *sadhus*] who want to serve Mukunda and desire the association of materialists, who proud of their wealth seek their refuge in what is untrue [see also B.G. 7: 15]? (19) I shall therefore take away this ignorant conceit of these womanizing drunkards who because of the sweet liquor *vārunī*, arrogant and blinded with the opulence, have lost control of themselves. (20-22) Since these two sons of Kuvera, being absorbed in darkness, in their pride indifferent towards others did not care to dress their bodies, they deserve it to become immobile [as two trees]. This in order to prevent that they repeat this. It is furthermore my mercy that their self-remembrance may continue and it is also my special favor that they, after a hundred years of the gods [a year is a day], may obtain the personal association of Vāsudeva. With their bhakti revived they then may resume their celestial lives.'

(23) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *devaṛṣi* thus having spoken went away to Nārāyaṇa-āśrama [his abode], leaving Nalakūvara and Manigrīva behind to become a pair of arjuna [***] trees. (24) To be true to the words of the seer, who was His topmost devotee, the Lord [who was bound to the mortar], very slowly moved to the spot where the two arjuna trees were standing. (25) [He thought:] 'The *devaṛṣi* is most dear to Me. Even though these two were born from the loins of Kuvera [a rich man], I shall act in accordance with the words stated by the great soul.' (26) Thus having decided, Kṛṣṇa moved in between the arjunas and that way got the big mortar stuck across. (27) The boy, dragging the wooden mortar which was tied to His belly behind Him, with great force pulled over the two trees. They shook heavily because

of His supreme power and came down with trunk, branches, leaves and roots up making a tremendous noise [*4]. (28) On the spot from the two trees two persons appeared, resplendently beautiful, like fire rising up and illuminating all directions. They offered Kṛṣṇa head down with folded hands their obeisances. Being freed from passion and ignorance they said the following to the Lord of the Entire World: (29) 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Supreme Master of Yoga! You are the root cause and the Original Person in the beyond of this world, of this creation of gross and subtle matter by the brahmins known to be Your form. (30-31) You are the One for all living beings, You are the master of the life force, of the body, of the soul and the senses. You are the Time, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the Imperishable Controller. You, as the Greatest One, who are both the cosmic creation and the subtle reality, You, consisting of passion, goodness and slowness, are the Original Personality, Overseer and the Knower of the restless mind in all fields of action. (32) Who, being locked up in a body with a mind that is agitated by the modes of nature, is capable of knowing You? Who now is worthy of You who are not confined to a body, You who existed before the creation and who, now being covered by the modes of nature, is present here before us? (33) Therefore we offer You, Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality, the Origin of Creation, You, whose light is covered by the might of Your natural modes, You, the Brahman [both inside and outside], our respectful obeisances. (34-35) You, who are not material but are known by the different embodiments of the *avatāras*, thus demonstrate an incomparable, unlimited might in activities that cannot be performed by normally embodied persons. You, that same Goodness and Master of all blessings, have now appeared for the liberation and elevation of everyone, with all Your potencies and expansions! (36) Our respects for You, oh Highest Virtue, oh Supreme Auspiciousness! For You, oh Vāsudeva, oh Peaceful One and Master of the Yadus, our reverence. (37) Oh Unlimited One, have we, the servants who could meet You, oh Supreme Lord, because of the mercy of Your follower, the sage [Nārada], Your permission now [to leave]? (38) May our words always concern Your pastimes, may our ears hear the talks about You, may our limbs be working for You, and may our minds always remember Your lotus feet. May our heads bow to You, the All-pervading One, and may our sight be engaged in seeing the truthful souls [the saints, the Vaiṣṇavas especially] who are Your partial embodiments.'

(39) Śrī Śuka said: 'This way being glorified by the two Guhyakas, the Supreme Lord, the Master of Gokula who with ropes was bound to the mortar, smiled and spoke to them. (40) The Supreme

Lord said: 'Everything of this incident with the most kind Nārada, that happened in the past, is known to Me. What a great favor he did in cursing you to fall down for being blind in your madness about the wealth. (41) Just as the eyes of a person who faces the sun [are freed from darkness], one is simply freed from all bondage by the presence of devotees who are equal towards all, by associating with persons dedicated to Me. (42) Now that you, oh reeds [*5] of Kuvera, are saturated with love towards Me, please return home with Me as the Supreme Destination, I who constitute the Supreme of your desire, and from whom one never returns [to a worldly existence. See also B.G. 5: 17].'

(43) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being addressed by Him, the two circumambulated Him who was bound to the mortar. They offered their repeated obeisances, took leave, and then left in the northern direction [where Kailāsa is found].'

*: Prabhupāda comments to this: 'There is an instructive story called *punar mūṣiko bhava*, "Again Become a Mouse". A mouse was very much harassed by a cat, and therefore the mouse approached a saintly person to request to become a cat. When the mouse became a cat, he was harassed by a dog, and then when he became a dog, he was harassed by a tiger. But when he became a tiger, he stared at the saintly person, and when that saintly person asked him, "What do you want?" the tiger said, "I want to eat you". Then the saintly person cursed him, saying, "May you again become a mouse".'

** : Systematic hunger or regular fasting is in fact a standard procedure for devotees who regularly fast for a day like with *ekādaśi*: each eleventh day after the new and full moon the Vaiṣṇava fasts from cereal and beans and then chants. Modern medicine confirms that a regular fast, or systematic hunger, prolongs one's life. See also 8.16: *payo vrata*, fasting from solid food as the best of all sacrifices.

***: Arjuna trees are still found in many forests. The bark is used by cardiologists to prepare medicine against heart trouble.

*4: It is because of this *dāmodara-līlā* that Lord Kṛṣṇa as a toddler is sometimes called Dāmodara: tied to the belly [see also the bhajan Damodarāṣṭaka].

*5: 'reeds' is an expression referring to the hollowness of being surrendered.

Chapter 11

A New Residence, the Fruit Vendor and Vatsāsura and Bakāsura Defeated

(1) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The cowherd men led by Nanda heard the tumult of the falling trees and, afraid that it had been the thunder, went to the spot, oh best of the Kurus. (2) Discovering that the two arjuna had fallen to the ground they, flabbergasted, had no idea what the cause of this apparent crash would be. (3) Who could have done this? The child, dragging the wooden mortar He was bound to by the rope? How could this wondrous thing have happened? They were perplexed. (4) The other children said: 'He has done it, with the mortar getting across. He dragged it in between the trees! And there were also two persons. We saw it with our own eyes!' (5) They could not believe what they said. 'That is not possible! How could such a small child have uprooted the trees?' But some of them had doubts [and deemed it very well possible]. (6) When Nanda saw that his son, with a rope being tied to a big mortar, was dragging around with it, he had to smile and released Him.

(7) **The Supreme Lord**, encouraged by the *gopīs*, sometimes danced or sang for them as if He was a simple, ordinary child they could control like a wooden doll. (8) Sometimes He on request carried a wooden seat, a measuring jug or a pair of shoes, to which He made fun with His relatives by striking His arms [as if He would be a strong adult]. (9) By acting like a child to the pleasure of everyone, the Supreme Lord in Vraja showed the world to what extent He submits to His devotees.

(10) **Kṛṣṇa** [one day] heard a fruit vendor calling: 'Oh people, come and get your fruits!' And so the Infallible One, the Bestower of all Fruits who wanted some fruits, quickly grabbed some paddy and came to buy fruit. (11) What He had to offer had slipped from the palms of His hands [on the way], but the fruit lady filled them [nevertheless] with fruits. Thereupon the entire basket of fruits filled with gold and jewels!

(12) **After** the incident with the arjuna Rohiṇī Devī once called Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, who were absorbed in playing with the other children at the riverside. (13) When the boys immersed in their games

upon being called did not show up, Rohiṇī sent mother Yaśodā to take care of the sons. (14) As she was calling for her son Kṛṣṇa and for the other boys whom He so late still was playing with, because of her love the milk flowed from her breasts. (15) 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, my lotus-eyed one, oh darling, stop playing and drink some milk. You must be tired and hungry my son! (16) Oh Rāma, please come right now together with Your younger brother! Oh love of the family, You enjoyed Your breakfast this morning and now You must be needing some more! (17) Oh scion of Dāśārha ['worthy of service', the Yadus], the king of Vraja wants to eat and is waiting for You. Come here, be nice and let the other boys go home. (18) You are covered with dirt my son, come and take a bath. Today is the day of Your birth star, be clean and then we will give cows to the brahmins! (19) Just see how the boys of Your age, being washed by their mothers, are all dressed up. You too with a bath, having eaten and being decorated, should enjoy now.' (20) Mother Yaśodā thus in her intense love considering the Highest of them All to be her son, oh ruler of man, took Kṛṣṇa and Rāma by the hand and brought Them home to get Them presentable.'

(21) Śrī Śuka said: 'The elderly *gopas*, who had witnessed the great disturbances in the Big Forest, came together with Nanda to discuss what was happening in Vraja. (22) Upananda [Nanda's elder brother], the oldest and wisest one with the greatest experience, said in that meeting what, according to the time and circumstances, to the interest of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa would be the best thing to do: (23) 'We who wish the best for our Gokula, should leave this place all together. Great disturbances are occurring here with the evil intent to kill the boys. (24) The reason for this is that, somehow or other with the grace of the Lord, He, this boy, was delivered from the hands of the Rākṣasī [Pūtanā] who came here to kill the children, and also because of the fact that the falling handcart almost hit Him. (25) And then the Lord of the Suras had to save Him from the demon in the form of a whirlwind, who transported Him into the sky and so dangerously collapsed on the rocky ground. (26) Being protected by the infallible One, the child and the other children also escaped from dying because of the two [falling] trees He got stuck in between. (27) As long as such misfortune is harassing us, we cannot stay in this cow place. To the interest of the boys we all together have to move to another place, before it is too late. (28) There is a[nother] forest named Vṛṇḍāvana [the 'clustered forest' *] with lots of fresh greenery and serene rock formations that with its variety of plants and wealth of grasses is a very suitable place for *gopa*, *gopī* and cow [*go*]. (29) Let us therefore immediately go there today and not waste any time. We get all the carts ready and be on our way with the cows, our wealth, in front - if you all agree.'

(30) **H**earing that, the *gopas* said unanimously: 'That is the right way, the correct approach', and began to assemble the cows and load their belongings. (31-32) Putting the elders, the children and women on the bullock carts and next their belongings, the *gopas* with the greatest care took their bows and arrows, and departed together with the priests, oh King, thereby keeping the cows in front while loudly vibrating their horns and bugles all around. (33) The *gopīs*, nicely dressed with their gold around their necks and their young breasts lovely decorated with fresh *kuṅkum*, sang during the ride on the carts with great pleasure about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. (34) Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, beautifully together with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma being seated on one cart, were very happy to hear the stories being sung. (35) Reaching Vṛṇḍāvana, a place most agreeable throughout all seasons, they settled for a cow compound by placing their carts in a semi-circle like the form of the moon. (36) Oh ruler of man, when Rāma and Mādhava saw Vṛṇḍāvana with Govardhana hill and the banks of the Yamunā, They were very happy. (37) The two boys with Their children's games and broken language thus delighted the inhabitants of the cow community [the new Vraja]. In due course of time They were old enough to take care of the calves. (38) Sporting in different ways with all kinds of games, They together with the other cowherd boys, tended the calves close to the lands of Vraja. (39-40) Sometimes blowing Their flutes, sometimes hurling with a sling [for the fruits], sometimes moving Their feet for the tinkling [of Their ankle bells], sometimes playing cow and bull while bellowing loudly imitating the animals that fought with each other, and sometimes imitating the sounds of other animals, They wandered around just like two normal children.

(41) **O**ne day on the bank of the Yamunā tending Their calves with Their playmates, a demon [Vatsāsura] appeared on the scene with the intent to kill Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. (42) Assuming the form of a calf he had mixed with the other calves. But the Lord spotted him and, gesturing to Baladeva, pointed him out while He inconspicuously slowly moved in his direction. (43) Acyuta caught him by the hind legs and his tail, whirled him heavily around and next threw him lifeless on top of a kapittha tree [**]. There the body of the demon assumed a giant size whereupon he together with the tree, fell to the ground. (44) The boys who all had witnessed this incident, were greatly amazed and praised Him, exclaiming: 'Well done, very good!', and the gods being pleased showered flowers. (45) This couple, the Sole Protectors of All the Worlds who had turned into protectors of calves, that morning finished Their breakfast and next wandered around tending the young animals.

(46) With each of them being responsible for his own group of calves, they one day wishing to quench their thirst arrived at a reservoir where they drenched the animals and thereupon themselves also drank from the water. (47) There the boys saw a gigantic body, looking like a mountain peak broken off by a thunderbolt and fallen down, that frightened them. (48) It belonged to a big demon called Bakāsura, who had assumed the body of a [monstrous] heron [a *baka* ***]. All of a sudden most powerfully rising up he with his sharp beak swallowed Kṛṣṇa. (49) Seeing Kṛṣṇa being devoured by the heron all the boys headed by Rāma were flabbergasted and stood completely overwhelmed staring, nailed to the ground. (50) He, the son of a cowherd, the Master of the Lord of the Universe [Brahmā], deep in its throat began to burn like fire, and was instantly angrily released without a scratch. The heron thereupon immediately tried to kill Him again with its sharp beak. (51) With Bakāsura attacking again, He with His arms caught the beak of that friend of Kāmsa, after which He, as the Master of the Truthful Souls, and to the pleasure of the denizens of heaven, before the eyes of the boys, tore it apart as easily as one splits a blade of grass. (52) At that moment the gods of all places, accompanied by drums, conches and prayers, showered jasmine and other flowers from Indra's paradise [Nandana-kānana] and congratulated the enemy of Bakāsura. Seeing this, the cowherd sons were struck with wonder. (53) The way the senses return to life [when one regains consciousness], the boys headed by Balarāma returned to life when He was released from the beak of the heron. Freed from the danger they embraced Him, assembled their calves and returned to Vraja. There they loudly declared [that Kṛṣṇa had defeated another demon]. (54) The *gopas* and the *gopīs* were astounded when they heard all the stories. Eagerly staring at Them as if They had returned from death, they, filled with admiration, most delighted could not turn their eyes away from the boys. (55) [They said to themselves:] 'What a miracle that this boy, having faced so many life threats, is still around, while all those who gave rise to fear, themselves had to find the death they threatened with. (56) Even though they had approached with the intent to kill this boy, none of the evil planners who appeared so grotesque in their malice, managed to succeed. Besieging Him they all died like flies in the fire. (57) That is how it is: the words of the knowers of Brahman never ever prove false. That what by the supreme master [Garga] was predicted has happened exactly so [see 10.8: 8-9]!' (58) This way Nanda's *gopas* delighted in the pleasure to talk about the stories about Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, without ever running into the pains of the world [see also 1.7: 6]. (59) The two boys thus passed their childhood in the cow-community with different children's

games like playing hide and seek, building dams and jumping around like they were monkeys.'

*: Vṛṇḍāvana is situated between Nandeśvara and Mahāvana.

** : The kapittha is sometimes called *kṣatbelpala*. The pulp of this fruit is very palatable. It is sour-sweet and liked by each and everyone.

***: The heron is regarded a bird of great cunning, deceit and deliberation, and so it stands for the hypocrite, the cheat, the rogue.

Chapter 12

The Killing of the Demon Aghāsura

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'One day the Lord decided to have a picnic in the forest. Rising early He blew His horn nicely to wake up His comrades and the calves. Then they departed from Vraja driving their groups of calves in front of them. (2) It offered a most attractive sight to see them all happy and beautifully together as they walked away in His company, with their prods, horns, flutes and the many calves each of them had. All together they numbered over a thousand. (3) With Kṛṣṇa's personal calves added to them they could not be counted anymore. Immersed in their children's games, the boys had a good time at different places [in the forest]. (4) Even though they were already adorned with gems, shells, gold and pearls, they also used fruits, green leaves, bunches of beautiful flowers, peacock feathers and colored minerals to decorate themselves. (5) They snatched away each other's belongings and threw them at a distance when it was discovered. Others threw them further away, but then again they were returned with a laugh. (6) When Kṛṣṇa walked away to admire the beauty of the forest, they enjoyed it to say 'me first, me first' while they touched Him. (7-11) Some blew their flutes, some vibrated their horns, some hummed along with the bumblebees and others imitated the cuckoos. Some ran after the shadows of the birds, some walked elegantly with the swans or sat with the ducks just as silent or danced with the peacocks. They searched for young monkeys and hopped along with them between the trees as they were skipping from tree to tree. They jumped together with the frogs, getting wet in the water, they laughed at their shadows and mocked their own echoes. This way they enjoyed the merit of their previous lives in friendship with Him who is the Supreme Divinity for those who are entangled in *māyā*, He who is the spiritual happiness for those transcendentalists who accept it to be of service [as a consequence thereof. See * and 1.1: 2, 1.7: 6 and 2.1: 6]. (12) Yogis skilled in self-control do not even after many lives of doing penance achieve the dust of His lotus feet. How fortunate then are the inhabitants of Vraja by whom He personally being present could be observed directly?

(13) And then the one named Agha ['the evil one'] appeared on the scene, a great demon who could not tolerate the sight of their happy pastimes. His life's end was awaited by all the immortal souls,

in spite of the nectar they drank. (14) When Aghāsura, who was sent by Kamsa and who was the younger brother of Bakī [Pūtanā] and Bakāsura, saw the boys who were led by Kṛṣṇa, he thought: 'This must be the killer of the two who together with me took birth from the same mother. Let me therefore now for their sake kill Him and His boys! (15) When these boys have become the sesame and water for the funeral rites of my brother and sister, when the strength of the life of the inhabitants of Vraja [their children] has disappeared, when these living beings whom they consider the very embodiment of their love and breath have left them, they all will be as good as dead.' (16) Thus having decided he assumed the wondrous form of a very, very large python that extended for miles. Therewith he occupied, as high as a mountain and with a mouth spread wide open like a mountain cave, that moment most wickedly the road in order to swallow the picknickers. (17) Keeping his mouth wide open, his lower lip rested on the earth and his upper lip touched the sky. His teeth were like mountain peaks, the inside was pitch dark, his tongue resembled a broad road, his breath was like a warm wind and his fiery look was like a fire. (18) Seeing him in that position they all considered it Vṛṇḍāvana at its best. It was for them a known game [to act] as if they were looking at the form of a python's mouth: (19) 'Look dear friends! A dead python there before us, ready to swallow us all with its snake mouth spread open, is it not? (20) It is obvious, really, that cloud up there is the upper lip and below, that big sand bank with that reddish glow, is his lower lip... (21) On the left and right, those caves, look just like the corners of the mouth and those peaks there, are exactly like the animal's teeth. (22) The length and breadth of the broad path, is like the tongue and the darkness, in between the mountains, looks like the inside of its mouth. (23) Just notice how that hot wind blowing from a forest fire is like its breath, and the bad smell of the flesh of the burned corpses, stinks like the flesh within its belly. (24) Would this animal be here to devour all who dare to enter? With that being so, he will, just like the heron, be immediately vanquished by Kṛṣṇa!' so they said, looking at the gleaming face of Him, Baka's enemy, while they loudly laughing and clapping their hands entered its mouth.

(25) **Kṛṣṇa** heard them talking this and that way besides the truth. They did not realize what they were dealing with. He knew that the Rākṣasa was very real and was deceiving them, and so He arrived at the conclusion that He, the Supreme Lord, the Complete Whole of All Living Beings who is situated in the heart, should stop His comrades. (26) Meanwhile, all the boys and their calves had entered the belly of the demon, but they were not devoured. The Rākṣasa, who was

thinking of his dead relatives, waited for Baka's enemy to enter. (27) Kṛṣṇa, who for each and everyone is the source of fearlessness, was amazed to witness that and compassionately felt sorry about this twist of fate. They who had no one but Him now helplessly had moved away from His control to burn as straws in the fire of the belly of Aghāsura, death personified. (28) What to do now? This rogue should not exist, nor should the innocent and faithful souls find their end. How could He achieve both ends at the same time? Gathering His thoughts the Lord, the Unlimited Seer, knew what to do and entered the mouth. (29) That very moment all the gods exclaimed from behind the clouds in fear: 'Alas, alas!', and Kaṁsa and the other bloodthirsty friends of Aghāsura rejoiced. (30) When He heard that, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord who is never vanquished, immediately expanded Himself [see *siddhi*] within the throat of the demon who tried to crush the boys and the calves in his belly. (31) With that action the airways were blocked and the eyes of the squirming and wrestling giant popped out. The life air was arrested within the internally completely obstructed body and then broke out through the top of the skull. (32) After all life air had left the body and Kṛṣṇa saw that the boys and calves lay dead, He, Mukunda, the Supreme Lord, brought them back to life, whereupon He reappeared from the mouth in their company. (33) From the body a most wonderful bright light issued that all by itself illumined the ten directions. It remained in the sky waiting until the Supreme Personality appeared and then, before the eyes of the demigods, it entered His body [*sāyujya-mukti*]. (34) Everyone most pleased thereupon performed his specific service of worship [see also 1.2: 13]: flowers were showered, the singers of heaven sang, the heavenly girls danced, the demigods played their specific instruments and the brahmins offered prayers. (35) The Unborn One [Lord Brahmā], who nearby in his abode heard the wondrous sounds of those for everyone so very auspicious prayers, sweet sounds, songs and different celebrations, came immediately and stood amazed to see the glory of the Supreme Master.

(36) **O**h King, after the skin of the python had dried, it became a place of interest for the inhabitants of Vṛṇḍāvana that for a long, long time afterwards was used as a cave. (37) This incident - of the snake's death and deliverance and the liberation of Him and His associates - that took place when the Lord was five years old [*kaumāra*], was by the boys in Vraja disclosed one year later [*pauganda*] as if it had happened that very day. (38) However unthinkable it might be for an impure soul, it is not that astonishing that even Aghāsura was liberated from all contamination and [with the light of his soul] could merge with the Supersoul. All he had to do was to associate but for a moment

with the Supreme Creator of a higher and lower existence, when He assumed the form of a human child. (39) This destination He even grants those who [like Aghāsura] but once got innerly connected to His form because of a certain state of mind in relation to His divinity [thus even being connected in hatred]. What then would that mean for those in whom He is ever present as the remover of illusion, as the One who always grants each and every soul the realization of transcendental happiness?' "

(40) Śrī Sūta [see 1: 12-15] said: "He [Parīkṣit] who was protected by the God of the Yadus [Yādavadeva or Kṛṣṇa] and who this way, oh twice-born one, heard about the so very wonderful activities of his savior [see 1.8], thus being fixed in his consciousness asked the son of Vyāsa for more about these meritorious deeds. (41) The honorable king said: 'Oh brahmin how could what happened in the past, be described as having happened in the present? How can that be possible? How could what the Lord did at the age of five years, by the boys be described as having occurred at His sixth? (42) Oh great yogi, I am burning with curiosity. Please, explain this incident to me, oh guru, I am certain that it was caused by nothing but the deluding potency of the Lord [*yoga-māyā*]. (43) In this world, oh teacher, we as a mundane ruler are most blessed with the opportunity to always drink from the nectar of your sacred talks about Kṛṣṇa.' "

(44) Śrī Sūta said: "When the man of penance this way was questioned by him, he had completely lost contact with his senses the very moment he was reminded of the Infinite One. After with difficulty slowly having regained his external vision, he answered the Lord's most outstanding, finest adherent."

*: Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: "The secret of success is unknown to people in general, and therefore Śrīla Vyāsadeva, being compassionate toward the poor souls in this material world, especially in this age of Kali, has given us the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam *purāṇam amalāṁ yad vaiṣṇavānām priyam* (S.B. 12.13: 18). For Vaiṣṇavas who are somewhat advanced, or who are fully aware of the glories and potencies of the Lord, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is a beloved Vedic literature. After all, we have to change this body (*tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*). If we do not care about Bhagavad Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, we do not know what the next body will be. But if one adheres to these two books - Bhagavad Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam - one is sure to obtain the association of Kṛṣṇa in the next life (*tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna* [B.G. 4: 9]). Therefore, distribution of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam all over the world is a great

welfare activity for theologians, philosophers, transcendentalists and yogis (*yoginām api sarveṣām* [B.G. 6: 47]), as well as for people in general'.

Chapter 13

Lord Brahmā Steals the Boys and Calves

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Asking such very good questions you are a most fortunate soul, oh best of the devotees, because you, with your wish to hear the stories about the Lord again and again, lend them new charm. (2) This is what sets apart the truthful souls who accepted the essence of life: that what is their life's purpose, the aim of their understanding and what comes first to their mind, appears to be new every time they properly discuss matters in relation to the Infallible One, despite the repetition, just like every woman seems to be new to a womanizer. (3) Please listen carefully, oh King, I will relate it to you... even though it is a confidential subject. For gurus describe even hidden matters to a loving disciple.

(4) After He had saved the boys and calves from the mouth of that deadly Agha, the Supreme Lord brought them to the river bank and spoke the following words: (5) 'Oh, how beautiful this river bank is, My dear friends! It offers all opportunity to play, with its soft and clean sands, the aroma of the blooming lotuses which attract the bumblebees, and the sounds of the chirping birds everywhere in the many trees! (6) Let us eat here. It is late now and we are weak from hunger. After the calves drank from the water, they at ease can eat from the nearby grasses.' (7) They consented, let the calves drink from the water and took them to the tender grasses. Then they opened their lunch bags and happily enjoyed their meal together with the Supreme Lord. (8) In a wide circle happily facing inward, the boys of Vraja grouped in rows around Kṛṣṇa. Thus sitting down in the forest they looked as beautiful as the petals and leaves that make up the whorl of a lotus flower. (9) Some of them used flower petals as a plate while others used bunches of leaves, twigs, fruits, [the material of] their packets, the bark of trees or a slab of rock. (10) All of them allowed the others a taste of their own favorite food and thus they had a good time taking their lunch with the Lord while laughing and making others laugh. (11) With His flute tucked away in His belt and with the horn and the prod at His left side, He took the yogurt rice and pieces of fruit between His fingers. Keeping Himself in the middle of the circle of His comrades He made them laugh telling His jokes. The denizens of heaven thus witnessed how the Enjoyer of all Sacrifices was enjoying His childhood pastimes. (12) Oh scion of Bharata, while

the Infallible One this way in harmony was eating together with the cowherds, the calves looking for grass had wandered deep into the forest. (13) Noticing that, Kṛṣṇa, the Terror of Fear, said to the worried boys: 'Oh friends, stay where you are, I shall bring the calves back to this spot!' (14) Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, after saying this, went away with a bit of food in His hand to look everywhere in the mountains, the caves, the bushes and the bowers for the calves of His friends.

(15) **H**e who was born from the lotus and who resides in the beyond [Lord Brahmā], was very charmed by the way the Lord had enchanted the boys. Just to see more of it he led the boys and their calves away to hide them elsewhere, oh man of the Kuru bond. This authority from heaven who before had witnessed the deliverance of Aghāsura, had become very astonished about the Almighty Personality [see footnote*]. (16) When Kṛṣṇa nowhere could find the calves, He neither could find the cowherd boys after He had returned to the river bank. Thereupon He searched the entire forest for the both of them. (17) Neither finding the calves nor their caretakers anywhere in the forest, Kṛṣṇa, well aware of everything going on in the universe, understood immediately that this was the work of Vidhi [Lord Brahmā]. (18) In order to please the mothers of the boys and also him [Brahmā], Kṛṣṇa, the Controller managing the entire universe, thereupon expanded Himself to both the forms [of cowherd boy and calf]. (19) With a perfect likeness of the cowherd boys and their tender calves, having the same size of legs and hands and the same bugles, flutes, sticks and bags and such, with the same ornaments and dresses in all respects, with exactly their character, habits, features, attributes and traits and playing the same games and such, Kṛṣṇa, the Unborn One, manifested Himself in expansions of Viṣṇu with the same voices and bodies they had. (20) Personally thus in different ways enjoying the company that He offered Himself in the form of the calves and the cowherd boys, He, the Soul of All, thereupon entered Vraja. (21) He brought Himself in the form of the different calves to the different cowsheds and next entered the different houses with the different persons He had become, oh King. (22) As soon as their mothers heard the sound of their flutes, they immediately abandoned what they were doing and lifted them like feathers up in their arms. They hugged them and allowed them, being wet from their love, to drink from their nectarean breast milk. In that spirit feeding their sons [they were thus of respect for] the Supreme Divinity [the Supreme Lord]. (23) Every time Mādhava thereupon in the evening came home, oh ruler of man, having finished what He had to do, they happily took care of Him with their actions of massaging, bathing, smearing and decorating Him, chanting mantras for His protection, marking Him with *tilaka* and

sumptuously feeding [all the boys He was]. (24) Thereafter the cows, which had arrived in their sheds, immediately loudly mooing called for their calves. These followed them, were time and again licked by them and fed with the milk that flowed from their udders. (25) From cow and *gopī* there was in this matter the motherly affection as there was before, be it that since this love now was derived from the Lord [in the form of the calves and boys], it was free from the bewilderment of 'this is my child' [free from 'I' and 'mine']. (26) Now that the children of the inhabitants of Vraja, unlike before, were all like Kṛṣṇa for the time of a year, the creeper of affection for them [and Him] gradually, day by day, increased without a limit. (27) Thus for the period of a year tending Himself in the form of the calves by means of Himself in the form of the cowherd boys, He, the Supersoul, wished to play His game [His *līlā*] in the community and the forest.

(28) **O**ne day, five or six days before a whole year had passed, the Unborn Lord, together with Balarāma taking care of the calves, entered the forest. (29) In the vicinity of Vraja looking for grass for their calves, they at a distance were spotted by the mother cows that were pasturing on top of Govardhana hill. (30) As soon as they saw them they, urged by their love, forgot about the herd. Despite the difficult path, they broke away from their caretakers and loudly mooing galloped fast [downhill] with their necks raised to their humps, their heads and tails upwards and dripping milk from their udders. (31) The cows united with their calves at the foot of the hill and, despite having calved again, fed them with their flow of milk and anxiously licked their limbs as if they wanted to swallow them. (32) The *gopas*, being frustrated in their efforts to keep them from the difficult and dangerous path, felt greatly ashamed for having gotten angry with them, for when they got there, they found their sons together with the cows and calves. (33) Their minds were steeped in a mood of utter, transcendental love and with that great attraction their anger melted away like snow before the sun. Lifting their boys up in their arms to embrace them, they smelled their heads and experienced the highest pleasure. (34) Thereafter the elderly *gopas*, overjoyed with the embraces, could only with difficulty tear themselves loose from them and had tears in their eyes upon the memory. (35) When Balarāma saw the abundance of love and the constant attachment of all the inhabitants of Vraja, however long ago their children and the calves had left behind their mother's breast, He could not understand the reason for this and wondered: (36) 'What kind of miracle is happening here? The divine love [*prema*] of Me and everyone here in Vraja for the children and for Vāsudeva, the Soul of the Complete Whole, has never been so great! (37) Who would be behind all this?

What has caused it? Is it a divine being, is it a woman or a she-devil? In any case it must be the special grace [Māyā-devī] of My Sustainer. Who else could bewilder Me like this?' (38) Pondering thus He through His mind's eye saw that all the calves, along with their companions, were [manifestations of] the Lord of Vaikunṭha. (39) [Balarāma said to Kṛṣṇa:] 'These boys are no [incarnated] masters of enlightenment, nor are these calves great sages. You, oh Supreme Controller, only You, are the One who manifests Himself in all the diversity of existence. How can You be everything that exists at the same time? Tell Me, what exactly is Your word to this?' By saying these words Baladeva then with His Lordship arrived at an understanding of the situation [**].

(40) **T**he selfborn one [Brahmā] returning after such a long time, saw that, even though it was but a moment later to his own notion [see *kalpa*], one year later the Lord was playing together with His expansions like He did before. (41) [He said to himself:] 'Because the many boys in Gokula together with their calves, are fast asleep situated on the bed of my deluding power, it cannot be so that they today would have risen again. (42) I therefore wonder where these boys here came from. They are different from the ones bewildered by my power of illusion. Yet the same number of them is for an entire year playing together with Viṣṇu!' (43) For a long time thus contemplating what the difference between the two would be, he, the selfborn one, by no means could determine who of them were the real ones and who not. (44) And thus even he, the unseen one, was factually bewildered by his own mystic power, he who wanted to mystify Viṣṇu, the One who, Himself being elevated above all misconception, mystifies the entire universe. (45) As meaningless as the obscurity of a fog is during the night and the light of a glowworm is during the day, a person of a lesser mystic potency will realize nothing but his own destruction, when he tries to use this power against a great personality. (46) And while the selfborn one was looking on, he saw the herders of the calves appearing with the complexion of a rain cloud and in clothes of yellow silk. (47-48) They had four arms and held a conch, a disc, a club and a lotus in Their hands. They wore helmets, earrings, necklaces and garlands of forest flowers. They were marked with the *śrīvatsa*, carried the [Kaustubha] jewel around Their conch-striped necks and had bracelets around Their wrists. They had ornaments at Their feet and bangles on Their ankles. With Their belts around Their waists and Their rings around Their fingers, They were most beautiful to behold. (49) From head to toe all Their limbs were covered by strings of fresh, soft *tulsī* [basil] that had been offered by those [devotees] who are of great merit [see

also 10.12: 7-11]. (50) With Their smiles as bright as moonlight and the clear glances of Their reddish eyes, They, being just like [the basic qualities of white] goodness and [reddish] passion, were the creators and protectors of the desires of Their devotees [compare 10.3: 20]. (51) The Praiseworthy Primal Being [of Viṣṇu] was by all beings moving and not moving, from the first being [of Brahmā] down to the smallest clump of grass, worshiped in different ways, with [for instance] dance and song. (52) The glory of the perfections [*siddhis*, being like the smallest etc.], the mystic potencies headed by Ajā [***] and the twenty-four elements of creation headed by the complete of them [the *mahat-tattva*] were standing around Them [in a personal appearance]. (53) They were worshiped by the time factor [*kāla*], the individual nature [*svabhāva*], the reform by purification [*samskāra*], desire [*kāma*], fruitive action [karma], the modes [*guṇa*] and other powers the glory of whose appearances was defeated by His greatness [see also B.G. 13: 22]. (54) They were embodiments of the complete one essence full of knowledge, bliss, truth and eternity. In Their glory They were of a greatness beyond the reach of even the seers of philosophy [see also 1.2: 12 and *4]. (55) The selfborn Brahmā thus saw Them all instantly as expansions of the Supreme Absolute Truth [*para-brahman*] by whose effulgence this entire creation, animate or inanimate, is manifested. (56) By Their radiance being caught in bliss and shaken in all his eleven senses, the selfborn one thereupon fell silent, just like the doll of a child [is nullified] by the presence of a locally worshiped deity.

(57) **The One Never Born** [Kṛṣṇa] understood that the lord of Irā [Brahmā's consort Sarasvatī] thus was mystified. Because by [the presence of] Him who is known by the Vedas [as the Supreme Brahman] everything else is nullified, because that self-manifested [multiple] blissfulness above the material energy superseded Brahmā's glory and he therefore could not fathom what he was dealing with, the Lord all at once tore away the veil of His *yogamāyā* [see also 7.7: 23]. (58) Then, with his external consciousness revived, he like a dead man with difficulty stood up and opened his eyes to behold this [universe] including himself. (59) That moment looking in all directions he saw Vṛṇḍāvana situated in front of him with its many trees, a place sustaining and pleasing its inhabitants during all seasons. (60) Man and beast who are inimical by nature, live together like friends in that residence of the Invincible One from which all anger, thirst and all of that has fled away. (61) There the one residing in the beyond [Brahmā], saw Him, the Absolute Truth Without a Second, the Supreme Unlimited One of Unfathomable Knowledge who had assumed the role of a child in a cowherd family. He saw Him the way

He was before: all alone and searching everywhere for His calves and boys with a morsel of food in His hand [*5]. (62) When he saw that, he quickly came down from his carrier [the swan] and fell with his body flat to the ground like a golden rod. Therewith he with the tips of his four crowns touched His feet and bowing down performed a bathing ceremony with the pure water of his tears of joy. (63) Over and over thinking about what he previously had seen, he rose and fell for a long time again and again at the feet of Kṛṣṇa, the greatness present there. (64) Gradually getting up again he, looking up at Mukunda, wiped his eyes and with his head bent over, a trembling body and a faltering voice extolled Him humbly with folded hands and a concentrated mind.'

*: Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: 'Anyone materially born is subject to bewilderment. This pastime is therefore called *brahma-vimohana-līlā*, the pastime of bewildering Brahmā. *Mohitam nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam* (B.G. 7: 13). Materially born persons cannot fully understand Kṛṣṇa. Even the demigods cannot understand Him (*muhyanti yat sūrayah*). *Tene brahmā hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye* (S.B. 1.1: 1). Everyone, from Brahmā down to the small insect, must take lessons from Kṛṣṇa.'

** : Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: 'We should be careful to note that although the supreme source is one, the emanations from this source should be separately regarded as inferior and superior [meaning unconscious and conscious - ed.]. The difference between the Māyāvāda and Vaiṣṇava philosophies is that the Vaiṣṇava philosophy recognizes this fact. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy, therefore, is called *acintya-bhedābheda* - simultaneous oneness and difference.' [see also the dual position taken by Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā 7: 3-6].

***: Ajah means unborn but Ajā, the she-goat, is a nickname of His deluding power by Māyā-devī or Durgā. According to Prabhupāda [the *paramparā*] namely the word *ajā* means *māyā*, or mystic power: everything mysterious is in full existence in Viṣṇu. Ajā Taulvali is, according the Cologne lexicon, the name of a Muni who lived on the milk of a she-goat [an *ajā*]. The term *aja* [the he-goat] itself refers to the leader of the flock, the driver, mover, instigator, and is used for indicating Indra, Rudra, one of the Maruts, Agni, the sun, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

*4: Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: 'Yet although Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen through the Upaniṣads, in some places it is said that Kṛṣṇa can in fact be known in this way. *Aupaniṣadam Puruṣam*: "He is known by the Upaniṣads." This means that when one is purified by Vedic knowledge, one

is then allowed to enter into devotional understanding (*mad-bhaktim labhate parām* [B.G. 18: 54]).'

*5: Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: 'A similar incident occurred when Brahmā went to see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā. When Kṛṣṇa's doorman informed Lord Kṛṣṇa that Lord Brahmā had arrived, Kṛṣṇa responded, "Which Brahmā? Ask him which Brahmā." The doorman relayed this question, and Brahmā was astonished. "Is there another Brahmā besides me?" he thought. When the doorman informed Lord Kṛṣṇa, "It is four-headed Brahmā," Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "Oh, four-headed. Call others. Show him".'

Chapter 14

Brahmā's Prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa

(1) Śrī Brahmā said: 'My praise for You, oh Son of the Cowherd King, oh worshipable Lord, whose beauty is characterized by a resplendent face, soft feet, a body as dark as a raincloud, clothes as bright as lightening, *guñjā* [seed] ornaments [on Your ears], peacock feathers, a garland of forest flowers, a morsel of food [see 10.13: 14], a rod, a bugle and a flute. (2) Oh Godhead so full of mercy for me, even with this body of Yours before me, that to the desire of Your devotees has manifested but at the other hand is not a material product at all, I, Brahmā, with my inward mind cannot directly fathom Your greatness, not to mention the happiness You experience within Yourself. (3) Even though You are Invincible in the three worlds, You surrender to the will of those persons who, in maintaining their material positions, regularly exercise their body, words and mind and [are prepared to] listen to the stories about You the way they are described by the devotees - by those truthful souls who, living simply, offer their obeisances and no longer try to be of any intellectual achievement [apart from You]. (4) The so highly beneficial path of bhakti, oh Almighty Lord, is rejected by those who struggle exclusively for the achievement of knowledge ['enlightenment']. Their efforts though mean nothing but trouble to them, just as empty husks are nothing but a hindrance to those who are threshing. (5) A long time ago, oh Almighty One, there was in this world many a yoga adept who, dedicating all his actions to You, acquired insight by doing his duty. It is indeed so that, by performing devotional service, someone with the presentation [the chanting and reading] of Your stories easily can achieve Your Supreme Destination, oh Infallible One [see also 7.5: 23-24]! (6) Nevertheless, oh Completeness of Existence, only he is able to understand the potency of You as being without material qualities [*nirguṇa*], who is of a pure engagement with a mind and senses that are free from agitations. A person is truly free from attachments to this or that form only when he follows Your love without another instruction for himself, and not otherwise. (7) Great scientists in the long run might succeed in counting all the particles of the earth, the sky, the snow and the light of the stars. But who can count all the qualities of You, the Self of All Qualities [*gunātma*], who descended for the benefit of all living beings [compare 8.5: 6]? (8) Someone who earnestly hopes for Your compassion, endures the

consequences of his own actions and offers You his obeisances with his heart, words and body, will lead a life directed at the position of liberation, because he then will be the heir of Your service [see also 1.5: 17, 1.19: 32, 2.1: 12, 3.33: 6, 4.20: 11, 4.29: 38 etc.]. (9) Just see, oh Lord, how I, just to test Your potency, by expanding my illusory power, have behaved myself in an uncivilized manner towards even You, the Deluder of All Deluders, the Unlimited, Original Supersoul. What is my will compared to Yours? But a spark relative to a fire! (10) Therefore, oh Infallible One, I offer You my excuses, I, the passion of the world, who as the unborn one thought himself to be independent from You. My eyes were blinded by the darkness of ignorance. Does someone like me, who accepts You as his master, not deserve Your mercy? (11) What am I with my material nature, with those seven *vitasti* [\pm 63 inches] of this body, with this totality of matter, false ego, ether, air, fire, water and earth that surrounds me like a pot? What am I compared to the unlimited universes that like atomic dust move away from the openings and pores of Your body, Your greatness [see also 1.3: 3 and 3: 11]? (12) Oh Lord from the Beyond, does the mother count it as an offense when a child kicks its legs within the womb? What, being labeled with designations as 'real' or 'not real', would there actually be outside of Your abdomen? (13) Have I, the 'selfborn' Brahmā [*aja* *5], not originated from You? Are the words untrue that state that when the three worlds ended and You, Nārāyaṇa, laid down in the waters of devastation, I have appeared on the lotus of the stem that grew from Your abdomen [see 3: 8]? (14) Are You not Nārāyaṇa, the Soul of all living beings? You are the Teacher Within the Heart, the Witness of All Worlds, the Nāra-ayaṇa: the lead of man and the source from which the waters originated. That is what You truly are and not so much your deluding material energy [*māyā*] *. (15) If that real transcendental body of Yours, which shelters the entire universe, is situated upon the water, why then did I not see it, oh Supreme Lord [when I was looking for You]? And why did You, when I could not see you clearly in the heart, on the other hand then suddenly become visible again [see 3.8: 22]? (16) In this incarnation, oh Dispeller of Māyā, You [by opening Your mouth] have demonstrated to Your mother the illusory nature of this externally visible manifested universe, that is also in its entirety present inside of You [see 10.7: 35-36 & 10.8: 37-39]. (17) The way all of this, including Yourself, is visible within You, it is also fully present outside. This is only possible because of Your inconceivable potency! (18) Did You not just today show me how this all, Your lawfulness, is based upon Your bewildering potency? First You were there all alone and then You became all of Vraja's boys and calves. Next You even became a same number of four-handed forms who were served by all [the powers]

including me and then You became an equal number of universes [10.13: 53]. Then You again became the One Infinite Absolute Truth without a second... (19) For those who, unaware of Your position, understand You the material way, You, by expanding Your *māyā*, appear as Me for the matters of creation, as Yourself for the purpose of maintenance and as the Three-eyed One [Lord Śiva] in the end. (20) You, who are [factually] unborn, oh Lord, take Your birth among the enlightened souls and the seers, as also as among the human beings, the animals and the aquatics, oh Master and Creator, to subdue the false pride of the non-devotees and to be of mercy for the devotees [see also B.G. 4: 8]. (21) Who, oh Greatest Supreme Lord, oh Supersoul and Master of Yoga, knows where and how, to what degree or when in the three worlds You expand the play of Your spiritual energy [*yoga-māyā*], Your pastimes? (22) For that reason this complete whole, which is untrue [*asat*, temporary] in its form, is just like a dream wherein one's awareness is covered by all kinds of distress. While one inside of You finds Your unlimited forms of consciousness, eternity and happiness [*sat*, permanent, see also B.G. 2: 16 and **], originated from the material energy that what seems to be true [outside]. (23) You are the One Soul, the Original Personality, the Oldest One, the Truth, the Light from Within without a beginning and an end, the eternally unchangeable, unimpeded happiness free from impurities, the Complete Whole Without a Second that is everlasting and defies all description. (24) They who from the sunlike spiritual master received the perfect vision of the confidential philosophy, can by that description see You as the very Soul, the Supersoul of all souls. It are they who easily cross over the ocean of an untrue worldly existence. (25) For those who do not understand You as being the Supreme Soul, for that reason alone a totally material life unfolds that dissolves again with a spiritual vision, just as with a rope [in illusion the image of] a snake may appear and disappear again. (26) Designations of being bound to matter or being liberated, rise from ignorance. When one realizes that the two have no separate existence, one is situated in the true knowledge and unhindered consciousness [as-it-is, free from *māyā*] of the supreme transcendental self. [They at that time lose their meaning,] just as day and night are matters doubtful to the sun itself. (27) Oh, how ignorant the foolishness is of persons who think of You, the Original Soul, as being something else, and consider the Self as something to be looked for [as someone present] in the outside world [see B.G. 18: 16]! (28) The realized devotees [the sages], who reject everything that is not 'that' [see *neti neti* 7.7: 23], chase You within themselves, oh Unlimited One. How can such a person of discrimination, appreciate the true nature of the 'rope' he sees before him, without rejecting the

[therewith associated] illusion of seeing a 'snake' [see also 10.6: 8, and B.G. 18: 37]? (29) It is therefore so, my Lord, that someone who is blessed with but a trace of Your lotus feet, can understand the truth of the glory of Your Supreme Personality, while that is not possible for someone else, however long he might speculate. (30) May it therefore be so, oh Lord, that in this birth, a next one or even another type of birth, there will be that greatest fortune in which I, by becoming one of Your devotees, am fully of service at the lotus buds of Your feet? (31) How fortunate are the cows and the *gopīs* of Vraja from whom You, to Your full satisfaction in the form of the calves and boys, have been drinking the nectarine breast milk. Oh Almighty Lord, that satisfaction of You could as yet by no Vedic sacrifice be equaled! (32) What a happiness, oh what a fortune it is for Nanda, the *gopas* and the other inhabitants of Vraja, to have You as their friend, You the Complete, Absolute and Eternal Truth of Transcendental Happiness. (33) However great the good fortune and glory of these people might be, oh Infallible One, we, the eleven [presiding deities of the senses ***], Lord Śiva and the other leading demigods, are very happy to drink, again and again, from the cups of the senses of these devotees, the nectarean beverage of Your sweet lotus feet. (34) Whatever birth I would take here in this forest [even as this or that animal or plant], would bring me the greatest happiness, just because I then would bathe in the dust of the feet of any of them [out here], whose life is completely devoted to the Supreme Lord Mukunda the dust of whose feet even today is sought in the Vedic mantras [the Śrutis]. (35) What but Yourself, the source of all benedictions, oh Godhead, would You grant as a reward to these members of the cowherd community? All of their homes, wealth, friends, dear ones, bodies, children, life-air and minds are dedicated to You. When our mind thinks of anything else it falls in illusion. For did You not even arrange it indubitably so that Pūtanā - who dressed up as a devotee - and also her family members [Bakā and Agha] could reach You, oh divine personality? (36) As long as the people are not Yours, oh Kṛṣṇa, their attachments and such are all thieves, their home is a prison and their infatuation is as a pair of shackles to their feet. (37) Despite of being completely transcendental You on this earth imitate [and deride] the material ways, oh Master, just to increase the amount of happiness of the people of surrender. (38) Let the people [who claim to know] of Your unlimited potency think what they like - why all these words? That is not my way, oh Master. Your magnificence is not within the range of my mind, body and words [see B.G. 2: 42-44]! (39) Permit me to leave, oh Kṛṣṇa. You know everything, You see all, You alone are the master of all universes, I put this universe at Your disposal. (40) Śrī Kṛṣṇa, oh bestower of pleasure of the lotus of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, You are the

cause of the development of the seas of demigods, brahmins and animals of this earth. When there are unsound doctrines You dispel the darkness. You are the opponent of the ogres on earth. For as long as the sun shines, till the end of time, I, oh worshipable Supreme Lord, will offer You my obeisances.'

(41) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus having extolled the Wealth of the World, the creator of the universe returned to his abode, after having circumambulated Him three times and having bowed down to His feet. (42) The Supreme Lord granted the one who had originated from Him permission to leave and then brought the calves back to the riverbank where they had been. There, just as it was before, all His friends were present. (43) Although one year had passed and they, without the Lord of their lives, had been covered by Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, it was to the conception of the boys but half a moment ago, oh King. (44) What do persons whose minds are under the spell of *māyā* not forget out here? Because of illusion the entire world is perpetually bewildered and forgetful about itself [its soul, its original identity]. (45) The friends said to Kṛṣṇa: 'You have returned quickly, we have not eaten even a single bite more, please come here and take Your meal as should.' (46) Smiling at them, the Lord of the Senses thereupon took His meal with the cowherd boys whom He, when they returned from the forest to Vraja, showed the skin of the python Aghāsura [see 10.12]. (47) He whose body was decorated with a peacock feather, with flowers and colors from the forest, loudly played the bamboo flute. He called for the calves while the horns sounded and the boys sang about His purifying glories. Thus with His comrades entering the pasture grounds [near Vṛṇḍāvana] He was a pleasure to the eyes of the *gopīs*. (48) In Vraja the boys sang: 'Today we have been saved by the son of Yaśodā and Nanda, who killed a great serpent!'

(49) The king said: 'Please, oh brahmin, explain how there could be such an unprecedented amount of love for the child of someone else, that Kṛṣṇa was, a love that even exceeded the love [the *gopas* and *gopīs* had] for their own offspring?'

(50) Śrī Śuka said: 'One's own self is most dear to every living being, oh ruler of man. All the love for others, children, wealth and so on is based on it. (51) Oh best of kings, the love of embodied beings for their own individual self is therefore not equal to the love they have for that what belongs to them, like sons, wealth, homes and so forth. (52) Persons who speak of the body as being their self [see also *ahankāra*], oh best of kings, therefore [also] hold their body as most

dear and certainly do not attach an equal value to that what [or the other person] they are associated with [see also B.G. 2: 71]. (53) If one considers the body as something that one possesses [though], it consequently will not be as dear as the soul [the true self]. After all, when it grows old the desire to stay alive remains equally strong. (54) [The self of] one's own soul is therefore most dear to all embodied beings. It constitutes in fact the purpose of existence of all the moving and not moving living entities in the universe. (55) In this you should know Kṛṣṇa as the Soul of all souls [or the Supersoul]. It is He [that Self] who, by His own potency appearing as a human being, is present on this planet for the benefit of the entire universe. (56) They who in this world know Kṛṣṇa as He really is, understand that the moving and not moving living entities [including inorganic matter] are two different manifestations of the Supreme Lord. He is the Complete Whole, the essence outside of which nothing exists out here [compare B.G. 7: 26]. (57) He is the original cause of all in existence, and even the cause of that unmanifest nature [of the unmanifested matter of *pradhāna*]. Is there anything that can exist apart from Krishna, the Supreme Lord? (58) His lotus feet, that are like a boat, the feet that for the entire universe [even for the greatest gods] are the refuge of virtue and merit of Him who is so famous as the enemy of Mura [the demon], constitute for those who seek shelter with them the Supreme Abode. In this place [named Vaikunṭha] none of the material miseries are found. With each step taken with them the ocean of material existence is [not more than the water in] a calf's hoof-print [compare 10.1: 5-7 and 10.2: 30].

(59) **E**verything you asked about what the Lord did at His fifth year, and was declared at His sixth, I have now described to you. (60) The person who hears or sings about these pastimes of Lord Murāri annihilating Agha, how He with His friends was taking lunch in an open spot in the forest and about the other-worldly [multiple Viṣṇu] form that He assumed with the selfborn one who so elaborately offers his prayers, will achieve all the [spiritual] ends he desired.' (61) *4

*: Based upon this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, chapter two, text 30 states that Kṛṣṇa is considered the real source of all other expansions of the Viṣṇu forms and other demigods originating from them: 'Lord Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa, the father of Brahmā, because Lord Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, after placing Himself on the Garbha Ocean, created Brahmā from His own body. Mahā-Viṣṇu in the Causal Ocean and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul in everyone's heart, are also transcendental expansions of the Supreme Truth.'

** : In his commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, Śrīla Madhvācārya quotes the following statement from the Vedic *śruti*-mantras: '*satyaṁ hy evedaṁ viśvam asṛjata*'. "This universe, created by the Lord, is real."

*** : The 'eleven' pertains to the demigods ruling over the senses of action and perception plus the mind: the Digdevatās rule audition, the Vayus rule the tactile sense, Sūrya rules sight, Varuṇa rules taste, the Aśvinī-kumāras rule the olfactory sense, Agni rules speech, Indra rules the hands, Upendra rules the feet, Mitra rules the defecation, Prajāpati rules the organ of generation and Candra rules the mind. Śiva is the god presiding over *ahankāra*, false ego.

*4 : There is a last verse to this chapter identical to the last one of chapter eleven: verse 10.11: 59.

'The two boys thus passed their childhood in the cow-community with different children's games like playing hide and seek, building dams and jumping around like they were monkeys.'

[translated by the pupils of Prabhupāda as]: *'In this way the boys spent their childhood in the land of Vṛndāvana playing hide-and-go-seek, building play bridges, jumping about like monkeys and engaging in many other such games.'*

This verse present in the original Sanskrit probably does not belong here. It must have accidentally been transferred from chapter 11 in the process of manual copying through the ages.

*5 : Brahmā is in this chapter just like Kṛṣṇa called the unborn one or *aja*; not to get confused it is here translated with 'selfborn', *svāyam-bhu*, another name for Brahmā as the one directly born from Nārāyaṇa, while Kṛṣṇa, contrary to what it seems in His descending in a material form, factually is the never born primeval source [see also footnote *** to the previous chapter].

Chapter 15

The Killing of Dhenuka, the Ass Demon and Poison in the River

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When They [Rāma and Kṛṣṇa] in Vraja attained the age of boyhood [six to ten years old], the two who rendered Vṛṇḍāvana most pleasurable with Their footprints, were old enough to be cowherds. Together with Their friends They thereupon were commissioned to tend the cows [*]. (2) Mādhava ['the Sweet Lord'], eager to play, surrounded by the *gopas* who were chanting His fame, sounding His flute and keeping the animals together with Balarāma in front of Him, entered the forest that had many flowers and a lot of nourishment for the cows. (3) The most enchanting forest was filled with the sounds of bees, animals and birds. There was a lake with water as clear as the minds of the great [sages], and it had a fragrance, originating from hundred-petalled lotuses, that was carried by the wind. When the Supreme Lord saw this He decided to play there. (4) The moment the Original Personality saw the beauty everywhere of the stately trees that with the tips of their branches touched His feet with their heavy load of fruits, flowers and reddish buds, He joyfully, almost laughing, spoke to His elder brother. (5) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh Best of the Gods, these trees at Your lotus feet that are worshiped by the demigods, with their heads bowing down are presenting offerings of flowers and fruits to put an end to the ignorance because of which they were born in their form. (6) Oh Original Personality, these bees, following You, as the most intimate great sages among Your devotees, do - despite Your hiding in the forest - not abandon You as their personal deity, oh Sinless One, while singing their worship of You, the place of pilgrimage for all the worlds! (7) These peacocks, oh Worshipable One, are dancing with joy. These doe are pleasing You with their glances as if they were the *gopīs*, and the cuckoos do Vedic prayers. They, as residents of the forest being blessed with such a saintly nature, are all fortunate to see You now arriving at their place. (8) Blessed today are this earth, her grasses and bushes, that receive the touch of Your feet. Blessed are the trees and creepers struck by Your fingernails. The rivers, mountains, birds and animals are blessed with the mercy of Your glances, and blessed are the *gopīs* in Your arms that are constantly craved by the Goddess of Fortune.'

(9) Śrī Śuka said: 'Lord Kṛṣṇa this way being satisfied by all of Vṛṇḍāvana's beauty, took delight in pasturing together with His companions the animals on the river banks at the foot of the mountain [Govardhana]. (10-12) Sometimes, when His companions together with Balarāma on their way sang about His glories, He sang along with the humming bees that were blind under His influence. He sometimes imitated the chattering broken speech of the parrots, and then cuckooed with the charming cuckooing of the cuckoos. Sometimes He cooed along with the swans, and sometimes He danced hilariously in front of a peacock. With a voice [rumbling] like the clouds He sometimes affectionately called the animals, which had wandered off, by their names, and spoke endearingly with the cows and their protectors. (13) He cried out in imitation of the cakora birds, the curlews, the ruddy geese, the skylarks and the peacocks, and then again acted with the smaller creatures as if [also] He was afraid of the tigers and lions. (14) Sometimes, when His elder brother being tired of playing used the lap of a *gopa* for a pillow, He would personally relieve Him by massaging His feet and performing other services. (15) When the cowherd boys so now and then danced, sang, moved about and wrestled, They stood hand in hand laughing and praised them. (16) At times, when He was tired of the wrestling, He sought His refuge at the foot of a tree to lie on a bed of twigs and leaves, and use the lap of a *gopa* for a pillow. (17) Some of them, who were all great souls, massaged His feet while others, free from all sin, fanned Him nicely with fans. (18) Others befitting the occasion, oh great King, would sing [songs] reflecting the spirit of the Great Soul, while their hearts slowly melted of love. (19) He in His activities pretending to be a cowherd, concealed His personal opulence with the help of His mystic potency. He whose tender feet are served by the Goddess of Fortune, enjoyed like a villager with the villagers, even though He with His heroic deeds had proven Himself to be the Master and Controller.

(20) **T**he *gopa* Śrīdāmā, a friend of Rāma and Keśava, together with others like Subala and Stokakṛṣṇa [one day] lovingly said the following: (21) 'Rāma, oh Rāma, oh Mighty-armed One, oh Kṛṣṇa, Destroyer of the Wicked Ones, not far away from here there is a very great forest full of palm trees [called Tālavana]. (22) Many fruits there have fallen from the trees, but they are checked by Dhenuka, the evil one. (23) Oh Rāma, oh Kṛṣṇa, he is a very powerful demon who has assumed the form of an ass, and he is surrounded by other companions that are as strong as he is. (24) He has killed human beings and eaten them, everyone is afraid to go there, oh Killer of the Enemies. All

kinds of animals and flocks of birds have abandoned the place. (25) There are fragrant fruits we have never tasted. The aroma they spread is noticed everywhere. (26) Please, oh Kṛṣṇa, give them to us whose hearts are craving because of the fragrance. The desire is so strong, oh Rāma, let us go there, if You consider it a good idea.'

(27) **H**aving heard these words from Their friends, the two masters laughed and, wishing to please Their comrades, went to the Tālavana forest surrounded by the *gopas* [compare 3.28: 31-33]. (28) Balarāma having arrived there, employed His great strength and shook like a mad elephant with His two arms the trees to all sides, so that the fruits fell down. (29) When he heard the fruits falling the donkey demon ran hither with a heavy gallop that made the earth and the trees tremble. (30) Meeting Him, the powerful demon struck Balarāma's chest quickly with his two hind legs and then ran about producing an ugly ass bray. (31) The furious, screaming beast approached Him again and angrily hurled with his back turned forward, his two legs at Balarāma, oh King. (32) [But] He seized him by the hooves, whirled him around with one hand and threw him, [being dashed against a palmyra] with his life spun out of him, in the top of a palm tree. (33) The big palm tree shook heavily with its large crown because of that blow and next broke down, along with another one that started to shake next to it. That tree in its turn took down another one, and so it went further. (34) Balarāma, with His game of donkey corpse throwing, made all the palm trees [of the forest] shake and hit each other as if they were blown about by a hurricane. (35) This feat of war of the Fortunate One is not that surprising at all, for He is the Unlimited One Controller of the Universe, in whom the length and width of the world[s] are woven like the threads of [the warp and woof] of a piece of cloth. (36) Then, enraged about the death of their comrade, all the asses that were Dhenuka's close friends, attacked Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. (37) But attacking Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, oh King, one after the other was easily seized by the hind legs and thrown in the stately palms. (38) The earth, being covered with heaps of fruits, palm treetops and lifeless Daitya bodies, offered a view as radiating as the sky decorated with clouds. (39) When the demigods and other transcendentalists heard about that immense triumph of the Two, they showered a rain of flowers, played music and offered prayers. (40) With Dhenuka being killed the fruits of the palm trees could be eaten by the people who were no longer afraid and the animals could graze again in the forest.

(41) **K**ṛṣṇa, the Lord with the lotus petal eyes about whom it is so auspicious to hear and chant, returned with His elder brother to Vraja,

glorified by the *gopas* who followed Them. (42) All the *gopīs*, with eyes hungry to see Him came to meet Him, who still had the dust in His hair that was thrown up by the cows, He, with His peacock feather, forest flowers, charming eyes and beautiful smile, who played His flute and whose glories were sung by the *gopas*. (43) Entering the cowherd village He heartily welcomed the ladies of Vraja who in their veneration being bashful, humble and laughing, like bees searching for honey, with sidelong glances were drinking in the face of Mukunda, He who constituted their liberation. And therewith they gave up the grief they had suffered during the day from having been separated from Him. (44) Mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, most lovingly, catered to the desires of their two sons by presenting Them at the right time the finest offerings. (45) The fatigue of their journey vanished with a bath and a massage and such, after which They were dressed with a charming cloth around Their waist and were decorated with divine garlands and fragrances. (46) With the delicious preparations offered to Them They ate Their fill, and thus being pampered by Their mothers, They fell happily asleep in Their fine beds in Vraja.

(47) **O**h King, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord who thus operated in Vṛṇḍāvana, went one day, without Balarāma and in the company of His friends, to the Kālindī [the Yamunā, see also **]. (48) The cows, who together with the *gopas* suffered from the glaring summer sun, tormented by thirst drank from the water of the river, but it was polluted, it was spoiled by poison. (49-50) Because they got in touch with that poisoned water they lost their consciousness and all fell lifeless down at the waterside, oh best of the Kurus. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Master of all Masters of Yoga, who saw them in that state, thereupon brought them back to life by casting His glance - which is as a shower of nectar - on them who had accepted Him as their master. (51) Regaining their senses, they got up at the waterside and all stood most surprised looking at each other. (52) They came to the conclusion that they, after having drunk the poison and had fallen dead, oh King, by the grace of Govinda's merciful glance had risen again.'

*: It is stated in the Kārttika-māhātmya section of the Padma Purāṇa:

*śuklāṣṭamī kārttike tu
smṛtā gopāṣṭamī budhaiḥ
tad-dinād vāsudevo 'bhūd
gopaḥ pūrvam tu vatsapaḥ*

"The eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kārttika is known by authorities as Gopāṣṭhamī. From that day, Lord Vāsudeva served as a cowherd, whereas previously He had tended the calves."

** : The Kalinda is the name of the mountain from which the river Yamunā rises.

Chapter 16

Kṛṣṇa Chastises the Serpent Kāliya

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Black Lord [Kṛṣṇa], the Almighty One, seeing the black waters contaminated by the black snake, wanted to purge the river of the serpent living there.'

(2) The king said: 'How did the Supreme Lord subdue the serpent in that dangerous water and how could it reside there for so many ages, oh learned one? Please explain. (3) Oh brahmin, who can get enough of sharing the nectar of the magnanimous pastimes of Him, the Supreme Unlimited Lord, who as a cowherd boy acted to His own bidding?'

(4) Śrī Śuka said: 'In the Kāḷindī there was a certain pool where Kāliya [as the serpent was called] resided and its water boiled because of the fire of his poison. Birds flying over it would fall [dead] into its waters. (5) All plant and animal life on the shore died because it came into contact with the poisonous vapor that by the wind was carried from the waves. (6) Kṛṣṇa had descended to subdue the wicked. Seeing how severely the river was contaminated by the terribly effective, powerful poison, He climbed in a Kadamba tree, slapped His arms, tightened His belt and jumped into the poisoned water. (7) The water of the serpent's lake in turmoil from the poison that the snake was vomiting, because of the force of the fall of the Essential Person, started to overflow on all sides so that its fearsome waves washed over the shore for a hundred bow lengths. What an immeasurable strength that was! (8) My best one, when the snake heard the sound that Kṛṣṇa produced while He, playing like a big elephant, with His mighty arms was engaged in whirling the waters around, he rushed forward, unable to tolerate the violation of his territory. (9) And while He, so attractive in His yellow garments and as delicate as a glowing white cloud, with the Śrīvatsa, His smiling beautiful face and with His feet, which resembled the inside of a lotus, thus fearlessly was playing, He was angrily bitten in the chest by him and enveloped in his coils. (10) Seeing Him in the grip of the snake's coils being immobilized, His dear friends, the tenders of the animals, were greatly disturbed. With their intelligence bewildered, in pain and full of remorse and fear, they fell to the ground, for they had dedicated everything, themselves, their relations, their wealth, their wives and

objects of desire to Kṛṣṇa. (11) The cows, the bulls and the she-calves, with their eyes fixed on Kṛṣṇa, cried out loudly in great distress while they fearfully lamented in shock.

(12) Thereupon most fearsome, ominous disturbances arose in Vraja. Three kinds of signs, to be observed in the sky, upon the earth and in the living beings, heralded imminent danger. (13-15) The cowherds, headed by Nanda, who saw these signs, were beset with fear. They knew that Kṛṣṇa herding the cows had left without Balarāma. Not knowing His prowess, they were overwhelmed by pain, grief and fear. Because of those bad omens they thought that something bad had happened and could only think of Him, who was their very life breath. The children, the elderly and the ladies, my best one, all felt as wretched as a cow missing her calf, and anxiously set out to look for Kṛṣṇa. (16) Balarāma, the Sweet Supreme Lord, seeing them that distressed, gently smiled and did not speak a word, knowing well the power of His younger brother. (17) Searching for their dear most Kṛṣṇa, they followed the trail marked by the footprints of the Lord. They led to the bank of the Yamunā. (18) Quickly they followed the marks of the lotus, the barleycorn, the elephant goad, the thunderbolt and the flag, of the Master of the cowherd community, my best one, which they here and there, dispersed between other footprints, saw on the cow path. (19) When they at a distance saw Kṛṣṇa motionless within the lake enveloped by the coils of the snake body, and the cowherd boys lying unconscious in the flooded water with all the animals crying around them, they in their distress were delivered to the greatest despair. (20) Now that their sweetheart was seized by the serpent, the *gopīs* who in their hearts were so attached to Him, the Supreme, Unlimited Personality, while remembering His loving smiles, glances and words, were tormented by the greatest agony. Being deprived of their darling, they experienced the three worlds as being completely empty [see also Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 7]. (21) Holding back Kṛṣṇa's mother, they, with their eyes fixed upon her son, equally pained shed a flow of tears. Standing there like corpses they stared at Krishna's face, and one by one recounted the stories about the Darling of Vraja. (22) Nanda and his men seeing Kṛṣṇa, their life and soul, were by the All-powerful Lord Balarāma, who knew well the might of Kṛṣṇa, withheld to enter the lake. (23) When He, the only one they had, for some time was caught in that position and saw how His cowherd folk on His behalf was standing there in utter despair together with the women and children, He put an end to His imitation of the mortal way [the illusion of His mortality] and rose up from the coils of the serpent. (24) By expanding His body the serpent was forced to let Him go because of the pain. Kāliya thereupon furiously

raised his hoods high, breathed heavily through his nostrils that were like two vessels of boiling poison, and stared the Lord in the face with eyes like firebrands. (25) Kāliya, moving his double-pointed tongue to and fro between his two lips and with his terrible look full of poisonous fire eagerly spying for an opportunity to strike, was by Him playfully approached from all sides by moving around him like He was the king of the birds [Garuḍa]. (26) Thus turning around him He exhausted him and forced him to bend down his highly raised shoulders. Kṛṣṇa thereupon climbed on top of the broad heads and then, as the Original One, the First Spiritual Master of All the Arts, started to dance. His lotus feet in touch [with the snake] therewith turned red from [the light of] the many jewels on the heads. (27) That very moment His servants arrived together with their wives: the heavenly singers and perfected souls, the sages and the venerable souls. Taking notice of Him being engaged in His dancing, they all were greatly pleased [and expressed their joy] with playing two-sided clay drums, smaller drums and large drums, and with songs, flowers and other forms of praise. (28) Whichever of Kāliya's one hundred-and-one heads would not bow down my best one, were immediately trampled down by Kṛṣṇa. The Lord, who with His kicking feet punishes the evil ones, made the serpent, that still moved but the life of which ran at its end, spit horrible [poisonous] blood from its mouth and nostrils, while it experienced the greatest anguish. (29) Poison oozed from his eyes, and whichever vomiting head that he breathing heavily in his anger would rise, Kṛṣṇa, while dancing, with His foot forced down into submission. Every time that happened, He with flowers was worshiped for being the Original Person. (30) Profusely vomiting blood, with his numerous hoods broken and with his body defeated by His amazing dancing, oh ruler of man, Kāliya remembered the oldest person, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual master of all moving and nonmoving entities. Within his mind he turned to Him for shelter. (31) Seeing that the serpent got tired of the heavy weight of the heels of Lord Kṛṣṇa, in whose abdomen the entire universe is found, and that his umbrella-like hoods were shattered by His trampling, his wives in distress approached the Original Lord with their clothing, ornaments and locks of hair in disarray. (32) Innerly totally upset approaching for shelter, they laid their bodies and children on the ground before Him, the Lord and Refuge of All Creatures. They bowed down, saintly joined their hands and solicited the liberation of their sinful husband.

(33) **T**he wives of the serpent said: 'The punishment for this person who acted against the rules is deserved. With an equal vision towards sons and foes, You descended in this world to subdue the

wicked ones and punish for the sake of a positive result. (34) This punishment of falsehood administered by You, is actually a form of mercy, because by dispelling the contamination, as You did with his appearance as a serpent, You, even being angry, are of grace in accepting the embodied souls. (35) Of what kind of properly performed [voluntary] penance has he been in his former lives, with which he, free from pride and thinking of others, religiously or otherwise being of compassion with everybody, has satisfied You, the Good Self of all living beings? (36) We do not know what [of his actions] led to this result, oh Lord. To be qualified to touch the dust of Your lotus feet, is something for which the Goddess of Fortune, the best of all women, has performed austerities, has given up all desires by keeping to her vow for a long time. (37) They who attained the dust of Your lotus feet, neither desire heaven, nor rulership over all, neither want to be the topmost creator, nor the master of the world, and neither wish the perfections of yoga, nor freedom from rebirth [see also Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 4]. (38) Even though he, the king of the serpents, being born in the mode of ignorance, oh Lord, was under the sway of anger, he has achieved that what is so difficult for others to achieve. For those who, filled with desires, are covered by a physical body and wander through the cycles of material existence [through different lives], all opulence will manifest itself before their eyes because of that [dust]. (39) We offer You, the Supreme Lord, the Original Person and the Greater Soul, You, the Shelter of All that Exists, the Supreme Primordial Cause and the Supreme One in the Beyond, our obeisances. (40) For You, the Ocean of Spiritual Knowledge and Wisdom, for You, the Absolute Truth of an unlimited potency, for You who are free from the modes and free from all changes of form, for You, the Prime Mover, there is our reverence. (41) We pray for You as the Time, for You as the Certainty with the Time and for You as the Witness of all Time measures. Our prayers are there for You in the Form of the Universe, for You as the One Supervising it All, for You as its Supreme Creator, and for You who are the Original Cause of the Universe. (42-43) Our obeisances for You who are the Soul and refuge for the intelligence, the spirit, the life breath and the senses, for You who constitute the subtle basis for the perception and the material elements, for You from whom [turned away] one falsely identifies with the three modes so that one's self-awareness is covered. We pray to You, the Unlimited One, the Transcendental One who are the center to the multitude, You who are the omniscient one and He who accepts the different doctrines [philosophies or *darśanas*], and constitutes the power of the expression of ideas and words. (44) Again and again we prove our respects for the foundation of all authoritative proof, for the author of the revealed scriptures, and for the source of the Vedic texts

that both restrict [*nivṛtti*] and incite [*pravṛtti*]. (45) We bow before Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma [Sañkarṣaṇa], the sons of Vasudeva, as also before Pradyumna and Aniruddha [Kṛṣṇa's son and grandson, see 4.24: 35-36]. Our obeisances to the Master of the Sātvatas [the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, Satvata]. (46) Our salutations are there for Him who manifests the various qualities, He who disguises Himself by the modes but who also because of the functioning of the modes can be acknowledged, He, who by His devotees is known as the [independent] witness of those basic qualities. (47) Oh Controller of the Senses, let there be our reverence for You who are so inscrutable in Your unmanifest state and so perfect in the state of all Your manifest forms, for You who acts so silently with the silent ones. (48) We worship Him, the Knower of the Higher and Lower Destinations, the Regulator of All Things, You who stand apart from the universe and [yet] are the universe itself, You who are the Overseer of That and the Root Cause of this all. (49) You are the Almighty Lord of the Creation, Maintenance and Destruction of this universe who, beginningless and without acting with the modes, with the potency of Time endeavors [to promote the balance] in relation to the modes. While impeccably playing Your game, You by Your glance awaken the distinctive dormant characteristics of each of these [modes]. (50) The souls of peace, the restless souls and those born in slowness are Your material embodiments [of the modes] in the three worlds. Wishing to maintain the dharma You [therewith being embodied Yourself] are present in this world in order to protect the saintly and the peace-loving souls dear to You. (51) The master for once should tolerate the offense that was committed by his own subject. You, oh Peace Personified, should forgive it this foolish one [our husband] who failed to understand You. (52) Oh Supreme Lord have mercy, the serpent is breathing his last. Since we women are pitied by the saints, our husband should be granted his life. (53) Please tell us, Your maidservants, what we should do. By the faithful execution of Your command one will surely be released from all fear.'

(54) Śrī Śuka said: 'He, the Supreme Lord, thus extensively praised by the wives of the stupefied snake, thereupon released him whose heads were defeated by His trampling feet. (55) Slowly he regained his senses and vital force. Breathing with difficulty and being miserable, Kāliya spoke submissively to Kṛṣṇa. (56) Kāliya said: 'We [snakes] so vicious and ignorant by birth, are of a constant anger. For normal living beings it is difficult to give up the propensities by which they hold on to that what is untrue [their physicality], oh Lord! (57) Oh Creator, oh Lord of the Time and the Seasons, You are the one who generated this universe filled with the appearances of the natural

modes that are endowed with different personal propensities in varieties of talents and physical capabilities, wombs and seeds, and different mentalities and forms. (58) And we present here in this world, oh Supreme Lord, who because of the serpent species are bound to anger, how can we in our bewilderment of our own accord get rid of Your insuperable *Māyā*? (59) Let there from Your good self, as the cause in this matter, as the Knower of this All, as the Master of this Universe, for us be the arrangement You think fit, whether it concerns Your mercy or Your punishment.'

(60) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, in the role of a human being thus hearing the words then said: 'You, oh serpent, must not stay here any longer. Go directly to the ocean with your folk, your children and women. May the wealth of the river be enjoyed by the human beings and the cows. (61) Any mortal being who remembers this command of Mine to you and recites it at the beginning and the end of the day, will not be afraid of you. (62) He who at the place of this pastime of Mine bathes and gratifies the gods and others with the water, will be freed from all sins, when he remembers Me and is of worship and fasts. (63) Afraid of Garuḍa you abandoned the island Ramaṇaka and took shelter of this pool, but now that you are marked by My feet he will not devour you.'

(64) The honorable sage said: 'Freed by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality whose actions are so wonderful, oh King, the serpent together with his wives worshiped Him with pleasure and reverence. (65-67) Worshiping and satisfying the Lord of the Universe with the finest clothing, strings of flowers and most valuable jewels, as also with ornaments, heavenly scents, ointments and with a wreath of lotuses, he was by Him who carries Garuḍa in His flag permitted to leave, contented as He was by the circumambulating and reverence accomplished by him and his wives, children and friends. Immediately after his departure to the island in the ocean, the nectarean water of the Yamunā became free from poison by the grace of the Supreme Lord who for His pastimes had assumed a human form.'

Chapter 17

The History of Kāliya and Kṛṣṇa Swallows a Forest Fire

(1) **T**he king said: 'Why did Kāliya give up Ramanāka, the abode of the serpents, and what caused the enmity of Garuḍa especially towards him?'

(2-3) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The snake people of sacrifice here [in Nāgālaya] were in the past urged to pay tribute to the serpents every month at the base of a tree, oh mighty-armed one. In order to secure their protection the serpents themselves every new moon each presented his portion to Garuḍa, the great power over them. (4) Kāliya, the son of Kadru, conceited under the influence of his venom and strength, in defiance of Garuḍa ate that offering himself. (5) Hearing about it, oh King, that mighty and beloved devotee of the Supreme Lord with great speed rushed forward to kill Kāliya. (6) Garuḍa, swiftly attacking, fell upon him who, armed with poison and full size raised with his many hoods, looked most fearsome with his tongues and terrible eyes. The snake then bit him with the help of his weapons, the fangs. (7) The carrier of Madhusūdana, the son of Tārṣya [see 6.6: 21-22] with his formidable prowess full of anger swiftly moving, warded off Kāliya, the son of Kadru, and struck him with his left wing that glowed like gold. (8) Beaten by Garuḍa's wing Kāliya utterly distraught entered a lake of the Kālindī where it was difficult for Garuḍa to go.

(9) **Saubhari Muni** [meditating under water] once had denied Garuḍa the right to desire any of its water creatures, his normal sustenance [see 9.6], but because he was hungry he resisted him and seized one. (10) Seeing the fish living there in a state of misery, most unhappy because the king of the fish had been killed [by Garuḍa], Saubhari, in order to set things right, out of compassion for the sake of their welfare said: (11) 'I swear, if Garuḍa enters this lake to eat fish, he will immediately lose his life!' (12) Kāliya was the only one who knew this, no other serpent, and therefore hiding in fear of Garuḍa he dwelled there, the very place from where he was expelled by Kṛṣṇa.

(13-14) **T**he moment the cowherds saw Lord Kṛṣṇa rising up from the lake, divinely clad with a garland and being scented, covered by many fine jewels and decorated with gold, they all revived full of joy, like the senses do [after one wakes up]. They embraced Him affectionately. (15) When Yaśodā, Rohiṇī and Nanda, the *gopīs* and the *gopas*, oh son of Kuru, rejoined with Kṛṣṇa, they regained all their functions, and that even happened with the dried up trees. (16) Rāma and Acyuta, the Infallible One, embraced each other laughing, well aware of Their potency. Out of love Balarāma raised Him on His lap and admired Him from all sides. Thus They, together with the cows, the bulls and she-calves, experienced the highest pleasure. (17) The learned and respectable personalities along with their wives all came to Nanda and said: 'Your son having been seized by Kāliya, has now by divine ordinance been freed. (18) For the sake of Kṛṣṇa's safety, please make donations to the brahmins', and Nanda, happy minded, oh King, gave them cows and gold. (19) The chaste Yaśodā, who had lost and retrieved her son, the One of Great Fortune, raised Him on her lap and hugged Him.

(20) **T**hat night, oh best of the kings, the cows and the people of Vraja, remained there at the shore of the Kālindī, for they were weakened because of thirst, hunger and fatigue. (21) Then, because of the summer heat, in the middle of the night from all sides a forest fire arose that closed in the sleeping Vrajasis and began to scorch them. (22) The people of Vraja thereupon woke up. In distress because they would burn, they turned to Kṛṣṇa for shelter, He the Master, who by the power of His spiritual potency had appeared like a human being [compare 10.8: 16]. (23) 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, oh Greatest of Fortune! Oh Rāma of Unlimited Power, this most terrible fire is about to devour us who belong to You! (24) Please protect us, Your people, Your friends, against this insurmountable [deadly] fire of Time. Oh Master, we at Your benevolent, blessed feet which drive away all fear, are incapable [to escape from here]!' (25) The Lord of the Universe, the Unlimited One who possesses endless potencies, seeing His people that desperate, thereupon swallowed that terrible fire.'

Chapter 18

Lord Balarāma Slays the Demon Pralamba

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Surrounded by His happy-natured folk singing His glories, Kṛṣṇa thereafter [after the forest fire] entered Vraja that was so beautiful with its herds of cows. (2) While the two [Lords Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa] thus were sporting in Vraja in the disguise of a cowherd, the summer season approached that is not so pleasant for the living beings. (3) Nonetheless because of the special qualities of Vṛndāvana this place, were the Supreme Lord Keśava together with Rāma personally was staying, manifested characteristics similar to those of spring. (4) The constant noise of the waterfalls drowned out the sound of the crickets there, while the groups of trees embellishing the area were moistened by their spray. (5) From the waves of the lakes and the currents of the rivers cool breezes transported the pollen of the kahlāra, kañja and utpala lotuses. Because of them there was for the people living in the forest not the tormenting heat of the sun or the forest fires that belong to the summer season, but instead an abundance of grass. (6) The water of the very deep rivers drenched the shores, which caused muddy banks on all sides. The fierce sun radiating its venomous rays there, could not drive away the moist from the earth and the greenery. (7) In the forest that was beautifully filled with flowers, all sorts of animals made their noises: birds were singing, peacocks [cried], bees [hummed], and cuckoos and cranes were cooing. (8) While sounding His flute, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, intent on playing there, entered the forest area in the company of Balarāma, the *gopas* and the cows. (9) Being decorated with fresh leaves, peacock feathers, bunches of small flowers, garlands and colorful minerals, the *gopas* headed by Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were singing, dancing and romping about. (10) While Kṛṣṇa danced, some of them sang, some played on flutes, cymbals and horns, while others offered praise. (11) The demigods, disguised as cowherd folk, oh King, worshiped [see 10.1: 22] Kṛṣṇa and Rāma in their form of cow protectors, just like professional dancers do when they encourage another dancer. (12) Whirling in circles, jumping distances, throwing with things, slapping their arms and pulling with ropes they played and sometimes they held, when they wrestled, each other by the locks of their hair. (13) When so now and then the others danced They were

the ones who played the instruments, who sang and who were of praise, oh King by saying: 'How good, how good this is!' (14) At times they played with bilva fruits and then again with kumbha fruits or with palmfuls of āmalaka fruits [myrobalan]. They played tag [*asprśya*] or blind man's buff [*netra-bandha*] and such games, and sometimes they mimicked the animals and birds. (15) Then they jumped like frogs, told all kinds of jokes, and then again they were playing on the swings or acted like kings. (16) The two this way being engaged in common human play, roamed the forests, mountains, rivers and valleys, bowers, lakes and surrounding groves.

(17) [One day,] while Rāma and Kṛṣṇa together with the *gopas* were herding the animals in that forest, the demon Pralamba arrived there in the form of a *gopa*. He wanted to kidnap Them. (18) Since He, who stemmed from the house of Daśārha, was the omniscient Supreme Lord, He saw what he was up to. Thinking of killing him, He accepted to be friends with him. (19) Kṛṣṇa, the knower of all games thereupon called together the *gopas* and said: 'Oh *gopas*, let us play and divide us in two equal teams.' (20) For that purpose the *gopas* appointed Rāma and Janārdana as their leaders, so that some belonged to Kṛṣṇa's group while others joined the group of Rāma. (21) They engaged in several games of 'carrier and carried' [*harinākrīdanam*] that were defined by the rule that the winners would climb on the back of the defeated ones who then had to carry them. (22) While carrying and being carried they tended the cows. Led by Kṛṣṇa, they went to a banyan tree named Bhāṇḍīraka [*]. (23) After Rāma's party, consisting of Śrīdāmā, Vṛṣabha and others, had won the contest, each of them was carried by Kṛṣṇa and the members of His party, oh King. (24) Because Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, was defeated He carried Śrīdāmā, Bhadrāsena carried Vṛṣabha and Pralamba [the Asura] carried the son of Rohiṇī [Balarāma]. (25) Considering Kṛṣṇa invincible, that foremost demon in great haste set off to carry [his passenger Rāma] beyond the finish line where one should dismount. (26) Holding Him high the demon lost his momentum though because Rāma became as heavy as the king of the earth and the planets [mount Meru]. As a consequence he resumed his original body that was covered by golden ornaments. He shone like a cloud flashing with lightening that carried the moon. (27) Seeing that body moving fast through the sky with blazing eyes, frowned eyebrows, rows of terrible teeth, wild hair, with armlets, with a crown and with earrings, the Carrier of the Plow being amazed about the effulgence, was a bit put off. (28) Balarāma, being carried away from His company like He was being kidnapped, regained His wits and fearlessly hit His enemy angrily hard with His fist on the head. That happened as vehemently as the king of the gods

hitting a mountain with his thunderbolt. (29) The head of the demon being struck split immediately in two so that he unconscious and lifeless, spitting blood from his mouth, fell to the ground with a loud noise that sounded like a mountain being hit by Indra's weapon. (30) When the *gopas* saw how Pralamba was killed by the force of Balarāma's display of power, they were most astonished and exclaimed: 'Very good, well done!' ['*sādhu, sādhu*'] (31) Pronouncing benedictions they praised Him for His deserving action. With their hearts overwhelmed by love they closed Him in their arms as if He had returned from death. (32) After the sinful Pralamba had been killed, the demigods, utterly satisfied, heaped flower garlands upon Balarāma and offered prayers exclaiming: 'Bravo, excellent!' '

*: Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī quotes the following verses from Śrī Harivamśa (Viṣṇu-parva 11.18 - 22), which describe the banyan tree:

*dadarśa vipulodagra-
śākhinām śākhinām varam
sthitam dharanyām meghābham
nibiḍam dala-sañcayaiḥ*

*gaganārdhocchritākāram
parvatābhoga-dhāriṇam
nīla-citrāṅga-varṇaiś ca
sevitaṁ bahubhiḥ khagaiḥ*

*phalaiḥ pravālaiś ca ghanaiḥ
sendracāpa-ghanopamam
bhavanākāra-viṭapam
latā-puṣpa-sumaṇḍitam*

*viśāla-mūlāvanataṁ
pāvanāmbhoda-dhāriṇam
ādhipatyam ivānyeṣām
tasya deśasya śākhinām*

*kurvāṇam śubha-karmāṇam
nirāvarṣam anātapam
nyagrodham parvatāgrābham
bhāṇḍīram nāma nāmataḥ*

"They saw that best of all trees that had many long branches. With its dense covering of leaves it resembled a cloud sitting on the earth. Indeed, its form

was so large that it appeared like a mountain covering half the sky. Many birds with charming blue wings frequented that great tree whose dense fruits and leaves made it seem like a cloud accompanied by a rainbow or like a house decorated with creepers and flowers. It spread its broad roots downward and carried upon itself the sanctified clouds. That banyan tree was like the lordly master of all other trees in that vicinity, as it performed the all-auspicious functions of warding off the rain and the heat of the sun. Such was the appearance of that nyagrodha tree known as Bhāṇḍīra, which appeared just like the peak of a great mountain."

Chapter 19

Kṛṣṇa Swallows Again a Forest Fire

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'With the *gopas* being absorbed in their games, their cows wandered far off. Grazing on their own they hungry for grass entered the thickets. (2) The goats, cows and buffalo going from one part of the forest to the other, entered a cane forest where they, thirsty because of the heat, complained loudly. (3) The *gopas* led by Kṛṣṇa and Rāma not seeing the animals, regretted it not to have kept an eye on the cows and started searching for their trail. (4) Anxious about the loss of their livelihood, they all followed the hoofprints of the cows on the path, that was marked by the blades of grass broken by the hooves and the teeth of the cows. (5) Their cows and the other animals who had lost their way, they found back in the Muñjā forest, tired crying because of thirst. Thereupon they all turned back. (6) When they heard the sound of their names being shouted by the Supreme Lord with a voice as loud as the rumbling clouds, they answered most joyfully.

(7) All of a sudden, from all sides a huge and terrible conflagration appeared that with its tongues of fire threatened all moving and non-moving beings in the forest with a gruesome storm of sparks driven by their charioteer, the wind. (8) From all sides being caught by the forest fire, the *gopas* and the cows looked about in fear. Just like anyone else who, troubled by the fear of death, seeks the Supreme Personality, they thereupon in their distress addressed Kṛṣṇa and His Strength, Balarāma. (9) 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Greatest Hero! Oh Rāma of a never failing power, please save us, surrendered souls, from being scorched by the forest fire. (10) We, Your friends, oh Kṛṣṇa, with You, the perfect knower of all dharma, as our Lord we are devoted to, for sure can never deserve it to suffer destruction!'

(11) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord Hari, thus hearing the pitiable words of His friends, said: 'Do not be afraid, just close your eyes.' (12) 'All right', they said, and having closed their eyes the Supreme Lord, the Controller of Yoga, delivered them from the danger by swallowing the terrible fire. (13) When they thereupon opened their eyes again, they stood amazed. Together with the cows they had been saved and transported to Bhāṇḍīra [the banyan tree, see 10.18: 22, ten miles away, so they say]. (14) Having witnessed their deliverance

from the burning forest, by dint of the yogic power of Kṛṣṇa's internal control over the deluding material energy, they considered Him an immortal divine being. (15) Together with Rāma and the cows returning late that afternoon to the cowherd village, Kṛṣṇa on the road sounded His flute while He was praised by the *gopas*. (16) The young cowherd girls were excited to the greatest degree of bliss to see Govinda present again. For them it seemed to take a hundred ages to be without Him but for a moment.'

Chapter 20

The Rainy Season and Autumn in Vṛṇḍāvana

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The cowherd boys described to the ladies [of Gokula] the amazing actions of the two, who had delivered them from the forest fire and had killed Pralamba. (2) The elder *gopas* and *gopīs* were surprised to hear about this and considered Kṛṣṇa and Rāma messengers of God who had come to Vraja.

(3) Then, with flashes of lightening at the horizon and rumbling skies, the rains began to fall that bring life to all living beings. (4) The sky being covered with dense, dark clouds accompanied by lightening and thunder was, with its diffuse light, like the spirit soul that manifests along with its material qualities. (5) For eight months in a row the sun with its rays drank the wealth of the earth that consists of water and now the time had arrived for its release. (6) Massive clouds, full of lightening and agitated by the fierce winds, released their grace, just as persons of mercy give their life in this world. (7) The earth that dried up because of the heat, being sprinkled by the divine water, was fully replenished just like the sensually motivated body of a repentant person restores after obtaining the fruits of that practice. (8) Because of the darkness the glowworm in the evening twilight could shine its light, but that was not true for the luminaries, just like in Kali-yuga because of the sins the heresies are shining and certainly not the Vedas. (9) The frogs, at first sitting silently, hearing the sounds of the rain clouds thereupon emitted their sounds, just like the followers of Brahmā do [their recitations] after completing their [silent] morning duties [see *niyama*]. (10) After first having been insignificant streams, the rivers that had dried up strayed from their courses, just like it happens with the body size, the property and the means of a person who is controlled by his senses. (11) Emerald green from the newly grown grass, reddish from the indragopa insects and affording the mushrooms shelter, the earth manifested herself like a person who [suddenly] became rich. (12) The fields rich with grains brought joy to the farmers, but made others, the wealthy souls who were too proud for that type of work, feel sorry not to live by that grace of God. (13) The creatures of the land and water, all reborn from the water they honored, took on attractive forms, just like people do when they honor

the Lord. (14) Where the rivers whirling met the ocean, waves were created that were blown up by the wind, just like the mind, of a by desire driven beginning yogi, is agitated who is still bound to material passions. (15) The mountains besieged by clouds filled with rain stood undaunted under their attack, just like the minds of souls dedicated to the Lord in the Beyond do, when they face trouble. (16) The roads, no longer used, faded away being overgrown by grass, just like written texts do that, not being studied by the brahmins, wither away under the influence of time. (17) The lightening in the clouds that are the friends of all the world, fickle in its friendship, could not keep its position, just like a lusty woman cannot [even] stay with men of merit. (18) When the [rain-]bow of the great Indra unstrung but clearly defined appeared in the sky, it was as if the Supreme Personality Free from the Modes had appeared within the manifest nature that is ruled by those basic qualities. (19) The moon did not shine because its light was covered by the clouds that radiated thereof, the same way the false ego of the living being shines because of its luster. (20) Because of the arrival of the clouds the peacocks cried joyously in celebration, the same way people who are troubled in their household existence are glad when the devotees of Acyuta arrive. (21) The trees, which drank the water through their feet, manifested various physical features [like fruits, leaves and sprouts], just like [the flourishing that happens] when one, after being emaciated and fatigued because of austerities, [finally] may delight in the object of one's desire. (22) The cranes kept staying at the muddy banks of the lakes, my best one, just like the citizens do who with vain hope restlessly engage themselves in their homes. (23) When Indra showers his rains the irrigation dikes break because of the floodwater, just as the paths of the Vedas are broken up by the false theories of the heretics in Kali-yuga. (24) The clouds driven by the winds released their nectarean water over all living beings, just like kings, encouraged by the brahmins, from time to time give their donations in charity.

(25) **T**he Lord and Balarāma surrounded by the cows and boys thus for their enjoyment entered that most resplendent forest with its ripe dates and jambu fruits. (26) The cows moved slowly because of their big and heavy udders, but being called by the Lord they came quickly with their udders wet out of affection. (27) He saw the joyful inhabitants of the forest, He saw its trees dripping sweet sap, and the waterfalls of the mountain that resounded from the nearby caves. (28) Sometimes when it rained, the Supreme Lord entered a hollow tree or a cave to play and eat roots and fruits. (29) The yogurt-rice brought from home He in the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa ate together with the boys, sharing the meal on a stone near the water.

(30-31) **T**he bulls sat ruminating on a patch of grass, satisfied with their eyes closed, together with the calves and the cows that were tired because of the weight of their udders. It always pleased the Supreme Lord to see the riches of the rainy season that were promoted by His internal potency. That made Him offer His respects.

(32) **W**ith Rāma and Keśava residing this way in Vraja, the fall season manifested itself in full, with a cloudless sky, the clearest water and a gentle wind. (33) In autumn the lotuses regenerated, and the bodies of water regained their original state [of purity], just as the minds of fallen souls are restored by the practice of devotional service. (34) Autumn put an end to the clouds in the sky, cleared the turbid water, dried the muddy condition of the earth and stopped the increase of animals, the way devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa puts an end to the troubles of all the spiritual departments [the status groups or *āśramas*]. (35) The clouds that had given all they had, shone with an effulgence as pure as the effulgence of the sages who, having forsaken desires, freed from sins found peace. (36) At one moment the mountains released their pure water while at another moment they did not, just as the nectar of spiritual knowledge only at times is bestowed by the *jñānis* [the spiritual philosophers]. (37) The living beings moving in shallow waters [the fish] could not appreciate that the water became less and less [after the rains], just like foolish people in a family setting do not appreciate the every day further diminishing of their life span. (38) Moving in shallow water they because of the autumn sun experienced hardship, just as a destitute man occupied by his family life feels miserable when he has no control over his senses. (39) Gradually the land had to give up its mud, and the plants had to give up their unripe condition [of bearing no fruits], just like sober souls who have to give up the egotism and possessiveness of being focussed on the non-spiritual nature of the material body and that what belongs to it. (40) With the arrival of fall the waters became motionless and the ocean became quiet, just as a fully renounced sage desists from actions and [further] acquiring knowledge [see also *avadhūta* and 7.13]. (41) The farmers contained the water of the rice fields with strong irrigation banks, the same way yogis stop the stream of consciousness that through the senses reaches outside. (42) The moon removed the suffering of all living beings that was generated by the rays of the autumn sun, just like wisdom removes the suffering based on self-conceit with the body, and the way Mukunda [returning home] puts an end to the misery of the ladies of Vraja. (43) The cloudless sky of fall shone brilliantly clear full of stars, just like a mind moved by goodness radiates in the direct experience of the purport of the Vedas.

(44) The moon and the stars shone unlimited forth in the sphere of the sky, just like the master of the Yadus, Kṛṣṇa, did when He walked the earth surrounded by the circle of the Vṛṣṇis [see family-tree]. (45) By embracing the wind, which was not too cold and not too hot blowing from the flower-filled forest, the people could forget their hardship, but not so the *gopīs* whose hearts were stolen by Kṛṣṇa. (46) The cows, the doe, the she-birds and the women were receptive in autumn, just like deeds in service of the Supreme Lord are followed by their respective mates, the good results. (47) Oh King, the lotuses, except for the night-blooming kumut lotus, bloomed abundantly at sunrise, just as the populace, except for the thieves, blossoms with a [righteous] king whom they do not fear. (48) During all the harvest rituals, other mundane celebrations and great festivals in the towns and villages, the fertile earth, rich with grains and especially with the two [of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma], shone beautifully as an expansion of the Supreme Lord. (49) The kings, the merchants, the renunciates and the initiated householders who were checked by the rains, now could venture to achieve their goals, just like those who attain the perfection of life find their ultimate form [*svarūpa* or form of service] when the time has come.'

Chapter 21

The Gopīs Glorify the Song of Kṛṣṇa's Flute

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Acyuta together with the cows and *gopas* entered the place thus being cooled by the breezes sweet because of the fragrance of the lotus filled lakes with their pellucid, autumnal waters. (2) While the Sweet Lord with Balarāma and the cowherd boys was tending the animals between the groups of flowering trees, the lakes, rivers and hills, full of the sounds of maddened bees and flocks of birds, He was absorbed in playing His flute. (3) When the ladies of Vraja heard the song of the flute, that brought to mind the flourishing [of all existence], each of them confidentially revealed to her intimate companion her appreciation for Kṛṣṇa. (4) But once they started that description they, remembering Kṛṣṇa's deeds and getting excited in rapt attention, could no longer continue, oh ruler of man. (5) [Before their mind's eye they saw how] His glories were sung by the group of cowherds, and the holes of His flute were filled by the nectar of His lips, as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana that was so enchanting because of His footprints. [They pictured Him] with a peacock feather on His head, a body like that of the best dancers, a blue *karnikāra* lotus behind His ears, golden, yellow colored garments and the *vaijayantī* garland around His neck [the garland 'of victory' with flowers of five different colors]. (6) Oh King, when the women of Vraja heard the sound of the flute that captivates the minds of all living beings, they in their praise all embraced [Him in their mind].

(7) The *gopīs* said: 'Oh friends, we who have eyes know no greater achievement than this: to imbibe the loving glances radiating from the faces of the two sons of the king of Vraja while They play on Their flutes and with Their companions drive the cows from one forest to another. (8) With the mango sprouts, peacock feathers, garlands of flower buds, lotuses and lilies to Their colorful garments and Their occasional singing, the two of Them magnificently shine forth in the midst of the cowherd boys, just like two expert dancers on a stage. (9) Oh *gopīs*, how meritorious must the deeds have been of this [bamboo] flute of Kṛṣṇa to be entitled to enjoy all alone the taste that is left behind by the nectar of His lips that [actually] belongs to the *gopīs*? His forefathers, the bamboo trees, are shedding tears of happiness, and

also the river [where they grew] is full of shivers of joy. (10) Vṛṇḍāvana having received the treasure of the lotus feet of the son of Devakī, oh friends, adds to the glories of the earth. The sound of Govinda's flute makes the peacocks dance madly and stuns all the other creatures looking down from the hillsides. (11) How fortunate are the doe who, however ignorant they were born, in hearing the sound of the flute of the so very nicely dressed son of Nanda, with their affectionate glances performed worship in the company of their black husbands? (12) It is for the women a festival to listen to the clear song of Kṛṣṇa's flute and observe His beauty and personality. Of the wives of the gods of heaven flying around in their heavenly vehicles slip, agitated and bewildered as they are by the thought of Him, the flowers tied in their hair and slacken their belts. (13) The cows raise their ears high to catch with those cups the nectar of the sounds emitted by Kṛṣṇa holding the flute to His mouth. The calves, with mouths full of the milk that exuded from the udders, stand silently with in their eyes and hearts Govinda who moves them and fills their eyes with tears. (14) Dear sisters, the birds in the forest rising to the branches of the trees beautiful with creepers and twigs, sit there like great sages in their eagerness to see Kṛṣṇa. With their eyes closed they listen to the sweet vibrations produced by His flute that silences other voices. (15) Hearing that song of Kṛṣṇa the rivers, with their currents broken in whirlpools because of their minds steeped in love, seize and firmly hold the two feet of Murāri, while carrying offerings of lotus flowers in the embrace of their wavy arms. (16) While the Lord was herding Vraja's animals together with Rāma and the *gopas*, a cloud seeing Him continually loudly playing His flute in the heat of the sun, out of love expanded itself high above its friend to create with its body a parasol carrying a great number of [cool droplets that descended like] flowers. (17) The aboriginal women of Vraja, the Pulindas, are tormented to see the grass being marked by the red, transcendental *kunkuma* powder stemming from the lotus feet of this Cupid. But smearing on their breasts and faces that powder that once decorated the breasts of the girlfriends of the widely celebrated Lord, they are fully satisfied and forget that pain. (18) And oh, this [Govardhana] hill my friends, is the Lord's best servant because it, from being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, jubilantly proves its respect with offerings of drinking water, tender grass and edible roots for the cows, the calves and the cowherds. (19) The two of Them, who can be recognized by the ropes [*] They have for binding the rear legs of the cows, accompanied in all freedom together with the cowherd boys the cows to every place in the forest. With the vibrations of the sweet tones of Their flutes, oh friends, They

therewith wondrously stunned the living entities that can move while They moved the otherwise immobile trees to ecstasy.'

(20) **T**he *gopīs*, picturing for each other the pastimes of the Supreme Lord the way He wandered around in Vṛṇḍāvana, thus being engaged became fully absorbed in Him.'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that the ropes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are made of yellow cloth and have clusters of pearls at both ends. Sometimes They wear these ropes around Their turbans, and the ropes thus become wonderful decorations.

Chapter 22

Kṛṣṇa Steals the Garments of the Unmarried Gopīs

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'During the first month of the winter season [*hemanta*: Nov./Jan.] the unmarried girls of Nanda's Vraja observed a vow of worshipping the goddess Kātyāyanī: they subsisted on unspiced *khichrī* [a mix of rice and lentils]. (2-3) Rising at dawn they took a bath in the water of the Yamunā and made from clay a deity of the goddess. Oh ruler of men, both opulent and simple they were of worship with sandalwood pulp, fragrant garlands, gifts [of food, clothes etc.], incense and lamps, as also with presentations of fresh leaves, fruits and bethel nuts. (4) The young girls performed worship repeating a mantra with the words: 'Oh Kātyāyanī, our obeisances unto you, oh great power, greatest *yoginī*, oh supreme control, please make the son of the *gopa* Nanda my husband!' [*] (5) The girls thus for an entire month executed their vow to be of proper worship before Bhadrakālī with: 'May He, Nanda's son, become my husband.' (6) Every day at dawn they called each other's names, held their hands and, loudly singing their respect for Kṛṣṇa, went to the Kālindī to bathe there. (7) One day arriving at the river singing about Kṛṣṇa, they left their clothes on the shore as usual and enjoyed sporting in the water.

(8) Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, who as the Master of all yoga masters approved this, surrounded by His companions went to that spot to make their actions a success. (9) He stole their clothes away and quickly climbed in a Kadamba tree. Laughing together with the boys He made fun by saying: (10) 'Come here, oh girls, if you like, and take each your own garment. Seriously, I am not joking, for you must be tired because of the vow. (11) All these boys know I have never spoken a lie. Therefore, oh slender girls, come [out of the water] either one by one or all together, to cover yourselves.'

(12) With that prank of Him He saw how the *gopīs*, steeped in love for Him, looked at each other and had to laugh, but being embarrassed they did not come out of the water. (13) Govinda thus having spoken, had with His joking caught the minds of those who, up to their necks shivering in the cold water, said to Him: (14) 'Oh You,

do not be unfair, we beg You, behave like the beloved son of the *gopa* Nanda we know, as the one renown throughout Vraja, oh dearest one. Please give us our garments, we are cold! (15) Oh Śyāmasundara ['beautiful dark one'] we, as Your maidservants, must do whatever You say! Please give us our clothes back, oh Knower of the Dharma, or else we will tell the king about it!

(16) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'If you are My servants, must you then not do what I told you and with your innocent smiles come out of the water to pick out your garments? I will not give them if you do not do so, and with the king being angry, what can he do about it?' (17) Thereupon all the girls shivering of the cold came out of the water, covering their pubic area with their hands. (18) The Supreme Lord seeing them defeated, put satisfied about the purity of their love their garments over His shoulder and said with a loving smile: (19) 'Because you during the observance of a vow were bathing naked in the water, you have offended Varuṇa and the other gods. To atone for that sin you must pay your obeisances with your palms joined together over your heads and then take your garments back.'

(20) **W**ith this being pointed out by the Infallible Lord, the Vraja girls considered their skinny-dipping a fall from their vow. Intent on successfully completing that vow, they therefore offered their obeisances to the Purifier of All Sins, He who was the directly visible result of their actions as also countless other [pious] activities. (21) The Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, satisfied to see them bowing down, thereupon mercifully gave them back the garments. (22) Despite seriously having been cheated, not being acknowledged in their shame, being laughed at and made to act like puppets on a string with their clothes being stolen, they felt no enmity towards Him, for they were happy to associate with their beloved one. (23) Having put on their garments they, smitten by the association with their beloved, with their minds being captivated, were completely incapable of moving and full of shyness glanced at Him. (24) The Supreme Lord understood from them that they were determined to live up to their vow and that they wanted to touch His feet. Dāmodara said to the girls: (25) 'Oh pious souls, I understand your motivation to worship Me. That pleases Me and so it has to come true. (26) The desire of those whose consciousness is fully absorbed in Me, does not lead to material lust, just as roasted and cooked grains as a rule are not capable of causing new growth [see also e.g. 1.6: 35, 3.15: 20, 7.7: 51-52]. (27) Dear girls, go now to Vraja. Having achieved the supreme state of fulfillment, you one of these nights will enjoy together with

Me. That was what you had in mind with the vow to be pure in your worship of the Goddess.'

(28) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being instructed by the Supreme Lord, the young girls, with their desire fulfilled meditating upon His lotus feet, could only with great difficulty [bring themselves to] return to the cowherd village. (29) The son of Devakī some time later surrounded by the *gopas* went at a distance from Vṛṇḍāvana to herd the cows together with His brother. (30) Seeing how the trees in the fiercely hot sun of the season with their shade served Him as parasols, He said to the boys: (31-32) 'Oh Stoka Kṛṣṇa and Amśu, Śrīdāma, Subala and Arjuna, Viśāla, Vṛṣabha and Ojasvī, Devaprastha and Varūthapa, just look at these fortunate trees protecting us against rain, wind, heat and snow. Their life is exclusively there for the benefit of others! (33) Just see the benediction of these trees that offer support to all living entities, like great souls do. No one in need of them will ever go away disappointed. (34) With their leaves, flowers and fruits, shade and roots, bark and wood, their fragrance, sap, ashes, pulp and shoots, they offer everything you desire. (35) To perform with one's life, wealth, intelligence and words always for the sake of the welfare of all embodied beings, to be in this world of such a kind of birth, is the perfection of life for every living being [see also the Vaiṣṇava Pranāma].'

(36) Thus speaking among the trees bowing down with their abundance of leaves, clusters of fruit, flowers and twigs, He arrived at the Yamunā. (37) There the *gopas* drenched the cows in the crystal clear, fresh and cool, wholesome water, oh ruler, and also themselves drank their fill of the sweet tasting water. (38) In a grove along the Yamunā where they allowed the animals to roam freely, oh ruler of the people, they [the *gopas*] plagued by hunger approached Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and said the following.'

*: The distinction between the internal of *yoga-māyā* and the external, or illusory, potency of the Lord of *mahā-māyā* is described in the Nārada-pañcarātra, in the conversation between Śruti and Vidyā:

*jānāty ekāparā kāntam
saivā durgā tad-ātmikā
yā parā paramā śaktir
mahā-viṣṇu-svarūpiṇī*

yasyā vijñāna-mātreṇa

*parāṇāṁ paramātmanah
mahūrtād deva-devasya
prāptir bhavati nānyathā*

*ekeyaṁ prema-sarvasva
svabhāvā gokuleśvarī
anayā su-labho jñeya
ādi-devo 'khileśvaraḥ*

*asyā āvārika-śaktir
mahā-māyākhileśvarī
yayā mugdaṁ jagat sarvaṁ
sarve dehābhimāninaḥ*

"The Lord's inferior potency, known as Durgā, is dedicated to His loving service. Being the Lord's potency, this inferior energy is nondifferent from Him. There is another, superior potency, whose form is on the same spiritual level as that of God Himself. Simply by scientifically understanding this supreme potency, one can immediately achieve the Supreme Soul of all souls, who is the Lord of all lords. There is no other process to achieve Him. That supreme potency of the Lord is known as Gokuleśvarī, the goddess of Gokula. Her nature is to be completely absorbed in love of God, and through Her one can easily obtain the primeval God, the Lord of all that be. This internal potency of the Lord has a covering potency, known as *Mahā-māyā*, who rules the material world. In fact she bewilders the entire universe, and thus everyone within the universe falsely identifies himself with the material body." See also 8.12: 40 for Durgā.

Chapter 23

The Brahmin Wives Blessed

(1) **T**he *gopas* said: 'Rāma, oh Rāma, oh mighty-armed one, oh Kṛṣṇa, destroyer of the wicked, we are troubled by hunger, please do something about it.'

(2) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Kṛṣṇa wanted to please some brahmin wives devoted to Him. Thus being informed by the *gopas*, the Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī said the following: (3) 'Please go to the sacrificial arena of the brahmins who, striving for a place in heaven, in accord with the Vedic injunctions at the moment are performing a sacrifice named Āṅgīrasa. (4) Going there, dear *gopas*, ask them for some food and tell them that you have been sent by Bhagavān [Balarāma], My elder brother, and by Me.'

(5) **W**ith this order of the Supreme Lord going there, they asked as was told. Petitioning with folded hands, they before the brahmins fell to the ground like sticks: (6) 'Oh earthly gods, we wish you all the best. Please listen. Know that we, cowherd boys, were sent by Rāma and have arrived here with a mission from Kṛṣṇa. (7) Rāma and Acyuta graze Their cows not far from here, and being hungry they want to ask you if you could supply Them with some food, oh twice-born souls. So, if you have faith, then please donate, oh finest knowers of the religion. (8) From the beginning of a sacrifice until the end of sacrificing the animal, oh lovers of the truth, it is, except for when it is a [Sautrāmaṇi] sacrifice to Indra [*], not even for an initiate an offense to enjoy [or hand out] food.'

(9) **T**hus hearing about the Supreme Lord's request, they nevertheless took no heed. In the trivial pursuit of their ritualistic engagement they, for being elder, most childishly thought to know it better. (10-11) Even though the place and time, the items used, the hymns, the rituals, the priests and the fire, the officiating God-conscious souls, the performer of the sacrifice, that what was sacrificed and the dharmic result, are all part of the directly visible

reality of His Absolute Truth, of Him, the Supreme Lord Beyond the Senses, they with their borrowed intelligence considered Him arrogantly just an ordinary person. (12) Not even having received a yes or a no from them, the *gopas* being discouraged, oh chastiser of the enemies, thereupon returned to inform Kṛṣṇa and Rāma about it. (13) Hearing that, the Supreme Lord, the Controller of the Universe, had to laugh and again addressed the cowherd boys in order to show them the ways of the world: (14) 'Communicate to their wives that I have arrived together with Sāṅkarsaṇa. They will give you all the food needed, for they, with their intelligence residing in Me, are full of affection for Me.'

(15) **N**ext going to the house of the wives, they saw them sitting there, nicely ornamented. The *gopas* bowed with reverence before the chaste women of the twice-born souls and said humbly: (16) 'Our obeisances, oh wives of the brahmins, please listen to what we have to say: not far from here we are roaming with Kṛṣṇa who has sent us here. (17) Tending the cows together with the *gopas* and with Rāma, He came a long way. He and His companions are hungry and should be given some food.'

(18) **H**earing that Kṛṣṇa was nearby whom they, with their minds enchanted by His stories, always had wanted to see, they got very excited. (19) Like rivers flowing towards the ocean the four types of food [to be chewed, sucked, licked and drunk] in the form of all kinds of dishes were brought together and in vessels transported to the One they all loved. (20-21) Even though their husbands, brothers, sons and other relatives tried to stop them, they, who for such a long time had heard about Him and longed for Him, headed for the Supreme Lord Praised in the Scriptures. The ladies found Him, wandering with the *gopas* and His elder brother, in a grove near the Yamunā full of blooming *aśokas*. (22) With His dark complexion, golden colored garment and garland of forest flowers, with His peacock feather, colored minerals and sprigs of buds, He was dressed like a dancer on a stage. His hand rested on a friend's shoulder and with the other hand He twirled a lotus. His lotus face was smiling, His hair fell over His cheeks and He had lilies behind His ears. (23) Over and over having heard about the glories of their most beloved [Kṛṣṇa], the gem to their ears in whom their minds were submerged, they embraced Him, now brought within their view, for a long time [within their hearts] and gave up the inner distress, oh sovereign of the people, that had resulted from their identifying with their bodies. (24) With understanding for the state of these women who out of their desire for Him had abandoned all material desires, He who knows each his point

of view, addressed them with a smile upon His face. (25) 'You are most welcome, oh finest graceful ladies, please sit down. What can I do for you? How becoming of you to come here to see Me! (26) People of discrimination who are well aware of what is good for them, keep themselves directly focussed on Me, their dear most Self. They are then constantly of devotional service, a service that is as should when delivered without any ulterior motive. (27) What other object [or who else] would be more attractive than this Self, connected to which one's life force, intelligence, mind, relatives, body, wife, children, wealth etc., became so very dear? (28) Go therefore to the sacrificial arena so that your husbands, as brahmin householders, with your help can complete their sacrifices.'

(29) **T**he wives answered: 'Do not speak so harshly with us, oh Almighty One, please be true to Your [scriptural] promise that someone who has attained the basis of Your lotus feet and has turned away from all his relations, may carry upon his hair the *tulsī* garland that was dismissed by Your feet. (30) Our husbands, fathers, sons and brothers, other relatives and friends will not accept us! And how would other people respond? Would You please therefore grant that to us, whose bodies have fallen at Your feet and for who there is no other destination, oh Chastiser of the Enemies?'

(31) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Your husbands will not be angry out of jealousy, nor will your fathers, brothers, sons or other people. Even the demigods will, on My word, regard you favorably. (32) Physical association does not make the people in the world more happy or loving. When you [in stead thereof] fix your minds upon Me, you will very quickly be with Me. (33) Hearing, attending [to the deity or the gathering of devotees], meditating and singing about Me, you are of love for Me, not so much with being physically close to Me. Therefore return to your homes.'

(34) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'After this was said to the wives of the brahmins, they went back to the place of sacrifice. Having arrived there their husbands were not spiteful and together with them completed the ceremony. (35) One of them had been forcibly held back by her husband. Hearing from the others about the Supreme Lord, she embraced Him in her heart and gave up the material body that is the source of karmic bondage. (36) The Supreme Lord, who is also known as Govinda, fed the *gopas* with the four types of food [that were brought by the women], after which He, the Almighty One, also took a share. (37) He thus in His pastimes, with His transcendental appearance, delighted to imitate the human ways and please the cows,

the *gopas* and the *gopīs* with His beauty, words and actions. (38) The brahmins afterwards came to their senses and felt great remorse about having been so offensive in their conceit with the humble request of the Lords of the Universe who appeared like human beings. (39) Seeing the high flight of the devotion of their wives for Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality, a devotion they completely lacked, they condemned themselves lamenting: (40) 'To hell with our threefold births [biological, brahminical and ritual], our vows, our extensive spiritual knowledge, our lineage and our expertise in the rituals, when we are inimical towards the Lord Beyond the Senses. (41) *Māyā*, the illusory potency of the Supreme Lord which even deludes the greatest yogis, has been the cause that we, the twice-born souls, the spiritual teachers of society, were bewildered about our true interest. (42) Just see that unlimited devotion of the women for Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual teacher of the universe, a devotion that even has broken the bonds of death [of their attachment] to family life. (43-44) They never underwent purification rites of rebirth, they did not stay with the guru, did not practice austerities, nor were they of philosophical inquiry into the true nature of the self or of any special cleanliness or pious actions. Nevertheless they, contrary to us so full of all that purification, are firm in their devotional service for Kṛṣṇa, the Lord Praised in the Verses and the Master of all Masters of Yoga. (45) Oh, how much has He through the words of His cowherd boys not reminded us of the ultimate destination of all transcendentalists, and has He helped us who in our bewilderment about our household interests indeed were inattentive! (46) Why else would He, the Master of Liberation and of all other benedictions, who is satisfied in every respect, be of this disguise [in the form of a *gopa*] with us, the souls resorting under His control? (47) The Goddess of Fortune refrains from all others and constantly only worships Him, in the hope of touching His feet and putting an end to the faults [of pride and fickleness e.g.] in her own being. His request [for food] really perplexes everyone. (48-49) He constitutes the place and time, the items used, the hymns, the rituals, the priests and the fire, the officiating God-conscious souls, the performer of the sacrifice, the performance and its dharmic result [see verse 10-11]. He, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the Master of all Yoga Masters, has directly visible taken birth among the Yadus, but despite having heard about this we foolishly failed to understand that. (50) The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is of an unlimited intelligence and because of whose illusory power we with bewildered minds are wandering along the paths of fruitive action, we offer our obeisances. (51) He, our Original Lord and Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose influence cannot be

fathomed by our minds which are bewildered because of His *māyā*, should forgive us our offense.'

(52) **T**hus thinking about their offense of having disregarded Kṛṣṇa, they wished to meet Him, but afraid of [drawing the attention of] Kāmsa, they decided not to go to Vraja.'

*: It is said that every one consecrated by the Sautrāmaṇi sacrifice for Lord Indra enters among the gods and is born *sarva-tanūh*, that is, with his entire body.

Chapter 24

Kṛṣṇa Defies Indra in Favor of the Brahmins, the Cows and Govardhana Hill

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord staying there [in Vraja] in the company of Baladeva, saw how the *gopas* were busily engaged in arranging a sacrifice for Lord Indra. (2) Even though the Supreme Lord, the Omniscient Soul of Everyone, knew everything about it [see B.G. 9: 23], He bowed down humbly and inquired of the elderly headed by Nanda [His stepfather]: (3) 'Tell Me, dear father, what is all this goings-on of you about? Where does it lead to, for whom is it done and what are the means by which this sacrifice is accomplished? (4) Please tell Me about it. I have this great desire to hear about it, oh father. Surely it cannot be so that the activities of saintly men, equal towards everyone in this world, being indifferent about mine and thine, and neutral towards friends and foes, are something to be secretive about, is it? (5) A stranger one may avoid like he is an enemy, but a friend one should treat like oneself, so they say. (6) When common people do something in the world, they sometimes engage with knowledge and sometimes they engage without. Engaging with expertise one achieves an optimal result and with ignorant actions that is not the case. (7) With that being said, I ask you whether this combined effort of yours is something that is prescribed [in the scriptures] or just a custom. That you should explain clearly to Me.'

(8) Śrī Nanda said: 'Indra is the great lord of the rain and the clouds are his personal representatives. They provide the rain for all living beings. Rain is the gratifying life force, just like milk. (9) Because of the liquid discharged by this lord and master of the clouds, my dear son, we - and also other people - worship him with fire sacrifices and various paraphernalia. (10) With the remnants of those sacrifices people sustain their lives in three different ways [religiously, economically and sensually]. He is the superhuman being who brings the fruits to those who from their human actions expect a certain yield

[like farmers]. (11) Anyone who rejects this dharma [of sacrificing to Indra] that was handed down by tradition, is a person who, because of lust, enmity, fear and greed, cannot find happiness in life [see B.G. 10: 36].'

(12) Śrī Śuka said: 'After having heard Nanda's words and also what the other residents of Vraja had to say, Lord Keśava spoke to His father in a way that made Lord Indra angry. (13) The Supreme Lord said: 'It is because of karma that a living entity takes birth and it is by [the force of] his karma alone that he meets his demise. Happiness or unhappiness, security and fear are all the result of one's karma. (14) If there would be some controller who awards others the fruit of their actions, then that ruler still depends on those who engage in action. After all, he cannot be the master of someone who does nothing! (15) Living beings have to face the consequences of their actions, what have they to do with Indra who cannot change what is determined by their own nature? (16) A person is controlled by his nature - he follows his nature. This entire world with its gods, demons and common men, exists on the basis of everyone's personal nature. (17) Living beings as a consequence of their actions obtain and forsake higher and lower evolved bodies. Karma alone is their enemy, friend and impartial judge, their Lord and their teacher [see also B.G. 8: 15 & 16, 4.29: 26-27 and 7.7: 46-47]. (18) One should therefore, keeping to one's duties, exercise respect for the karma of one's own nature [see *varṇāśrama*]. One lives rightly by that karma, it is no doubt someone's worshipable deity. (19) The way an unfaithful woman, resorting to another living being, does not gain any real benefit with her lover, it is also not to someone's advantage to prefer a thing [or deity] different from the one sustaining one's life. (20) The *brāhmaṇas* maintain their life [by teaching and explaining] the Vedas, the *kṣatriyas* by protecting the land, the *vaiśyas* by trading and the *śūdras* by serving the twice-born souls [the former three, see also 7.11: 21-24]. (21) The fourfold occupational duty of the *vaiśya* consists of farming, trading, cow protection and banking as the fourth. Among these the constant care for the cows is the duty we are engaged in. (22) [The natural qualities of] goodness, passion and ignorance are the cause of the maintenance, creation and destruction [in the world. See *guṇa*]. From the quality of passion this universe is generated and from the mutual [sexual] action therein we find the [biological] diversity of this world. (23) The clouds, impelled by that passion, pour down their water everywhere, and by that water they factually maintain the population. So what would Indra then do? (24) The cities, the cultivated lands and the villages are not the places where we are at home. We are the forest people, dear father, we always live in the forests and the hills. (25) Let

us therefore begin with a sacrifice for the cows, the brahmins and the hill [Govardhana], and use for this worship the paraphernalia of Indra's sacrifice [see also footnote 10.8*3]! (26) Let us cook all sorts of preparations and soups, beginning with sweet rice, porridge, buns and cakes, and let us use all kinds of dairy products. (27) Let there be properly prayed before the fires by brahmins versed in the Vedas whom you should feed with well prepared dishes and reward with cows and other gifts. (28) To act appropriately in respect of everyone, also should be thought of others: fallen souls like dogs and outcasts. After next having given grass to the cows the offerings should be presented to the mountain. (29) After having eaten our fill, we in our best clothes, being smeared with sandalwood pulp and nicely adorned, should circumambulate the cows, the brahmins, the fires and the hill [always kept to the right]. (30) This is my view, oh father, may it be done, if you please. This will not only be dear to the brahmins, the cows and the hill, but also to Me.'

(31) Śrī Śuka said: 'When Nanda and the elders heard these words being spoken by the Supreme Lord, by the Time in person, in order to break the pride of Indra, they accepted them as excellent. (32-33) And so they executed everything Madhusūdana had spoken about: they arranged for the auspicious recitations, they all together respectfully paid tribute to the hill and the brahmins with the paraphernalia mentioned, they offered grass to the cows, the bulls and the calves, and next they circumambulated the hill with the animals in front of them. (34) The cowherd women, nicely ornamented and riding wagons that were yoked with oxen, sang the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while the twice-born souls chanted their benedictions. (35) To instill faith in the *gopas*, Kṛṣṇa thereupon assumed another form. Saying 'I am the hill' He devoured the abundance of offerings with the immensity of His body [see *vapu* and footnote *]. (36) Together with the people of Vraja He, by means of Himself, offered His obeisances to Himself: 'Oh, just see, how this hill, by assuming its form, has bestowed His mercy upon us!'

*: Śrīla Prabhupāda writes to this (Kṛṣṇabook ch. 24): "The identity of Kṛṣṇa and Govardhana Hill is still honored, and great devotees take rocks from Govardhana Hill and worship them exactly as they worship the Deity of Kṛṣṇa in the temples. Devotees therefore collect small rocks or pebbles from Govardhana Hill and worship them at home, because this worship is as good as Deity worship."

Chapter 25

Lord Kṛṣṇa Lifts Govardhana Hill

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Indra, who realized that the worship of his person had been rejected, oh King, thereupon got angry with the *gopas* headed by Nanda, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa as their Lord. (2) In order to put an end to it all, clouds were sent forth by Indra that carried the name Sāṁvartaka. Deeming himself the supreme controller he enraged spoke the words: (3) 'Just see how enormously bewildered about their wealth these forest dwelling cowherds are. Having taken shelter of a mortal being like Kṛṣṇa, they have committed an offense against the gods! (4) They abandoned the spiritual knowledge and try to get across the ocean of material existence by performing ritual sacrifices that, profit-oriented, are inadequate to pass as boats [for that ocean]. (5) By taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, this prattling, arrogant child, ignorantly thinking Himself to be the wisest, the *gopas* have acted to my displeasure. (6) Bring [oh clouds] destruction to their animals and put an end to their arrogance, because they, proud and foolish because of Kṛṣṇa and their wealth, are full of conceit. (7) Riding my elephant Airāvata, I shall also come to Vraja. Accompanied by the wind gods I, moving hither with great power, will wipe out Nanda's cowherd community [see e.g. also 6.11 & 12].'

(8) Śrī Śuka said: 'The clouds thus on the command of Indra being released from their positions, with all their power tormented Nanda's cowherd village with a massive downpour of rain. (9) Propelled by the wind gods they, illumined by lightening bolts and roaring with thunder, showered down hailstones. (10) With the rain incessantly pouring down from the clouds in curtains, the higher and lower parts of the earth submerged by the flood of water, could no longer be discerned. (11) The *gopas* and *gopīs*, plagued by the abundance of rain and excessive wind, shivering from the cold, together with their cattle went to Govinda for shelter. (12) Covering their heads and protecting their children with their bodies they, tormented by the rains, quivering approached the basis of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead: (13) Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Greatest Fortune. You are Your own master, oh Lord, please protect

the cow community against the godhead [Indra] who is angry with us, oh Protector of the Devotees! [see also 10.8: 16]'

(14) **T**he Supreme Lord Hari seeing them witless under the attack of the hail, the rain and the extreme winds, considered the anger of Indra responsible for this: (15) [He thought:] 'Because I rejected Indra's sacrifice he, bent on destruction, is flooding us now with these unusual out-of-season fierce rains and great winds full of hailstones. (16) To counteract that properly I will, by the power of My yoga, arrange for the defeat of the pride and ignorance of all those who, with their wealth, are as foolish to consider themselves falsely Lord and Master over the world. (17) Of the demigods who, as controlling lords being falsely identified, are certainly not moved by goodness, I eradicate the false pride in order to pacify them [see also B.G. 14: 14]. (18) The cowherd community that has taken shelter of Me as their master is My family. Therefore I will protect them with My mystic power. That is the vow I have taken [see also B.G. 9: 22].'

(19) **H**aving said this [to Himself this incarnation of] Viṣṇu took up with one hand [His left one] Govardhana hill and held it high as easily as a child holding a mushroom. (20) The Supreme Lord then said to the *gopas*: 'Oh mother, oh father, oh residents of Vraja, please come, together with your cows, to the free space below this hill. (21) Do not be afraid that, because of the wind and the rain, the mountain would fall from My hand. You have feared enough, and in order to deliver you therefrom, I have provided [this solution] for you.'

(22) **W**ith their minds thus being pacified by Kṛṣṇa, they entered the space underneath the mountain where they found ample room for their cows, wagons and everyone belonging to them. (23) Putting aside pain, hunger, thirst and all considerations of personal comfort, He before the eyes of the residents of Vraja held up the mountain for seven days without moving from His place. (24) When Indra saw the result of Kṛṣṇa's mystic power, he most amazed, bereft of his pride and broken in his determination, called back his clouds. (25) With the sky free from clouds and the sun visible again, now that the fierce wind and rain had ended, the Lifter of Govardhana Hill said to the cowherds: (26) 'Please leave this place, together with your property, women and children. Give up your fear, dear *gopas*, the wind and rain have ceased, and the water in the rivers is low again.'

(27) **T**he *gopas* each took their personal cows and left, with their belongings loaded on the wagons, and the women, children and old people slowly following. (28) And while all the living beings were

looking on, the Supreme Almighty Lord easily put down the hill back where it stood before. (29) The residents of Vraja, overwhelmed by the pure love they felt for Him, came forward with embraces and so on, each expressing his personal relationship with Him. The *gopīs* joyfully with great affection showered their fine blessings and respected Him with presentations of yogurt, whole grains and water. (30) Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and Balarāma, the Greatest of the Strongest, embraced Kṛṣṇa and full of affection eagerly all offered Him their blessings. (31) In heaven all the demigods - the perfected souls, the saints, the heavenly singers and the venerable souls - sang the Lord's praises and showered satisfied a rain of flowers, oh earthly ruler. (32) They sounded conch shells and played kettledrums in their abode while the leading Gandharvas headed by Tumburu sang, oh ruler of men. (33) Oh King, Kṛṣṇa together with Balarāma, surrounded by the loving animal tenders, thereupon left for the place where they were grazing their animals. The *gopīs* also went away singing about the glories of His heroic deeds, happy as they were with Him who had touched their hearts.'

Chapter 26

Nanda Recapitulates the Words of Garga Before the Puzzled Gopas

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopas*, witnessing activities of Kṛṣṇa like this one [lifting the hill], had no idea how He could be that powerful, and most astonished approached Nanda saying to him: (2) 'How could the boy, considering His extraordinary actions, deserve a birth among simple countryfolk, that would be contemptible for Him? (3) How can a boy of seven years old, playfully with one hand hold up the best of all hills, [as easily] as a mighty elephant holds up a lotus flower? (4) As a new-born child with hardly His eyes open, He sucked [the poisoned milk] from the breast of the greatly powerful Pūtanā, in the process also sucking away her life air, just like the force of time sucks away the youth from a body [see 10.6]. (5) When He, a few months old, lying beneath a cart was crying, He with His legs [kicking] upwards turned over the cart that was struck by the tip of His foot [see 10.7]. (6) At the age of one, sitting outside He was transported into the sky by the demon Tṛṇāvarta. He seized him by his neck, made him suffer and killed him [see 10.7]. (7) One day His mother tied Him to a large mortar because He had stolen butter. He [crawling with the mortar] on His hands moved between the two arjuna trees and caused their crash [see 10.10]. (8) Together with Balarāma and the boys grazing the calves in the forest, He with His two arms tore apart the beak of the enemy Baka who wanted to kill Him [see 10.11]. (9) Vatsa, [another demon] desirous to kill Him, in the form of a calf hid among the other calves. Kṛṣṇa killed him and sportively [throwing the corpse in a tree] made kapittha fruits fall down with him [see 10.11]. (10) Together with Balarāma killing the jackass demon [Dhenuka] and his jackass companions, He secured the safety of the Tālavana forest that was full of ripe fruits [see 10.15]. (11) After arranging that the terrible Pralamba would be killed by the most powerful Balarāma, He released Vraja's *gopas* and their animals from a forest fire [see 10.18 & 19]. (12) Subduing the most venomous chief of the snakes [Kāliya]

by climbing on top of him, He managed to defeat his pride and with force send him away from the lake of the Yamunā, the water of which thus was freed from its poison [10. 16 & 17]. (13) Dear Nanda, how can it be that all of us inhabitants of Vraja cannot give up our feelings of love for your son, who on His part is just as natural towards us? (14) The fact that He as a boy of seven years old has lifted the big hill, has with us, oh master of Vraja, raised questions about your son.'

(15) Nanda said: 'Please listen to my words, dear *gopas*. Let go of your doubt concerning the boy. This is what Garga in the past has told me referring to this child [see also 10.8: 13-19 for the same verses]: (16) 'And this one [the son of Yaśodā] has according to the *yuga* accepted forms with a white, a red or a yellow color. Now He is Kṛṣṇa [of a dark complexion, see **]. (17) This child previously was born somewhere else as the son of Vasudeva, and therefore the souls who know this will speak about this child of yours as the glorious Vāsudeva. (18) There are many names and forms according to the qualities and activities of His appearances. These are known to me, but the common people do not know them. (19) Being a *Nanda-Gokula* cowherd this child will always act to what is most beneficial to all of you. With His support you will easily overcome all dangers [*3] (20) Oh King of Vraja, in the past, when there was a faulty regime, He has protected pious souls who were disturbed by rogues so that they, with those bad elements defeated, could flourish [see also 1.3: 28]. (21) Just like those faithful to Viṣṇu have nothing to fear from the Asuras, those who are as fortunate to associate with this child in love and affection, will not be overcome by enemies. (22) Therefore, oh Nanda, take the greatest care raising this child. As for His qualities, opulences, name and fame this son of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa!' (23) After Garga had pointed this out to me, he went home. [Ever since] I consider Kṛṣṇa, who frees us from all obstacles, an expansion of Nārāyaṇa.'

(24) **H**aving heard Nanda's words about what Garga had said, the residents of Vraja, enlivened by him and with their perplexity gone, worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa. (25) The demigod [Indra] who caused the rain, made in his anger about the loss of his sacrifice, the cowherds, animals and women suffer by engaging lightning bolts, hail and winds. Krishna, considering Himself their only shelter, smiled out of compassion, and in order to protect the cowherd community picked up the hill with one hand the way a small child picks up a mushroom. May He, the Lord of the Cows, the destroyer of the conceit of the great king of the sky, be satisfied with us!'

*: These colors will later be explained in the eleventh canto of the Bhāgavatam, in the verses 11.5: 21, 24, 27 and 34.

Chapter 27

Lord Indra and Mother Surabhi Offer Prayers

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After He held up the hill Govardhana to protect Vraja against the rains, from the world of the cows mother Surabhi [the celestial cow] came to Kṛṣṇa. And so did Lord Indra. (2) Indra, ashamed of having been offensive, approached Him in a secluded place [*] and touched His feet with his helmet that shone like the sun. (3) Having heard about, and having witnessed, the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose immeasurable potency had put an end to his arrogance of being the lord of the three worlds, he with folded hands spoke as follows.

(4) Indra said: 'Your majesty, oh You abode of pure goodness, being of peace and the illumination of penance, You destroyed the passion and ignorance that are based on illusion. This continuous stream of the material qualities, to which one is bound in one's attachment, is not present in You. (5) How, oh Lord, can there in You [as I supposed, see 10.25: 3] exist the causes of being entangled - like greed and such - that symptomize an ignorant person? Are You not the Supreme Lord who, in defense of the dharma, exercises Your authority to chastise the wicked ones? (6) You are the father and the guru of the entire universe, the Original Lord and the insurmountable Time who, when You by Your own decision assume Your transcendental forms, strives to be the authority to eradicate the self-conceit of those who think they are the Lord of the Universe. (7) Ignorant souls like me, who think they are the master of the universe, quickly abandon their arrogance the moment they see You fearless [in confrontation]. This happens when they, no longer conceited because of the lesson You teach the wicked, wish to take the path of civilization only. (8) Unaware of Your influence I, because of my rulership, bathed in arrogance. Being offensive my intelligence got bewildered. Therefore please forgive me, oh Master who has assumed this form. Please let my consciousness never again be that foul, my Lord. (9) Your descent into this world, oh Lord of the Beyond, happened for the sake of the existence of those who serve Your lotus feet, oh Godhead, and for the non-existence of warlords, who constitute a great burden with the many disturbances they create. (10) I offer You my obeisances, the

Supreme Lord and Original Personality, the great Soul Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. My respects for the Master of the Servants of the Absolute Truth. (11) My obeisances for Him who assumes physical forms in response to the desires of His devotees, for Him whose form is pure spiritual knowledge, who is the seed of all and everything, and who is the indwelling Soul of all living beings. (12) Oh Lord, when the sacrifice was frustrated I, fiercely arrogant and angry, wanted to destroy the cowherd community by means of rain and wind, oh Supreme Lord. (13) You, oh Controller, showing Your mercy have shattered my rigidity and rendered my attempts fruitless. I came to You, the True Self and spiritual master, to seek Your shelter.'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'With Kṛṣṇa this way been glorified by the munificent Indra, the Supreme Lord smiled and spoke, as grave as the clouds, the following words to him. (15) The Supreme Lord said: 'I have engaged in the arrest of your sacrifice to show you My mercy and to ensure that you, as the king of heaven who was so greatly intoxicated by the opulence, would remember Me forever. (16) He, who blinded by the intoxication of power and opulence, does not see Me standing with the rod in My hand, I will, wishing to promote him, prepare a fall from his affluent position [see also B.G. 9: 22]. (17) Oh Indra, you may go now, I wish you all good fortune. Executing My order you may, free from false pride, remain engaged in your responsibilities.'

(18) Then mother Surabhi spoke to Krishna. Peaceful of mind offering her respects she, together with her cows, asked for the attention of the Supreme Lord who had appeared as a cowherd boy. (19) Mother Surabhi said: 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Greatest Mystic! Oh Soul and Origin of the Universe, with You as the director of the world, we have found our master, oh Infallible One. (20) You are our Supreme Godhead. Oh Lord of the Universe, please, for the welfare of the cows, the brahmins and those who are godly and saintly, be there as our Indra. (21) For You to be our Indra, we shall perform a bathing ceremony to the directions of Lord Brahmā, oh Soul of the Universe who descended to relieve the burden of the earth.'

(22-23) Śrī Śuka said: 'After this request Lord Krishna was by Surabhi bathed with her own milk. On the order of the mothers of the demigods [the daughters of Aditi] He thereupon by Indra was bathed with the heavenly Ganges water carried in Airāvata's trunk. He, the descendent of Daśarha, thus, in the company of the enlightened souls and the seers, received the name Govinda ['he who finds the cows']. (24) Tumburu, Nārada and the others, the singers of

heaven, the scholars, the perfected and the venerable souls, came to that place and sang the glories of the Lord that eradicate the impurity of the world. The wives of the demigods danced together filled with joy. (25) He, as the emblem of all the gods, was praised and covered with wonderful showers of flowers. Everyone in the three worlds experienced a supreme satisfaction and the cows saturated the earth with their milk. (26) The rivers flooded with all kinds of liquids, the trees provided honey, the plants developed fully without being cultivated and the mountains produced jewels. (27) Oh [Parīkṣit,] beloved one of the Kuru dynasty, after Lord Krishna had been bathed, all living beings, even the ones that are dangerous [predators, false people], were freed from their enmity. (28) After Govinda, the master of the cows and the cowherd community, thus had been bathed by him, Indra took leave and returned to heaven, surrounded by the gods and the others.'

*: The specific "solitary place" where Indra approached Śrī Kṛṣṇa is mentioned by the sage Śrī Vaiśampāyana in the *Hari-vamśa* (Viṣṇu-parva 19.3): *sa dadarśopaviṣṭam vai govardhana-śilā-tale*. "He saw Him [Kṛṣṇa] sitting at the base of Govardhana Hill".

Chapter 28

Kṛṣṇa Rescues Nanda Mahārāja from the Abode of Varuṇa

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'After having fasted the eleventh day [of a lunar fortnight, *ekādaśī*] and having worshiped the Maintainer of All [Janārdana], Nanda entered the water of the Yamunā for a bath on the twelfth day. (2) An obscure servant of Varuṇa seized him and led him to his master, for he had neglected that it was an unfavorable time to enter the water at night. (3) Oh King, the *gopas* not seeing him, cried loudly: 'Oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Rāma!', upon which the Supreme Lord, who makes His people fearless, found out that His [step]father had been arrested by Varuṇa. He went to Varuṇa's place. (4) As soon as he saw that the Lord of the Senses had arrived, the presiding godhead of that region [of the waters] elaborately honored Him, being greatly pleased to have Him present.

(5) **Śrī** Varuṇa said: 'Today I may experience the true wealth of the success of my physical existence, oh Lord, for it is so that those who earned the privilege to serve Your lotus feet, have achieved the transcendence of their material life. (6) I offer You my obeisances, oh Supreme Personality of Godhead, You who are the Absolute Truth and the Supreme Soul free from the influence of the deluding material energy of *māyā* that makes up the material universe. (7) That ignorant servant of mine was a fool who did not know his duty [*] when he brought this man to me who is Your father. I beg Your pardon, Your goodness. (8) Towards me, oh Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, oh You who sees everything, please be of mercy. Take this person who is Your father with You, oh You who care so much about Your parents.'

(9) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and Controller of all Controllers, thus being satisfied, took His father with Him and went back to His relatives whom He brought great joy with it. (10) Nanda, who never before had met with the great opulence of the lord of the realm [of the waters], nor had witnessed the obeisances they [Varuṇa and his followers] offered Kṛṣṇa, most amazed spoke to his friends and relatives. (11) Oh King, the *gopas*, excited to hear about Him, their Lord, thought: 'Maybe the Supreme Master is going to grant us His transcendental abode!'

(12) **H**e, the Supreme Lord who sees and understands everything of His devotees, full of compassion thought about the fulfillment of their desire: (13) 'The people in this world, ignorantly engaged in their wanton activities, wander between higher and lower purposes, without being aware of their actual destination.'

(14-15) **W**ith this consideration the Supreme Lord Hari in His great compassion showed the *gopas* His abode beyond the darkness of matter: the true, unlimited, spiritual knowing which is the light of the eternal absolute, the way it is seen by the sages when they in trance are removed from the material qualities. (16) They were by Kṛṣṇa brought to the lake of the One Spirit [*brahma-hrada*] and submerged in it. Lifted out again they saw the abode of the Absolute Truth, the way Akrūra has seen it [3.1: 32, 10.38 & 10.40]. (17) With that vision Nanda and the others were overwhelmed by supreme bliss, and they were most surprised to see Kṛṣṇa Himself present there, extensively being praised with Vedic hymns.'

*: Prabhupāda's pupils comment to the precise execution of *ekādaśī* fasting matters and auspicious times of bathing: 'Of course, Varuṇa's servant should have been aware of these technical details, which are meant for strict followers of the Vedic rituals.'

Chapter 29

The Rāsa Play: Kṛṣṇa Meets and Escapes the Gopīs at Night

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'Even though Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord, He, resorting to His inner potency [see *yoga-māyā*], decided to enjoy those nights in autumn when He saw the jasmine flowers blossoming. (2) The king of the stars [the moon] at the time painted with his action the face of the east red, thus giving comfort to all who longed for him, just like a lover approaching his beloved ends her grief when he after a long time shows up again. (3) Kṛṣṇa saw how the kumuda lotuses opened to the full disc of the moon, that glowed as red as the fresh *kuṅkuma* on the face of the goddess of fortune. He saw how the forest was reddened by the gentle rays of that light, and sweetly played His flute that enchanted the minds of the [*gopīs* with their] beautiful eyes. (4) That song being heard by the women of Vraja awakened Cupid in their hearts, so that each of them, unknown to the others, with her mind seized by Kṛṣṇa and with earrings swinging in the haste, went to the place where He, her boyfriend, was situated. (5) Some left behind the cows while they were milking them, some abandoned in their eagerness the milk they had on the stove, while others went away without taking the cake out of the oven. (6-7) Some put aside the children they were feeding milk, and dressed up without thinking of the service they would render to their husbands. Some left during their meals, some while they were oiling themselves, were smearing their bodies or were making up their eyes. Others went to Kṛṣṇa with their clothes and ornaments in disarray. (8) They were checked by their husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives but, enchanted by Govinda they, with their hearts stolen, did not turn around [to their duties]. (9) Some *gopīs* who could not get away, stayed at home and closed their eyes to meditate on being [transcendentally] connected in love with Him [see footnote* and 10.1: 62-63]. (10-11) The intolerable, intense agony of being separated from their Beloved One, drove away all bad-mindedness. At the same time their material virtue was also reduced to zero because of the joy they obtained from meditating on Acyuta's embrace. Despite the fact that He was the Supreme Soul, they thought of Him as their paramour. Getting His direct association though their karmic bonds were

counteracted so that they immediately gave up their physical interest ruled by the natural modes.'

(12) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'They only knew Kṛṣṇa as their beloved one, and not as the Absolute Truth, oh sage. How could there, for them being so mindful of the material affair, be an end to the mighty current of the *guṇas*?'

(13) Śrī Śuka said: 'I spoke to you about this before [in 3.2: 19 and in 7.1: 16-33]. When the king of Cedi [Śīsupāla] could attain perfection even by hating the Lord of the Senses, what then would that mean for those dear to the Lord in the Beyond? (14) The personal appearance of the Supreme, Imperishable and Inscrutable Lord who, free from the modes, is the controller of the modes, is there to lead humanity to the perfection of life, oh King. (15) They who towards Him are constantly of lust, anger, fear, affection, unity or friendship will surely achieve absorption in Him. (16) You should not be surprised about this [fact] concerning the Unborn Supreme Personality, the master of all masters of yoga, Kṛṣṇa, by whose grace this world finds liberation. (17) When the Supreme Lord saw the girls of Vraja coming to Him, He, the best of all speakers, used charming words that confused them. (18) The Supreme Lord said: 'All of you, be welcome, oh fortunate ladies. What can I do to please you? Please tell Me whether Vraja is all right and for what reason you came here. (19) This night is full of ugly fearsome creatures, so please return to Vraja, oh slender girls. You women should not hang around here. (20) Your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands undoubtedly are looking for you and cannot find you. Do not make your families afraid. (21-22) You have seen Rākā [the goddess of the full moon day] resplendent with her moonlight. You have seen the forest full of flowers, which is even more pleasurable by the breeze, coming from the Yamunā, that plays through the leaves of the trees. Go therefore, without delay, back to the cowherd village. You must serve your husbands, oh chaste ladies, the calves and the children are crying for you to give them milk. (23) Or else, if you have come with your hearts overtaken by your love for Me, that is indeed praiseworthy of you, for all living beings have affection for Me. (24) For women it indeed is the highest dharma to be diligently of service to her husband, to be simple and honest towards the relatives, and to take good care of her family. (25) Unless he fell down [from his belief or being unfaithful] a husband, even being bad-tempered, unfortunate, old, decrepit, sickly and poor, must not be rejected by women who want to go to heaven [see also 9.14: 37 and B.G. 1: 40]. (26) For a well-educated woman to go astray dishonorably in adultery, is in all cases a contemptible

weakness that creates fear and harms the reputation. (27) By listening, being in My presence [with the deity and the devotees], by meditation and by narrating [proclaiming and publishing], one is of love for Me, not so much with physical proximity. Therefore, please return to your homes [see also 10.23: 33].'

(28) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopīs* thus hearing the not so pleasant words of Govinda, being dejected because they were disappointed in their strong desires, felt an anxiety that was hard to overcome. (29) Saddened letting their faces hang down and their bimba-red lips dry up, they sighed while scratching the ground with their feet. With their tears spoiling their make-up and washing away the *kun̄kum* on their breasts, they silently carried the burden of their great distress. (30) Their Beloved One, not so loving at all, had addressed them contrarily, while they for His sake had desisted from all their material desires. They wiped their tears and stopped their crying and then, with their voices choked up in the attachment, in agony said something back. (31) The beautiful *gopīs* said: 'You, oh Mighty One, oh Goodness should not speak so harshly. Please reciprocate with our devotion at Your feet for which we have denounced everything else. Do not play so hard-to-get rejecting us. Be just like the Godhead, the Original Personality who reciprocates with those who desire liberation. (32) Oh dearest one, You as the Knower of the Dharma spoke to us about the duty of women, that would consist of faithfulness to her husband, children and relatives. So be it, but is it not so that You, oh Lord, the Godhead, the most appreciated one, who as the Soul for all embodied beings is the closest relative, are the real object of this instruction? (33) The experts are constantly of service to You, who always endear them as their very own Self. So, what do our husbands, children and relatives mean to us who give us trouble? Have mercy with us, oh Supreme Controller, do not take away the by us for so long entertained hopes for You, oh Lotus-eyed One! (34) You easily stole our minds that were absorbed in our households, as also our hands that were engaged in household duties. Our feet will not move one step away from Your feet. How can we go back to Vraja, what should we do instead? (35) Please, oh Dearest One, pour the flood of the nectar of Your smiling glances and melodious songs, which [by the flute] escape from Your lips, over the fire in our hearts. Otherwise we will place our bodies in the fire that burns of separation, and by meditation on Your feet attain Your abode, oh Friend. (36) Oh You with Your lotus eyes, for the goddess of fortune it is a festival whenever she resides at the base of Your feet, the feet that now are held dear by [us] the people dwelling in the forest. Touching them we, being filled by Your joy, from that moment on will never be able to

stand in the direct presence of any other man! (37) The goddess of fortune, who together with Tulasī-devī has achieved a position on Your chest, is served by servants, and the other gods try to acquire her look of approval. But the same way as even she desires the dust of Your lotus feet, we also have sought the shelter of the dust of Your feet. (38) Therefore be of mercy with us, oh Vanquisher of all Distress. Renouncing our homes we have approached Your feet in the hope to worship You. Please allow us to serve You, oh gem of all people, oh You with Your beautiful smiles and glances for which our hearts have burned with an intense desire. (39) Seeing Your face encircled by Your hair, the beauty of Your earrings at Your cheeks, the nectar of Your smiling lips, the glances that make one fearless, Your two mighty arms, and with seeing Your chest, the only source of pleasure for the goddess, we are delivered as Your servants. (40) Which woman within the three worlds, oh dearest, would, completely being bewildered by the drawn-out melody lines of the song of Your flute, not deviate in her civil conduct, after seeing this grace of the three worlds, this beautiful form because of which [even] the cows, the birds, the trees and the deer manifested a shiver of joy? (41) You clearly have taken birth as the Godhead, the remover of the fear and distress of the people of Vraja, as no one else but the Original Personality who protects all the gods and worlds. Therefore, oh Friend of the Distressed, kindly place Your lotuslike hand on the burning breasts and heads of Your maidservants.'

(42) Śrī Śuka said: 'Having heard the *gopīs*' despondent words, the Lord of all the Lords of Yoga full of mercy smiled, He who had been satisfied despite His ever being satisfied within. (43) Being together with all of them He - like the spotted deer - was as splendid as the blemished moon surrounded by the stars. As the Infallible Lord who is so magnanimous in His glances and proofs of affection, He made their faces blossom with His broad smiles that beamed His jasmine-like teeth. (44) Being sung and singing Himself as the commander of hundreds of women moving among them, He wore the five-colored [Vaijayantī] garland with which He increased the beauty of the forest. (45-46) Together with the *gopīs* He arrived at the riverbank that, served by the waves, was cool with its [wet] sand and was pleasant with the fragrance of the lotuses that was carried by the wind. Together with the Vraja beauties awakening Cupid, He took pleasure in throwing His arms around them in embraces. That way touching their hair, belts, thighs and breasts with His hands, He, challenging striking them with His fingernails, glanced at them and played and laughed with them. (47) This way receiving from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the special attention of the

Greater Soul, they, getting proud, considered themselves the best of all women on earth. (48) Observing that they, due to their fortune, were caught in an intoxicated state of self-conceit, Lord Keśava, as a form of grace, disappeared from the spot in order to abate it.'

*: The different types of *gopīs* suggested here are also mentioned in the Padma Purāṇa:

*gopyas tu śrutayo jñeyā
ṛṣi-jā gopa-kanyakāḥ
deva-kanyāś ca rājendra
na mānuṣyāḥ kathañcana*

'It is understood that some of the *gopīs* are personified Vedic literatures (*śruti-cārī*), while others are reborn sages (*ṛṣi-cārī*), daughters of cowherds (*gopa-kanyās*), or demigod maidens (*deva-kanyās*). But by no means, my dear King, are any of them ordinary humans.' There is also mention of *sādhana-siddhas* and *nitya-siddhas*: those perfect of spiritual discipline and those born that way.

Chapter 30

The Gopīs Search for Kṛṣṇa Who Disappeared with Rādhā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Supreme Lord that sudden had disappeared, the young ladies of Vraja were as sorry not to see Him any longer as she-elephants who miss their bull. (2) The women who in their hearts were overwhelmed by the movements, affectionate smiles, playful glances, charming talks and other graceful gestures of the husband of Ramā, being absorbed in Him thereupon enacted each of those wonderful activities. (3) The dear ones lost themselves in imitating the movements, smiles, beholding, talking and so on, of their Beloved One, who factually thus was expressing Himself through their bodies. Under the influence of Kṛṣṇa's ways they confided to each other: 'He is completely in me!' (4) Together they sang loudly about Him and searched like mad everywhere in the forest, asking the trees for the Original Personality who, like the ether, is both present inside and outside: (5) 'Oh aśvattha [holy fig tree], oh plakṣa [waved-leaf fig tree], oh nyagrodha [banyan], have you seen the son of Nanda who has disappeared after He with His loving smiles and glances stole our hearts? (6) Oh kurabaka [red amaranth], aśoka, nāga, punnāga and campaka, have you seen passing the younger brother of Balarāma who with His smile vanquishes the pride of every girl who is too haughty? (7) Oh sweet tulasī, have you, who loves Govinda's feet so very much, seen our dearest Acyuta who carries you with swarms of bees around His neck? (8) Oh mālati, jāti, yūthikā and mallikā jasmine, have you seen Mādhava pass by who with His touch gives you pleasure? (9) Oh cūta [mango creeper], priyāla, panasa and āsana [jackfruit trees]; oh kovidāra [mountain ebony], jambu [rose-apple], arka, bilva [bell fruit], bakula [mimosa] and āmra [mango tree]; oh kadamba and nīpa, and who else of you who for the sake of others live here near the bank of the Yamunā, please be so kind to tell us whose minds were stolen, the path that Kṛṣṇa took. (10) Oh [mother] earth, what austerity did you perform to have been touched by Keśava's feet with a joy that made your bodily hair [her grasses and such] stand on end? Or do you maybe owe your beauty to being trodden by the feet of Vāmanadeva [see 8.18-22] or maybe because you were embraced by the body of Varāha [3.13]? (11) Oh wife of the deer, oh friend, did you encounter Acyuta and His beloved one here, He who with all His limbs is a

festival to your eyes? There is the fragrance in the air of the garland of the Master of the Gopīs that in touch with the breasts of His girlfriend was colored by the *kuṅkum*. (12) Oh trees, when Rāma's younger brother passed by, with His arm placed on the shoulder of His sweetheart, with in His hand a lotus and with the tulasī flowers [around His neck] followed by a swarm of bees blind of intoxication, did He, with His loving glances, acknowledge that you were bowing down? (13) Let us ask these creepers. Despite embracing the arms of their master tree, they must have noticed the touch of His fingernails. Just see how their skins erupt with joy!

(14) **T**he *gopīs* thus speaking madly, being distraught in their search for Kṛṣṇa, got fully immersed in Him when each of them began to act out a certain pastime of the Fortunate One. (15) One of them drank as Kṛṣṇa from another one acting as Pūtanā, like an infant from her breast, while yet another one, acting for the cart, was kicked over by the foot of another *gopī* who was crying [see chapters 10.6 and 7]. (16) One *gopī* acting as Kṛṣṇa was carried away by another *gopī* imitating a Daitya [Tṛṇāvarta, see 10.7], while yet another one, crawling about, was tinkling with her ankle bells while dragging her feet behind her. (17) Two behaved like Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, with some others who acted like the *gopas*, and killed one who played for Vatsāsura, while yet another couple enacted what happened with Bakāsura [see 10.11]. (18) Just like Kṛṣṇa calling for the cows far away, one *gopī*, who played for Him and acted like she was vibrating a flute, was praised by the others who said: 'Well done!' (19) One of them walked about with her arm placed over a [friend's] shoulder and declared: 'Look at my gracious movements, I am Kṛṣṇa!' and was thus keeping her mind fixed on Him. (20) 'Do not be afraid of the wind and rain, I will take care of your deliverance', one of them said while she with one hand managed to lift up her shawl [like it was Govardhana Hill, see 10.25]. (21) Oh master of men, one *gopī* climbing on top of another one declared with her foot on her head: 'Oh you vicious snake, go away, I have taken birth as the one to chastise the wicked!' [see 10.16] (22) One of them said: 'Oh *gopas*, look at this fierce forest fire, quickly close your eyes, I shall without any problem arrange for your protection.' (23) One slender *gopī* was tied up with a flower garland by another *gopī* who said: 'There You are, I bind You to the mortar, You pot breaker and butter thief!' and with that being said the other one covered her face and beautiful eyes, pretending to be afraid.

(24) **E**ngaged this way and asking the trees and creepers everywhere in Vṛṇḍāvana where He was, they at one spot in the forest saw the footprints of the Supreme Soul: (25) 'These are clearly the

footprints of the son of Nanda. You can tell by [the marks of] the flag, the lotus, the thunderbolt, the barleycorn and the elephant goad [see *]'. (26) The girls who, led by the various footprints, followed His trail, noticed to their dismay that they all the way were accompanied by the footprints of one of them. They thereupon said: (27) 'Whose footprints are these next to the ones of the son of Nanda? Over whose shoulder has He, as a bull with a she-elephant, placed His arm? (28) He must have been perfectly honored by her [*ārādhitaḥ*, see Rādhā] as being the Supreme, One Lord and Controller, for Govinda, thus being pleased, has turned us down and taken her separate. (29) Oh girls, how sacred are the particles of dust of Govinda's lotus feet that by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Śrī Ramādevī [Lakṣmī] are taken on their heads to drive away the sins? (30) For us these footprints of her are most unsettling, because, whom of us *gopīs* was taken aside to enjoy Acyuta's lips in seclusion? Look, here we do not see her feet anymore. The blades of grass and sprouts must have hurt the soles of her tender feet so that her love has lifted up His sweetheart. (31) Carrying His sweetheart the footprints pressed much deeper... Just see, oh *gopīs*, how, burdened by the weight, our so intelligent object of desire Kṛṣṇa has placed His girlfriend down to pick some flowers. (32) And see these half footprints over here. To gather flowers for His sweetheart the One Beloved made this imprint by standing on His toes. (33) Furthermore, in order to arrange the design of her hair the love-stricken friend with His loving girl sat down precisely here, in order to make for His sweetheart a crown from the flowers.'

(34) [Śrī Śuka said:] 'Even though Kṛṣṇa was perfectly contented, satisfied and undivided within Himself, He enjoyed with her and thus demonstrated the covetousness and selfhood of men and women who are motivated by lust. (35-36) Kṛṣṇa this way showed for which *gopī* He had abandoned the other women, the other *gopīs* who completely bewildered wandered around in the forest. She in her turn then thought of herself: 'He has accepted me, the best of all women, as His beloved and has turned down the *gopīs* who were led by lust!'

(37) **T**hereupon going to that spot in the forest, she got proud and said to Kṛṣṇa: 'I cannot move on, please carry me wherever You want to go.'

(38) **T**hus being addressed Kṛṣṇa said to His sweetheart: 'Climb on My back.' and then He disappeared. She felt very sorry.

(39) 'Oh Master, oh Lover, oh Dearest, where are You, where are You? Oh mighty armed One, please my friend, show Yourself to me, Your wretched maidservant!'

(40) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopīs*, not far away following the trail of the Supreme Lord, discovered their unhappy friend in a state of bewilderment about being separated from her Beloved. (41) To their utter amazement they heard her saying that she had received Mādhava's respect but that He also had let her down because of her bad behavior. (42) As far as the light of the moon permitted, they thereupon entered the forest [to look for Him], but noticing it got [too] dark, the women desisted. (43) Absorbed in Him, discussing Him, imitating Him and filled with His presence they, simply singing about His qualities, no longer thought about their homes [see also 7.5: 23-24]. (44) Turning back to the bank of the Yamunā they meditated on Kṛṣṇa, sang together and eagerly awaited His arrival.'

*: In the Skanda Purāṇa is found an explanation of these [in total nineteen] marks: 'At the base of the large toe on His right foot, the unborn Lord carries the mark of a disc, which cuts down the six [mental] enemies of His devotees. At the bottom of the middle toe of that same foot Lord Acyuta has a lotus flower, which increases the greed for Him in the minds of the bee like devotees who meditate on His feet. At the base of His small toe is a thunderbolt, which smashes the mountains of His devotees' reactions to past sins, and in the middle of His heel is the mark of an elephant goad, which brings the elephants of His devotees' minds under control. The joint of His right large toe bears the mark of a barleycorn, representing all kinds of enjoyable opulences. The thunderbolt is found on the right side of His right foot, and the elephant goad below that.' See the Vedabase file of 10.30: 25 for further info.

Chapter 31

The Songs of the Gopīs in Separation

(1) **T**he *gopīs* said: 'Because of Your birth the land of Vraja is more and more glorious and the goddess of fortune resides there perpetually. Show Yourself, oh dear beloved, You for whom the devotees, who search for You everywhere, sustain their life breath. (2) Not being here, oh Finest of Grace, You, with the beauty of Your glance which excels the exquisite beauty of the heart of the lotus that so perfectly grew in the pond of autumn, put an end to the life of us, the maidservants who gave themselves to You without expecting anything in return, oh Lord of Love. Is that not murder? (3) Time and again, oh Greatest Personality, we have been protected by You against all that is fearsome: perishing by the water [of Kāliya, 10.16], by the demon [Agha, 10.12], by the rains, the storm and thunderbolts [of Indra, 10.25], and by the bull and the son of Maya [the incidents with Ariṣṭāsura and Vyomāsura which Śuka discusses later]. (4) Oh Friend, You who appeared in the dynasty of the devotees [the Sātvatas] are actually not the son of the *gopī* [Yaśodā]. You, oh Lordship, are the seer, the inner consciousness of all embodied beings, oh You who appeared on the request of Brahmā who was praying for the protection of the universe [see also 3.8: 16 and 10.14]. (5) You who took the hand of the goddess, oh best of the Vṛṣṇis, made those fearless who, in the fear about their material existence, approached Your feet. Please, oh Lover, place as an answer to our desires Your lotuslike hand on our heads. (6) Oh You who put an end to the suffering of the inhabitants of Vraja, oh Hero of the women who with His smile defeats the false smiles of the people, please oh Friend, accept us, Your eternal maidservants. Please show us Your beautiful lotus face. (7) Your lotus feet, which remove the sins of the embodied souls surrendered to You, which follow the cows grazing grass, which are the abode of the goddess and which stood on the hoods of the serpent, please put them on our breasts, and dispel the lust in our hearts. (8) Oh You with Your lotus eyes, because of Your sweet charming voice and words which are so attractive to the intelligent souls, these maidservants, oh Hero, are getting bewildered. Please restore us to life with the nectar of Your lips. (9) The nectar of Your talks as described by the great thinkers drive away the sins of the individual souls who suffer [in this material world]. Charged with spiritual power they are a blessing for everyone

who hears them. Oh how beneficent are the persons who with song spread those talks all over the world [*].

(10) **We** are happy to meditate on Your affectionate smiles full of divine love, Your glances and Your pastimes, but the intimate conversations, which go straight to our hearts, oh deceiver, agitate our minds! (11) When You leave Vraja to herd the animals, oh Master, it does not feel good, oh Lover, to think of Your feet being hurt by the sharp and hard grasses and sprouting plants, oh Master, those feet that are more beautiful than a lotus. (12) When You at the end of the day show again Your bluish black locks and Your lotus face, thickly covered with dust, You time and again bring Cupid to our minds, oh Hero. (13) Your lotus feet, which fulfill the desires of those bowing down to them and which are worshiped by the one born on the lotus [Brahmā], are the ornament of the earth and the proper object to meditate in times of distress. Therefore please, oh Lover, oh Remover of the Anxiety, place Your feet, which grant the highest satisfaction, upon our breasts. (14) Sorrow ends and the pleasure of love increases by the vibrations of the flute that, so perfectly handled [by You], makes us forget the attachments to other persons. So please, oh hero, grant us the nectar of Your lips! (15) When You wander about the forest during the day, a single moment becomes like an eon for us not seeing Your curling locks of hair and Your beautiful face. How foolish is he [Brahmā] who created the eyelids of those looking at You! (16) Completely neglecting our husbands, children, ancestors, brothers and other relatives, we sought Your presence, oh Acyuta, oh You who know the reasons of our movements. Oh cheater, how could You in the dead of night abandon the women who were bewildered by the clear sound of Your flute? (17) By intimately chatting with You finding the lust rising in our hearts, by seeing Your smiling face, loving glances and Your broad chest that is the abode of the goddess, our minds so full of craving, time and again got bewildered. (18) For those living in the forests of Vraja Your so very, for each and all, auspicious appearance constitutes the destruction of their distress, oh dearest. Please grant us a bit of that medicine counteracting the disease in the hearts of Your devotees hankering for You. (19) Your so tender lotus feet we, oh beloved, place gently on our breasts, afraid that the forest You roam might be too rough for them. We who consider Your Lordship our very life, with restless minds are concerned that they do not suffer any harm from small pebbles and so on [see further the Śikṣāṣṭaka].'

*: The pupils of Prabhupāda here refer to the following story: 'King Pratāparudra recited this verse to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during Lord

Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā festival. While the Lord was resting in a garden, king Pratāparudra humbly entered and began massaging His legs and lotus feet. Then the king recited the thirty-first chapter of the tenth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the songs of the *gopīs*. The Caitanya-Caritāmṛta relates that when Lord Caitanya heard this verse, beginning *tava kathāmṛtam*, He immediately arose in ecstatic love and embraced king Pratāparudra. The incident is described in detail in the Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Madhya 14.4 - 18), and in his edition Śrīla Prabhupāda has given an extensive commentary.'

Chapter 32

Kṛṣṇa Returns to the Gopīs

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopīs*, oh King, thus went on singing and speaking deliriously, endearingly weeping loudly and hankering for the audience of Kṛṣṇa. (2) The son of Vasudeva [or Śauri, 'the Son of the Hero'], the Bewilderer of [Cupid] the bewilderer of the mind, thereupon appeared directly before them, smiling with His lotuslike face and wearing a yellow garment and a garland. (3) When they saw that He, their dearest one, had returned to them, the girls full of affection opened their eyes wide and stood all simultaneously up as if life had returned to their bodies. (4) One of them joyfully seized the hand of Śauri with her folded palms while another one put His arm, adorned with sandalwood paste, around her shoulder. (5) A slender *gopī* took the remnants of the betel He had chewed in her joined hands and another one took His lotus feet and placed them on her burning breasts. (6) Another one with frowning eyebrows biting her lips threw, beside herself in her love, agitated, sidelong looks at Him as if she wanted to harm Him. (7) Another one [said to be Rādhā] staring at Him relished His lotus face but could, despite the full taste, not get enough, just like saints cannot get enough of His feet. (8) One of them placed Him, through the openings of her eyes, in her heart and kept embracing Him there with her eyes closed, like a yogi being drowned in ecstasy while her hairs stood on end [*]. (9) All of them experienced a supreme jubilation at the sight of Keśava and gave up the distress of their separation, just like normal people do when they meet a spiritually enlightened person. (10) In the midst of those who were relieved of their sorrow, Acyuta, the Supreme Lord, appeared even more brilliant, my dear King, as the Original Person complete with all His spiritual potencies. (11-12) The Almighty One took them with Him and arrived at the banks of the Yamunā. There the auspicious river with the hands of her waves had collected soft sands. The kunda and mandāra flowers fragrantly bloomed with bees [attracted] by the autumnal breeze, while the moon, plentifully shining, with its rays dispelled the darkness of the night. (13) The pain of the desires in their heart was dispelled by the ecstasy of seeing Him. By arranging a seat for their dear friend, with their shawls which were smeared with the *kuṅkuma* from their breasts, the *gopīs* attained the ultimate fulfillment of their souls as [described in] the scriptures [see also 10.87: 23]. (14) The Supreme Lord and Controller for whom

the masters of yoga arrange a seat in their hearts, present in the assembly of the *gopīs* was seated there resplendently. Thus exhibiting His personal form He was worshiped as the exclusive reservoir of all beauty and opulence in the three worlds. (15) He who awakens Cupid, was honored with smiles, with playful glances, with sporting their eyebrows, with massaging His feet and hands upon their laps, and was thus offered praise, but still being somewhat incensed they addressed Him. (16) The fine *gopīs* said: 'Some are of respect for of those who respect them, some show respect without being respected themselves and some have no respect for anyone. Oh dear one, can You explain that to us?'

(17) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Friends respecting each other for their self-interest only, are no real friends that way because they, in just desiring their benefit, do not follow the principle. (18) They who are respectful and kind without being respected themselves, like parents e.g., are faultless in their sense of duty and of real friendship, oh slender girls. (19) As for those who have no respect for the ones who respect them, not even answering the love they receive: with them one may speak of either [spiritually] self-satisfied souls, of people whose material desires were fulfilled, of ungrateful, dissatisfied human beings, or else of persons inimical towards venerable personalities [like spiritual masters and superiors]. (20) My dear friends, I on the other hand do not [always] answer the respect I receive from other living beings, not even when I am worshiped, because I want to make that respect [that propensity for pure love] grow. It works like with a poor man who collected some wealth and, out of fear to lose it, can think of nothing else then [see also B.G. 4: 11 and 10.29: 27]. (21) Because you for My sake defied what the people, the scriptures and your relatives all say, and because of [My desire to increase] your propensity to love Me, I have answered actually out of love by disappearing from your sight, My dear girls [**]. So do not be displeased with your Beloved, oh dear ones. (22) I will, not even living as long as a god in heaven, be able to repay you for your unadulterated worship of Me. May your pious activities constitute the return [the reward] for your cutting with the so difficult to break chains of your household lives.'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states that the seven *gopīs* mentioned thus far in this chapter are the first seven of the eight principal *gopīs* of which the Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī in a verse gives the names as being Candrāvalī, Śyāmalā, Śaibyā, Padmā, Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā and Viśākhā. The eighth one is understood to be Bhadrā. The Skanda Purāṇa declares these

eight *gopīs* to be the principal ones among the three billion *gopīs* and Rādhā is, as confirmed in the Padma Purāṇa, Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra and the Ṛg-parīśiṣṭa, the Lord's most beloved one.

** : Intermittent reinforcement as practiced by Kṛṣṇa so evanescently here, in fact creates the strongest bond, so confirms modern behavioral science. Thus with all His religions everywhere in the world there are days of materially motivated work where we do not see Him as He vanishes into the background, and days of prayer where we do meet Him by His representatives.

Chapter 33

The Rāsa Dance

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the *gopīs* heard these most charming words of the Supreme Lord, they gave up their lamentation about having been deserted. Touching His limbs had fulfilled all their desires. (2) Govinda thereupon on the spot engaged in a dance [a *rāsa*, or sport] in which the faithful jewels among women all satisfied joined with their arms linked together. (3-4) The festival of the dance commenced with the *gopīs* positioned in a circle. Kṛṣṇa, the Controller of the Mystic Union, always keeping Himself situated between two of them, held His arms around the necks of the women next to Him. At that moment the sky was crowded by hundreds of celestial carriers belonging to the denizens of heaven with their wives whose minds were carried away by curiosity. (5) Thereupon kettledrums resounded and a rain of flowers came down, while the chief singers of heaven together with their wives sang about His immaculate glories. (6) In the circle of the dance there was a great rumor of the bracelets, ankle bells and waist bells of the women being together with their Beloved. (7) The Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, being together with them appeared as handsomely splendid as an exquisite [blue] sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments. (8) The way they placed their feet, by the gestures of their hands, their smiles, playful eyebrows and their bending waists, by their breasts moving beneath their clothes, their earrings at their necks and their perspiring faces, with the braids of their hair, their tightly tied belts and their singing about Him, they, in the role of Kṛṣṇa's consorts, shone as streaks of lightening amidst the clouds. (9) They by whose song the entire universe is pervaded, sang loudly with their colored throats, danced joyfully and were happy in their dedication to be touched by Kṛṣṇa. (10) One *gopī* who together with Kṛṣṇa raised [her voice relative to His] in pure tones of close harmony, was praised by Him who pleased exclaimed: 'excellent, excellent!' And another *gopī* who vibrated along with them with a special metre, He also showed His great appreciation. (11) A certain *gopī* [Rādhā probably] whose bracelets and flowers were slipping, stood fatigued because of the dancing at the side of the Master of the Ceremony ['He who holds the club'] and grasped His shoulder with her arm. (12) Somewhere else there was one who placed Krishna's arm, which was as fragrant as a blue lotus, over her shoulder and kissed it, as she smelled the

sandalwood with her hair standing on end. (13) Another one, looking beautiful with the glittering of her earrings shaking because of the dancing, placed her cheek next to His and received from Him the betel nut He had chewed. (14) One of them who with Acyuta at her side was dancing and singing with tinkling ankle bells and waist bells, feeling tired, placed His auspicious lotus hand on her breasts. (15) Now that the *gopīs* had achieved the Infallible Lord, the Exclusive Lover of the Goddess of Fortune, as their lover, they enjoyed it, with His arms around their necks, to sing about Him. (16) With the lotus flowers behind their ears and the wreaths in their hair falling to the ground, with the locks of their hair decorating their cheeks and their beautiful faces perspiring, with the reverberation of the harmonious sounds of their armlets and bells and the bees buzzing around them, the *gopīs* danced together with the Supreme Lord in the arena of the dance. (17) The Master of the Goddess of Fortune, thus with His embraces, the touches of His hands, His affectionate glances and His broad playful smiles, enjoyed it to be together with the young women of Vraja, just like a boy does playing with His own reflection. (18) From the bodily contact with Him being overwhelmed in their senses, it was for the ladies of Vraja not easy to keep their hair, their dresses and the cloths, which covered their breasts, sufficiently tidy. Their flower garlands and ornaments were in disarray, oh best of the Kurus. (19) Seeing Kṛṣṇa thus playing, the goddesses moving through the sky were seized by desires of love and the moon and his followers [the stars] got amazed. (20) Expanding Himself to as many [appearances] as there were cowherd women, He, despite being the Supreme Lord satisfied within, enjoyed the pastime He had with them. (21) Lovingly He, with His most soothing hand, kindly wiped the faces of the *gopīs*, my best one, when they felt tired from the pleasure of the romance. (22) The *gopīs* greatly pleased by the touch of His fingernails, sang about the exploits of their Hero, honoring Him with the beauty of their smiles, glances and cheeks, that was heightened by the effulgence of their shining locks of hair and golden earrings.

(23) **B**eing tired, He, with His garland crushed and smeared by the *kuṅkuma* of their breasts, quickly being followed by the bees [singing] like the best Gandharvas, entered together with the *gopīs* the water [of the Yamunā] in order to dispel the fatigue, just as a bull elephant does when he with his wives has broken the irrigation dikes [in their case: the normal rules of conduct]. (24) In the water He was splashed from all sides by the girls who looked at Him with love and laughter, my best one. Thereto from the heavenly carriers [of the gods] being worshiped with a rain of flowers He, who is personally always satisfied within, in that place reveled in playing [with the *gopīs*] like

He was the king of the elephants [see also 8.3]. (25) Just like an elephant that is dripping rut with his wives, He then, surrounded by the swarm of His bees and women, passed through a grove nearby the Yamunā that everywhere was filled with the - by the wind carried - fragrance of the flowers in the water and on the land. (26) He, the Truth of all Desires, thus with His many adoring girlfriends spent the night that was so bright because of the moonlight. He thereby controlled within Himself [during that one night] the romantic feelings He wished to honor during all autumn nights, the nights that so very much inspire for poetic descriptions of spiritual moods [or *rasas*].'

(27-28) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'In order to establish the dharma and to subdue the defiant souls, He, the Supreme Lord, the Controller of the Universe, descended with His plenary portion [Balarāma]. How could He, the original speaker, executor and protector of the codes of moral conduct, behave so to the contrary, oh brahmin, by touching the wives of other men? (29) What did He, being satisfied within, have in mind with this no doubt contemptible performance, oh upholder of the vows? Please dispel our doubt about this.'

(30) Śrī Śuka said: 'When mighty authorities transgress the rules of dharma and act boldly, it does not mean they are at fault. They are like an all-consuming fire [that is not affected by what it consumes]. (31) Someone not in control [of himself] must not even think of ever doing a thing like this. Being as foolish to act in such a way, means one's demise, one is not a Rudra who can drink the poison of the ocean [see 8.7]. (32) It are the *words* of the authorities that are true, their *acts* should only occasionally be taken as an example. Someone intelligent does only what is in agreement with their words [see also B.G. e.g. 3: 6-7, 3: 42, 5: 7]. (33) Just as they who act egolessly do not benefit from the good acts they perform, they neither will suffer any disadvantage when they act contrary to the virtue. (34) How can one speak in terms of right or wrong concerning the Controller(s) of those who are controlled - all the created beings, animals, human beings and denizens of heaven? (35) The sages [His representatives] who abandoned all karmic bondage by serving the dust of the lotus feet, are satisfied by the power of yoga and act freely, they never get entangled because of Him. Therefore one can never speak of a state of bondage of, or of being bound by, Him who assumed His wonderful bodies [for the sake of detachment, see *vapu*]. (36) He who, within the *gopīs* and their husbands, indeed within all embodied beings, lives as the Supreme Witness, assumes a form in this world in order to engage in His pastimes. (37) In order to show His mercy to His devotees, He, with assuming a humanlike body, engages in such [amorous] pastimes,

that one hearing them becomes devoted to Him [see also 1.7: 10]. (38) The cowherd men of Vraja, who were bewildered by the power of His *māyā*, were not jealous of Kṛṣṇa. They all thought that their wives had stayed at their side. (39) Even though the *gopīs* did not want to, the sweethearts of the Supreme Lord, on Kṛṣṇa's advise went home after that [endless] night of Brahmā had passed. (40) Anyone who with faith listens to, or gives an account of, this pastime of Lord Viṣṇu with the cowherd girls of Vraja, will achieve the transcendental devotional service of the Supreme Lord. He will quickly become sober and forthwith drive away the disease of lust in his heart.'

Chapter 34

Sudarśana Delivered and Śankhacūḍa Killed

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopas* one day, eager for God, with bullock carts went on a trip into the Ambikā forest. (2) There they took a bath in the Sarasvatī and worshiped with paraphernalia devotedly the mighty demigod Paśupati [Śiva as the lord of the animals] and the goddess Ambikā [*], oh King. (3) Respectfully donating cows, gold, clothing and sweet grains to all the brahmins, they prayed: '*devo nah prīyatām*' [may God be pleased with us]. (4) Following strict vows only drinking water [see 8.16], the highly blessed Nanda, Sunanda [Nanda's younger brother] and the others stayed that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī. (5) Some giant snake that was very hungry, happened to live in that forest and slithering on his belly began to swallow the sleeping Nanda. (6) Seized by the python he shouted: 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, my dear boy, save this surrendered soul. This huge serpent is devouring me!' (7) Hearing his cries, the *gopas* rose immediately, and seeing what happened, they perplexed took up firebrands to attack the snake. (8) The snake, despite being burned by the torches, did not release Nanda. But the Supreme Lord, the Master of the Devotees came and touched him with His foot. (9) The divine touch of the Supreme Lord's foot put an end to his badness. He gave up his snake body and next assumed a form that was worshiped by the Vidyādhara [he was their leader]. (10) The Lord of the Senses then questioned the personality who, offering his obeisances and with his body adorned with a golden necklace, brilliantly shining stood before Him. (11) 'Who might you be who, shining so beautifully, are wonderful to behold? Tell Me what led to this terrible fate of having been forced to assume such a ghastly form [7.13: 11]?'

(12-13) **T**he [erstwhile] serpent said: 'I am Sudarśana, a certain Vidyādhara well-known for his opulence and appearance. I used to wander all the directions in my celestial carrier. Because I, conceited about my appearance, ridiculed the sages who descended from Āṅgirā I, for my sin of deriding them, was made to assume this ugly form. (14) They, in their compassionate nature, with pronouncing their imprecation included the favor that all my viciousness would be

destroyed after having being touched by the foot of the Master of All Worlds. (15) I beg You, that same person who for the surrendered souls are the remover of the fear of a material existence, oh You who by the touch of Your foot freed me from the curse, for Your permission [to return to my world], oh Destroyer of All Distress. (16) I am surrendered to You, oh Greatest of All Yogis, oh Supreme Personality, oh Master of the Truthful Ones. Please let me go, oh Lord, oh Controller of all the Controllers of the Universe. (17) Seeing You I was immediately freed from the punishment of the brahmins, oh Acyuta, oh You whose name being sung instantly purifies all those who may hear it as also the singer himself. How much more then, would it mean to be touched by Your foot?'

(18) **T**hus circumambulating Him and offering his obeisances, Sudarśana took leave. He returned to heaven and Nanda was delivered from his awkward position. (19) The men of Vraja, witnessing Kṛṣṇa's personal display of power, stood amazed. Thereupon they on the spot finished their duties [unto Śiva] and returned to the cowherd village, oh King, [on their way] with reverence recounting what had happened.

(20) **S**ome day thereafter [at Gaura-pūrnimā so one says] Govinda and Rāma, whose deeds are so wonderful, in the middle of the night were playing in the forest with the girls of Vraja. (21) Their glories were charmingly sung by the group of women bound in affection to Them, whose limbs were finely decorated and smeared, wearing flower garlands and spotless clothes. (22) The two of Them [together with them] honored the nightfall with the appearance of the moon and the stars, the jasmine buds that with their fragrance intoxicated the enjoying bees, and the breeze that transported the fragrance of the lotuses. (23) They both sang for the mind and ears of all living beings to be happy, therewith in harmony from high to low producing the entire scale of notes available. (24) The *gopīs* who listened to Their singing, in their fascination did not notice, oh ruler of man, that their dresses slipped and their hair and flowers got disheveled. (25) While the Two thus were amusing Themselves to their heart's content, singing to the point of ecstasy, a servant of Kuvera arrived on the scene carrying the name Śankhacūḍa ['wealthy-crest']. (26) Straight in front of their eyes, oh King, he shamelessly drove the group of women away in the northern direction, while they were crying out to the Two they had chosen as their Lords. (27) Seeing that they who belonged to Them were seized by a thief like a couple of cows and were crying out 'Oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Rāma, help us!', the two brothers ran after them. (28) Calling out 'Do not be afraid', They comforted them with Their words. Quickly moving with śāla logs in

Their hands They soon caught up with that worst specimen of all Yakṣas who was speeding away with great haste. (29) When he saw the Two approaching like Time and Death personified, he became afraid. In his confusion he left the women behind and ran for his life. (30) Govinda pursued him wherever he fled in order to rob him of his crest jewel, while Balarāma stayed behind to protect the women. (31) Overtaking him like it was nothing, the Almighty Lord with His fist knocked off the crest jewel of the villain together with his head. (32) After thus having killed Śankhacūḍa He brought the shining jewel to His elder brother and handed it satisfied over to Him while the *gopīs* were watching.'

*: Ambikā means mother, good woman, a name scripturally associated with the femininity of Ūma and Pārvatī in relation to Skanda, Śiva or Rudra, as a term of respect. Ambikāvana is found in the Gujarat province, near the city of Siddhapura. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura quotes authorities here who claim that Ambikāvana is situated at the bank of the Sarasvatī river [that does not exist any longer] and is found northwest of Mathurā. Ambikāvana is notable for its deities of Śrī Śiva and his wife, the goddess Ūma.

Chapter 35

The Gopīs Sing about Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Whenever Kṛṣṇa had left for the forest, the *gopīs*, unhappy chasing Him in their mind, passed their days singing loudly about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

(2-3) The *gopīs* said [in double verses]: 'With His left cheek put to His left arm He, oh *gopīs*, with His eyebrows moving, places the flute at His lips, while stopping the holes with His tender fingers. Where Mukunda thus sounds His flute, the women travel the sky together with the Siddhas. Embarrassed about the desires pursued by their minds, they listen in amazement and forget the sadness they felt, as also their girdles. (4-5) Oh girls, listen how wonderfully Nanda's son, the giver of joy to people in trouble, He with His brilliant smile and fixed streak of lightning [the Śrīvatsa or the goddess] on His chest, sounds His flute. Groups of bulls kept in the pasture, deer and cows, with their ears pricked up at a distance, with their mouths filled, stop chewing and, transfixed by His play, dreaming, stand frozen as if it concerned a drawn picture. (6-7) When Mukunda dear *gopīs*, looking like a wrestler with an arrangement of [peacock] feathers, [mineral] colors and leaves, together with Balarāma and the *gopas*, calls for the cows, the flow of the rivers is interrupted. The rivers, just like us lacking in piety, trembling out of love, with their arms of water stand perplexed, while hankering for the dust of His lotus feet that is transported by the wind. (8-9) When He, moving around in the forest and on the hillsides, as the Original Person with His flute calls for the cows and He, for His prowess and inexhaustible opulences, by His company extensively is praised in every way, the creepers and the trees, heavy with flowers and fruits, bend over all by themselves. As if they wanted to reveal Viṣṇu present within them, they in their love rain down torrents of sweet sap, while the growths on their bodies stand on end in ecstatic love. (10-11) The very moment He, as the most attractive one to behold, raises His flute, with respect for the desirable song of the strongly humming swarm of bees around His divine garland which is intoxicated by the honey sweet [subtle] fragrance of the tulsī flowers, oh then, the cranes, swans and other birds in the lake, with their minds seized by the charm of the song,

come forward to pay Him homage with their eyes closed, keeping silent with their minds under control. (12-13) Oh Vraja *devīs*, when He, being together with Balarāma, for fun wears a garland on His head, and He at the mountain side gives happiness vibrating on His flute and makes the whole world delightfully enjoy, the deck of clouds, afraid to offend such a great personality, in return most gentle minded, thundering and raining flowers upon his Friend, offers its shade as a parasol. (14-15) Oh pious lady [Yaśodā], when your son, who is an expert in different cowherd matters and a genius in the different styles of playing, places His flute to His bimba-red lips to produce the harmonious sounds of His music, the masters of spiritual authority like Indra, Śiva and Brahmā, who hear that tonal variety, with their minds confounded bow their heads because they cannot fathom its essence. (16-17) When He plays His famous flute and, moving with the grace of an elephant, with His flower petal lotus feet marks the soil of Vraja with the different symbols of the flag, thunderbolt, lotus and elephant goad, He with His body relieves the earth from the distress caused by the hooves [of the cows]. As He walks [by] and bestows His playful glances, we get excited in our amorous feelings and stand transfixed like trees, in our bewilderment not knowing anymore [what the condition would be of] our dresses and braids.

(18-19) **A**t times, when He, with the garland around His neck smelling of the by Him favored tulsī, counts the cows on a string of colored beads and then, throwing His arm over the shoulder of a loving companion, sings, the wives of the black deer, the doe - just like the *gopīs* who gave up their civil aspirations -, approach that ocean of transcendental qualities to sit at His side with their hearts stolen by the sound produced by Kṛṣṇa's flute. (20-21) Oh sinless lady, your darling child, the son of Nanda, is now, with His attire ornamented with a garland of jasmine flowers and surrounded by the *gopas* and the cows, having fun playing with His companions along the Yamunā. The wind gently blowing in His favor, honors Him there with a touch of sandalwood scent, while the lesser divinities [the Upadevas] surrounding Him present Him gifts and offer praise with instrumental music and songs. (22-23) Taking care of the cows of Vraja and at His feet being worshiped as the lifter of the mountain [see 10.25] He, at the end of the day, collected the herd of cows. Playing His flute with His companions, He on His way was everywhere worshiped by all adults [and demigods]. This moon, born from the womb of Devakī, who came with the wish to fulfill the desires of His friends, was, even when He was tired and His garland was colored by the dust raised by the hooves, a feast for the eyes. (24-25) He greets

His well-wishing friends while slightly rolling His eyes as if He is intoxicated. With His garland of forest flowers, with His face paled like a jujube plum [a badara], with the soft line of His cheeks and with the beauty of the golden earrings adorning Him, He is the Lord of the Yadus, the Lord sporting just like the lord of the elephants. His joyful face is like the moon, the lord of the night, who at the end of the day dispels the miserable heat of the cows [and the *gopīs*] of Vraja .'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh King, the women of Vraja, with their hearts and minds absorbed in Him, thus enjoyed their days, highly spirited singing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.'

Chapter 36

The Bull Ariṣṭāsura Defeated and Akrūra Sent by Kāmsa

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'Some time later the bull demon named Ariṣṭa, who had a huge hump, came to the cowherd village. The earth trembled because of his body as he ripped open the soil with his hooves. (2) Bellowing very loudly and scraping the ground with his hooves he, with his tail upward and with the tips of his horns tearing up the mud walls and throwing up clods, with glaring eyes released little bits of urine and stool. (3-4) The harsh sound he produced and the frightening sight of his pointed horns and his hump, which looked like a mountain with amassing clouds, so terrified the *gopas* and *gopīs*, my best one, that the women and the cows in their fear untimely lost their fetuses in miscarriages. (5) The animals panicked and fled from the pasture, oh King, while all the people cried 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!', seeking Govinda for shelter. (6) The Supreme Lord, seeing the entire cow-community distraught fleeing in fear, pacified them with the words 'do not fear' and called out to the bull demon: (7) 'You dull-witted, bad creature, how dare you in the presence of Me, the chastiser of foul miscreants like you, to frighten these *gopas* and their animals?!'

(8) **A**cyuta, the Lord, thus speaking, slapped His arms to anger Ariṣṭa with the sound of His palms and assumed a posture thereto in which He threw His serpentine arm over a friend's shoulder. (9) He indeed managed that way to enrage Ariṣṭa who furiously scratched the earth with his hoof and with his tail raised to the wandering clouds attacked Kṛṣṇa. (10) Bloodthirsty staring from the corners of his eyes, he pointed his horns straight ahead and ran full speed toward Acyuta, like he was a thunderbolt released by Indra. (11) The Supreme Lord though, seized him by the horns and threw him back eighteen feet, like he was an elephant with a rival. (12) Warded off he quickly restored to charge again in blind anger, to which he, sweating all over, breathed heavily. (13) Attacking Him he was [by the Lord] seized by his horns and made to trip by His foot, so that he slapped down to the ground like a wet garment. The Lord thereupon struck him with his horn [broken off] until he lay flat. (14) Vomiting blood, excreting a mass of urine and stool, and throwing his legs about, he in pain rolling with his eyes left for the abode of Death. The demigods thereupon scattered

flowers upon the Lord in worship. (15) After thus having killed the demon with the big hump, He, that feast for the eyes of the *gopīs*, together with Balarāma entered the cowherd village while being praised by the twice-born souls.

(16) **W**ith the demon Ariṣṭa being killed by the Worker of Miracles, Kṛṣṇa, the powerful sage Nārada, who has the vision of God, said to Kāṁsa: [see 1.6: 25-29] (17) 'Devakī's daughter actually was Yaśodā's girl, Balarāma was the son of Rohiṇī and Kṛṣṇa was also born from Devakī. Vasudeva out of fear placed Them in charge of his friend Nanda, They [Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma] were the two who killed your men.'

(18) **T**he lord of Bhoja hearing that, raging with anger, took up a sharp sword to kill Vasudeva. (19) Nārada withheld Kāṁsa [by saying] that Vasudeva's two sons would bring about his death. With that in mind he then chained him and his wife up with iron shackles [see also 10.1: 64-69]. (20) After the *devarṣi* had left, Kāṁsa spoke with the demon Keśī and told him: 'You are the one to kill Rāma and Keśava.'

(21) **T**hen he called together Muṣṭika, Cāṇūra, Śāla, Tośāla and others, as also his ministers and his elephant keepers. The king of Bhoja said to them: (22-23) 'Muṣṭika and Cāṇūra, dear mates, please listen to what I have to say, oh heroes. The two sons of Ānakadundubhi are living in the cowherd village of Nanda. It was foretold that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would cause my death. If we manage to get Them here for the sake of a wrestling match, you can kill Them. (24) Build a ring with various stages around it. Let all subjects from inside and outside the city witness an open competition. (25) Dear elephant-keeper, you my good man, should take the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa to the entrance of the arena and destroy there my enemies. (26) It has to commence on the fourteenth [Caturdaśī] of the month with the bow-sacrifice performed according to the injunctions. For the Lord of the Spirits [Śiva], the graceful one, the proper kind of animals should be offered in sacrifice.'

(27) **T**hus having issued his orders he, well versed in the art of securing one's personal interest, called for Akrūra ['the one not cruel'], the most eminent Yadu. He took his hand into his own and then said: (28) 'Dear master of charity, please do me a favor. With all respect, there is no one among the Bhojas and Vṛṣṇis to be found who is as merciful as you are. (29) The way Indra, the mighty king of heaven achieved his goals by taking shelter of Lord Viṣṇu, I have taken

shelter of you, oh kind one, for you always carry out your duties respectfully. (30) Go to Nanda's cowherd village where the two sons of Ānakadundubhi live and bring Them without delay here on this chariot. (31) These Two have been sent by the gods, under the protection of Viṣṇu, for the sake of my death. Bring Them together with the *gopas* headed by Nanda over here, and tell them to take along gifts of tribute. (32) When you have brought Them here I will have Them killed by the elephant, that is as mighty as time itself. And if They manage to escape that, my wrestlers, who are as strong as lightning, will put an end to Them. (33) After the two of Them are dead I will next kill the pained relatives whose leader is Vasudeva: the Vṛṣṇis, Bhojas and the Daśārhas [see again 10.1: 67]. (34) And my old father Ugrasena, so greedy for the kingdom, I will give the same treatment, as also his brother Devaka and my other opponents. (35) The thorns of this earth, oh friend, will thus be destroyed. (36) Together with my elder relative [my father-in-law] Jarāsandha and my dear friend Dvivida, as also with determined comrades like Śambara, Naraka and Bāṇa, I will enjoy this earth, killing all those kings who side with the demigods. (37) And now, with this knowledge, bring me quickly the young boys Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, to attend the bow-sacrifice here and to respect the glory of the Yadu capital [of Mathurā].'

(38) Śrī Akrūra said: 'Oh King, there is nothing wrong with your approach to free yourself from unwanted elements. One should act irrespective failure or success, destiny after all determines the end result. (39) Even though providence foils his plans, the common man fervently acts to his desires and is confronted with happiness and distress. Nonetheless I will execute your order.'

(40) Śrī Śuka said: 'After Kaṁsa thus had instructed Akrūra and dismissed his ministers, he entered his quarters, and Akrūra returned home.'

Chapter 37

Keśī and Vyoma Killed and Nārada Eulogizes Kṛṣṇa's Future

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'Then there was Keśī being sent by Kamsa [in 10.36: 20]. He as a huge horse with his hooves with the speed of mind ripped open the earth and scattered the clouds as also the celestial carriers of the gods. With his manes and neighing he frightened everyone. The Supreme Lord in response to the stir of the clouds created by his tail and his whinnying that terrified His cowherd village, thereupon stepped forward to fight. He called for Keśī who roaring like a lion was searching Him. (3) The moment he, who was hard to conquer and approach and most aggressively with a wide open mouth was swallowing the sky, saw Him before him, he rushed furiously forward to attack the lotus-eyed Lord with his legs. (4) The Lord of the Beyond alert to that dodged that attack and seized him with His arms by the legs. He whirled him around indifferently and threw him at a distance of a hundred bow lengths, standing there just like the son of Tārksya [Garuḍa] throwing a snake. (5) Regaining his consciousness he stood up in bitter rage and ran, [with his mouth] wide open, full speed at the Lord. With a smile He then put His left arm in Keśī's mouth, like it was a snake in a hole. (6) As Keśī's teeth came in touch with the Lord's arm they fell out as if they had come in contact with a red-hot iron. Thereupon the arm of the Supreme Soul swelled within his body so that his belly expanded like a diseased belly does after being neglected. (7) Because Kṛṣṇa's arm thus expanded, his breathing was arrested. Kicking with his legs, perspiring all over, rolling with his eyes and excreting feces, he thereupon fell lifeless to the ground. (8) After the Mighty-armed One had retracted His arm from the dead body, which looked like a cucumber [*karkaṭikā*], He, unassuming as He was in His effortlessly having killed His enemy, was honored from above by the gods with a rain of flowers.

(9) **T**he *devaṛṣi* [Nārada], the most exalted devotee of the Lord, oh King, approached Kṛṣṇa in private and said the following to Him who is so effortless in His actions: (10-11) 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Vāsudeva, immeasurable Soul, oh Lord of Yoga, oh Controller of the Universe, oh shelter of each, oh You master and very best of the Yadus! You alone are the Soul of all living beings who, like fire

hidden in firewood, resides within the heart as the Witness, the Lord, the Supreme Personality. (12) You, as the refuge of the spiritual soul, first of all, through Your energy, produced the basic qualities of nature. Unfailing in Your purpose You through these modes create, destroy and maintain this universe. (13) You, this one [creator] Himself, have descended for the protection of the virtuous souls and for the destruction of the demons [Daityas], the savages [Rākṣasas] and tormentors [Pramathas], who have the world of the living beings in their grip. (14) To our great fortune You in person have sportively killed this demon who assumed the form of a horse and because of whose neighing being terrified the vigilant gods abandoned heaven. (15-20) The day after tomorrow, I will see that Cānūra, Muṣṭika and other wrestlers, as also the elephant [Kuvalayāpīḍa] and Kāmsa, are killed by You, oh Almighty One. Thereafter [the demons] Śaṅkha, [Kāla-]yavana, Mura and Naraka will follow, You will steal the pārijāta flower and defeat Indra. I will see You marry the daughters of the heroes [the kings] as a reward for Your valor. In Dvārakā You will deliver King Nṛga from his curse, oh Master of the Universe, and capture the jewel named Syamantaka together with a wife. You will retrieve the deceased son of a brahmin [Sāndīpani Muni] from Your abode [of death] and then You will kill Pauṇḍraka, burn down the city of Kāśī [Benares] and see to the demise of Dantavakra. Thereafter You will kill the king of Cedi [Śīsupāla] at the great sacrifice [see also 3.2: 19, 7.1: 14-15]. The poets on this earth will be singing about these and other great feats, that I will see You perform during Your stay in Dvārakā. (21) Then I will see You, as the charioteer of Arjuna, assume the form of Time in bringing about the destruction of the armed forces of this world. (22) Let us approach [You who are] this Supreme Lord, full of the purest wisdom, who is completely fulfilled in His original identity, whose will in none of His exploits can be thwarted, and who, by the power of His potency, always desists from [identifying with] the flow of things occurring with the [interaction of the] basic qualities of the illusory, material energy. (23) For You I am bowed down, You the Greatest of the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas, the self-contained Controller who, by Your creative potency, has arranged for an endless number of specific situations in which You immediately could act and in which You have taken upon Yourself [the burden of] humanity being divided [in warfare].'

(24) Śrī Śuka said: 'The most eminent sage among the devotees thus respectfully having honored Kṛṣṇa, the leading Yadu, received permission to leave and went away most delighted about having seen Him. (25) Govinda, the Supreme Lord who in a fight had killed Keśī, still tended the animals together with the cowherd boys, who were

most pleased with the happiness He brought to Vraja. (26) One day, when the *gopas* were grazing the animals on the slopes of the hill, they engaged in the game 'stealing and hiding', playing the roles of thieves and herders. (27) Some of them were therein the thieves, some were the shepherds, while a couple of them, oh King, played for the unsuspecting sheep. (28) A son of the demon Maya named Vyoma ['the sky'], a powerful magician, disguised himself as a *gopa* and then, engaging as one of the many thieves, led away almost all the boys who acted as the sheep. (29) The great demon threw them one by one in a mountain cave the entrance of which he blocked with a boulder, so that only four or five of them remained. (30) Kṛṣṇa, He who offers shelter to all pious souls, finding out what he was doing, seized the *gopa* carrier as forcefully as a lion would seize a wolf. (31) The demon resumed his original form that was as big as a mountain. By all means he tried to free himself, but held tightly in His grip he, being debilitated, failed. (32) Controlling him with His arms, Acyuta forced him to the ground and, while the gods in heaven were watching, He killed him like it concerned a sacrificial animal. (33) He broke through the blocked entrance of the cave and led the *gopas* out of their awkward position, whereupon He, praised by the *gopas* and the gods, returned to His cowherd village.'

Chapter 38

Akrūra's Musing and Reception in Gokula

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The high-minded soul Akrūra spent the night in the city of Mathurā [after 10.36: 40] and then mounted his chariot to go to Nanda's cowherd village. (2) On his way he experienced an exceptional amount of devotion for the greatly fortunate lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, and thus he thought as follows: (3) 'What good works have I done, what severe penance did I suffer, or else of what worship have I been or what charity have I given, that I today may see Keśava? (4) My attainment of the presence of the One Praised in the Verses is, I think, for someone with a worldly mind [like me] as difficult to achieve as the chanting of the Vedas is for someone of the lowest class. (5) But enough of that, even for a fallen soul like me there is a chance to acquire the audience of Acyuta. Some time someone, pulled along by the river of time, may reach the other shore! (6) Today my impurity will be uprooted and my birth will bear fruit, for it are the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, whereupon the yogis meditate, that I am going to respect. (7) Kāmsa sending me here did me a great service indeed by obliging me to look for the feet of the Lord who descended into this world. It is by the effulgence of His rounded toenails that in the past many a soul succeeded in freeing himself from the hard to overcome darkness of a material existence. (8) On these [feet] that, marked by the red *kuṅkum* from the breasts of the *gopīs*, are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and the other demigods, by Śrī the goddess of fortune, the sages and the devotees, He with His companions moves about in the forest while tending the cows. (9) The deer are passing me on my right side [an auspicious sign]! I certainly will behold Mukunda's beautiful cheeks and nose, His smiles, the glances of His reddish lotus eyes and the hair curling around His face. (10) Today I no doubt will enjoy the direct sight of Viṣṇu. I unflinchingly will directly behold that paragon of beauty, who of His own accord assumed the form of a human being to diminish the burden of this earth. (11) Even though He is a witness [just like me] to the true and untrue, He is free from [false] ego. By that personal potency of Him He has dispelled the darkness and bewilderment of an existence in separation [see also 2.5: 14, 2.10: 8-9, 3.27: 18-30 and 10.3: 18]. Working from the inside out, He, by the created beings that manifested after He cast His glance upon the material energy of His creation, in their bodies can [only indirectly] be approached through the vital airs,

senses and intelligence [see also 2.2: 35]. (12) His auspicious words, in combination with the qualities, activities and the incarnations [of Him and His expansions], put an end to all sins in the world and bring life, beauty and purity to the entire universe, while words devoid of these are considered as [useful as] things that beautify a corpse. (13) And now He, to the delight of the chief demigods, has descended in the dynasty of His faithful souls [the Sātvatas] who maintain the codes of conduct, He who, with His presence in Vraja, spreads His fame as the Controller whose all-auspicious nature is glorified by the godly souls. (14) Today I will certainly see Him, the destination and spiritual master of all the great souls in the three worlds, He the real beauty and great feast for everyone endowed with eyes, He who exhibits the form that is the desire of the Goddess, He who is my safe haven, the One because of whom all my dawns became [a sign of] His auspicious presence. (15) The moment I alight from my chariot to respect the feet of the two Lords, the Principal Personalities upon whom even the yogis fix their intelligence in their self-realization, I will certainly bow down to Them as also to the friends [and the others] who live with Them in the forest. (16) And when I have fallen at the base of His feet, the Almighty One will place upon my head His lotus hand that dispels the fear for the serpent of time, the snake because of whose swift force the people terrified seek shelter. (17) By placing in that hand an offering, Purandara [see 8.13: 4] and also Bali [see 8.19] acquired rulership [the position of Indra] over the three worlds. It is the same hand that, fragrant like an aromatic flower, during the pastime with the ladies of Vraja, by its touch wiped away their fatigue [see 10.33]. (18) Even though I am a messenger sent by Kāṁsa, Acyuta will not adopt an attitude of enmity towards me. He, the Knower of the Field [of the body, see B.G. 13: 3], witnessing everything taking place inside and outside the heart, sees with a perfect vision. (19) Smiling affectionately He will look upon me, with my joined palms being fixed at the basis of His feet. With the immediate eradication of all my sins by His glance, I will thus be freed from doubt and achieve intense happiness. (20) With me [standing before Him] as His best friend and as a family member who is exclusively devoted to Him, He will close me in His two large arms. As a result my body will instantly become sanctified and my karma determined bonds will slacken. (21) When I, with my head down and palms joined, have achieved physical contact with Him, Uruśrava ['the renown Lord'] will address me with words like 'Oh Akrūra, dear relative...' Because of the Greatest of All Persons my life will thus be a success. How pitiable is the birth of the one not this way honored by Him! (22) No one is His favorite or best friend, nor is anyone disliked by Him, hated or held in contempt by Him [see B.G. 9: 29]. Nevertheless He reciprocates with His devotees [see also

10.32: 17-22] according to their actions, just like a [desire] tree from heaven that, upon approach, brings whatever one desires [see *Vaiṣṇava pranāma*]. (23) In addition His elder brother, the most excellent Yadu [Balarāma], smiling at me who stands there with a head bowed down, will embrace me, take hold of my hands and take me into His house to receive me with all respects, and then inquire how Kamsa fares together with the members of His family.'

(24) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus on his way with his chariot pondering over Kṛṣṇa, the son of Śvaphalka [see 9.24: 15] reached the village of Gokula as the sun was setting behind the mountain, oh King. (25) The imprints of His feet, of which the rulers of all worlds hold the pure dust on their crowns, he saw in the pasture: a wonderful decoration on the ground showing the shapes of the lotus, the barleycorn, the elephant goad and so on [see also 10.16: 18 and 10.30: 25*]. (26) The ecstasy of seeing them exited him greatly, made his hair stand on end and filled his eyes with tears. Getting down from his chariot he rolled himself in the footprints exclaiming: 'Oh this is the dust from my master's feet!' (27) This is what for all embodied beings is the goal of life: to give up one's pride, fear and sorrow when one is faced with the message of the signs of the Lord and hears about them and such [see 7.5: 23-24].

(28-33) In Vraja he saw Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, who, wearing yellow and blue garments and with eyes that looked like autumnal lotuses, were going to the place where the cows were milked. The two boys who are the shelter of the Goddess were, bluish-dark and fair skinned, most beautiful to behold with their mighty arms, attractive faces and a gait like that of a young elephant. With Their feet marked by the flag, bolt, goad and lotus, and with Their smiles and glances full of compassion, the two great souls increased the beauty of the cow pasture. They whose pastimes were so magnanimous and attractive, were freshly bathed, impeccably dressed, wore flower garlands and jeweled necklaces, and had smeared Their limbs with auspicious, fragrant substances. The two original, most excellent persons, who are the Cause and the Masters of the universe [see also 5.25], had for the welfare of that universe descended in Their distinct forms of Balarāma and Keśava. Oh King, with their effulgence They, as a mountain of emerald and a mountain of silver both decorated with gold, dispelled the darkness in all directions. (34) Quickly climbing down from his chariot Akrūra, overwhelmed with affection, prostrated himself at the feet of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. (35) Seeing the Supreme Personality he, because of the tears of joy overflowing his eyes and the eruptions [of ecstasy] marking his limbs, in his eagerness could not announce

himself, oh King. (36) The Supreme Lord, the Caretaker of the Surrendered Souls, recognized him, drew him near with His hand, which is marked with a chariot wheel [the *cakra*], and happily embraced him. (37-38) Thereupon the magnanimous Saṅkarṣaṇa [Rāma] embraced him who stood there with his head bowed down. With His hand taking hold of his two hands He took him together with His younger brother into the house. There He inquired whether he had enjoyed a pleasant journey. He offered him an excellent seat and washed his feet with sweetened milk, as was prescribed as a form of reverential respect. (39) Donating a cow in charity and respectfully giving the tired guest a massage, the Almighty One faithfully served him pure food of different tastes [fit for a sacrifice]. (40) After having eaten Rāma, the Supreme Knower of the Dharma, with love further arranged for herbs to serve the tongue and for fragrances and flower garlands for the highest satisfaction.

(41) **A**fter thus having honored him Nanda asked: 'Oh descendant of Daśārha, how are you faring with the merciless Kāṁsa alive, that boss who is [treating his subjects] just like a butcher [deals] with sheep? (42) If he, being cruel and self-indulgent, killed the babies of his own sister to her great distress, what then would that mean for the well-being of his subjects, for you?'

(43) **T**hus by Nanda properly being respected with true and pleasing words, Akrūra shook off the fatigue of his journey.'

Chapter 39

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Leave for Mathurā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After comfortably seated on a couch thus having been honored that much by Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, he [Akrūra] saw that everything had taken place what he on his way had pictured in his mind. (2) What would be unattainable when the Supreme Lord, the shelter of Śrī, is satisfied? Still, the souls devoted to Him, oh King, do not desire anything. (3) After having enjoyed supper the Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, asked how Kaṁsa treated His friends and relatives, as also what his plans were. (4) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh gentle one, have you recovered from your trip? I wish you all the best! Are your friends, relatives and other associates all hale and hearty? (5) But why, My dear one, would I ask about the well-being of us, our relatives and the citizens, as long as Kaṁsa, that disease of the family, who only in name is our maternal uncle, is prospering? (6) Ah! Because of Me there was great suffering for My noble parents: their sons were killed and they were imprisoned. (7) Fortunately, today My wish has been fulfilled to see you, My close relative, oh gentle soul. Please uncle, tell Me why you came here.'

(8) Śrī Śuka said: 'On the request of the Supreme Lord the descendant of Madhu [Akrūra, see 9.23: 29] described everything of the inimical attitude [of Kaṁsa] towards the Yadus and his murderous intentions in relation to Vasudeva. (9) He disclosed what the message was he was sent for as an envoy and what Nārada had told him [Kaṁsa] about Kṛṣṇa being born as a son of Ānakadundubhi. (10) When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the destroyer of all boldness in opposition, heard what Akrūra had to say, They laughed and told Nanda, Their [foster] father, what the king had ordered. (11-12) Nanda then issued the following official announcement to the *gopas* and the other people of Gokula: 'Gather all dairy products, take gifts and yoke the wagons. Tomorrow we together with all the people, will go to Mathurā to offer the king our products and have a great festival.'

(13) **W**hen the cowherd girls heard that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take Rāma and Kṛṣṇa along to the city, they got totally upset. (14) That created in the hearts of some of them such a great pain, that their beautiful faces turned pale because of their sighing, while the knots in the hair, the bracelets and dresses of other girls slipped away. (15) Of

other *gopīs* fixed in meditation on Him, all the sensory functions ceased, so that they took no notion of this world anymore, just like it happens with those who attained the realm of self-realization. (16) Women fainted, thinking of how Śauri had touched their hearts by sending His loving smiles and expressing Himself in wonderful phrases. (17-18) Thinking about Mukunda's charming movements, His activities, affectionate smiles, His glances that removed all unhappiness, His jesting words and mighty deeds, they joined in fear of the separation, greatly distressed, in groups to speak deeply absorbed with tears on their faces, about Acyuta. (19) The fine *gopīs* said: 'Oh Providence, where is your mercy to bring together the embodied souls in love and friendship? Separating us you leave us unfulfilled in our purposes. How uselessly you, just like a child, toy with us! (20) Having shown to us the face of Mukunda framed in black locks, His fine cheeks, straight nose, and the beauty of His modest smile dispelling the misery, you are not doing any good by [now] making all of this invisible to us. (21) By the name of Akrūra ['not-cruel'] you certainly are cruel, in your, like a fool, alas, taking away from us the Perfection of All Creation in one form, the enemy of Madhu, you allowed our eyes to see. (22) The son of Nanda breaks in a moment with His friendship. He has taken up a new love and has, alas, no eyes for us [anymore], we who under His influence were made to give up our homes, relatives, children and husbands, and directly serve Him. (23) How happy the dawn is after this night, when unfailingly the hopes have been fulfilled of the women of the city [of Mathurā]! For then they imbibe the face of the master of Vraja arriving there with the nectarean smile from the corners of His eyes. (24) However subservient and intelligent Mukunda may be, once His mind is seized by their honey-sweet words, oh girls, what chance is there for us? Would He, spellbound by the enchantments of their bashful smiles, still return to us rustics? (25) Today there certainly will be a great festival before the eyes of the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas and all others out there, when they on the road see the Darling of the Goddess, the reservoir of all transcendental qualities who is the son of Devakī. (26) Such an unkind person, a person as extremely cruel as he, should not be called '*a-krūra*' because he, without the least excuse, removes from the presence of us people [of Vraja] full of sorrow, the one dearer to us than the dearest. (27) He who so coldly has mounted the chariot [Kṛṣṇa], is by these foolish *gopas* followed in their bullock carts. And the elders do not even say a word. Today providence is not working in our favor! (28) Let us go to Him now and stop Him! What will that do to us, the family, the elders and our relatives, we who not even for half a second can miss the association of Mukunda? Separated by that fate our hearts will be

broken! (29) For us, who by the charm of His loving affection, attractive smiles, intimate discussions, playful glances and embraces, were drawn to the assembly of the *rāsa* dance [10.33], the night passed in a single moment! How, oh *gopīs*, can we ever defeat the insurmountable darkness of His absence? (30) How can we ever exist without Him, that Friend of Ananta [Balarāma], who at the end of the day, surrounded by the *gopas* entered Vraja with His hair and garland smeared with the dust of the hoofs, He who, playing His flute and smiling from the corners of His eyes, stole our minds with His glances?'

(31) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus speaking in pain about the separation, the ladies of Vraja, in attachment thinking of Kṛṣṇa, forgot all their shame and cried out loudly: 'Oh Govinda, oh Dāmodara, oh Mādhava!'

(32) While the women were lamenting thus, Akrūra at sunrise, after having performed his morning duties, set out with his chariot. (33) The *gopas*, who led by Nanda followed Him in their wagons, took along an abundance of offerings and clay pots filled with dairy products. (34) Also the *gopīs* followed their beloved Kṛṣṇa [for some time] and [then] stood waiting, hoping for some pleasing words from the Lord. (35) The Greatest among the Yadus saw them lamenting at His departure and consoled them lovingly with the message: 'I will do My best!' (36) Sending their minds after Him for as long as the flag and the dust of the chariot were visible, they stood there like painted figures. (37) Without the hope of ever seeing Him back, they returned and free from sorrow spent their days and nights singing about the activities of their Beloved.

(38) **W**ith the chariot moving as swiftly as the wind, the Supreme Lord together with Rāma and Akrūra, oh King, arrived at the Yamunā, the river removing all sin. (39) After touching the water there with His hand and drinking the sweet liquid that was as effulgent as jewels, He led the chariot to a grove and then climbed [back] on it together with Balarāma. (40) Akrūra asked Them to stay behind on the chariot and went to a pool in the Yamunā to perform a bath in accord with the injunctions. (41) Immersing himself in that water and reciting perennial mantras, Akrūra saw before him the likeness of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. (42-43) He thought: 'How can the two sons of Ānakadundhubhi positioned on the chariot be present here? Let me see whether They are still there...!', and rising from the water he saw Them sitting where he had left Them. Again alone entering the water he wondered: 'Was my vision of Them in the water a hallucination

maybe?' (44-45) And again he saw in that same place the Lord of the Serpents [Ananta or Balarāma], the Godhead with the thousands of heads, hoods and helmets, who by the perfected souls, the venerable souls, the singers of heaven and those of darkness was praised with bowed heads. Clad in blue and [with a complexion] as white as the filaments of a lotus stem, He was situated there like mount Kailāsa with its white peaks. (46-48) On His lap there was situated peacefully, like a dark cloud, the Original Personality with the four arms, clad in yellow silk. He had reddish eyes like the petals of a lotus, an attractive cheerful face with a charming, smiling glance, fine eyebrows, ears and a straight nose, beautiful cheeks and red lips. He had high shoulders and a broad chest home to the Goddess, stout, long arms and a conch shell-like neck, a deep navel and a belly with lines like those of a [banyan] leaf. (49-50) He had firm hips and loins, two thighs like an elephant's trunk, shapely knees and an attractive pair of shanks. His ankles were high, reddish were the rays emanating from His toenails, and the soft toes of His lotus feet surrounding His two big toes glowed like flower petals. (51-52) Adorned with a helmet bedecked with large and precious gems, wearing bracelets, armlets, a belt, a sacred thread, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, He carried an effulgent lotus, a conch shell, a disc and a club in His hands, next to the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest, His brilliant Kaustubha jewel and a flower garland. (53-55) He was accompanied by attendants headed by Nanda and Sunanda and was, according to each different type of loving attitude, praised in sanctified words by Sanaka and the others [the Kumāras], by the leading demigods headed by Brahmā and Śiva, by the foremost twice-born souls [headed by Marīci] and by the most exalted devotees led by Prahlāda, Nārada and Vasu. He was served by His [feminine] internal potencies of fortune [Śrī], development [Puṣṭi or also strength], speech [Gīr or knowledge], beauty [Kānti], renown [Kīrti], contentment [Tuṣṭi or renunciation - these first ones are His six opulences]; comfort [Ilā, *bhū-śakti*, the earth-element or *sandhinī*] and power [Ūrjā, expanding as Tulasī] as also by His potencies of knowing and ignorance [*vidyā* and *avidyā*, leading to liberation and bondage], His internal pleasure potency [Śakti or *hlādinī*], [His marginal potency, *jīva-śakti*] and His creative potency [Māyā].

(56-57) **W**itnessing this to his great pleasure, he [Akrūra], stood enthused with supreme devotion, with the hairs of his body standing on end and with his eyes and body getting wet because of his loving ecstasy. Regaining his composure the great devotee with a choked voice offered his respects with his head bowed down. Joining his hands he attentively prayed slowly!

Chapter 40

Akrūra's Prayers

(1) Śrī Akrūra said: 'I bow down to You, oh Lord Nārāyaṇa, Cause of All Causes, oh Original Inexhaustible Person, oh You from whose navel the lotus sprouted on the whorl of which Lord Brahmā appeared who generated this world. (2) Earth, water, fire, air, the ether including its source [the false ego]; the totality of matter [see footnote 10.13: ***] and its origin [the Puruṣa]; the mind, the senses, the objects of all the senses and the demigods [belonging to them], together constitute the [secondary] causes of the universe that have generated from Your [transcendental] body. (3) They, under the [outer] direction of the material realm, have because of that lifelessness no knowledge about the true identity of the Supreme Self, Your Soul. Also the unborn one [Brahmā] being bound to the modes of material nature, cannot know Your form transcendental to these modes [see also 10.13: 40-56]. (4) It is to the honor of You that the yogis perform sacrifice, You, the Supreme Personality and Controller within each, within the material elements, and within the ruling gods and saints. (5) Some brahmins worship You, with respect for the three sacred [*agnitraya*] fires, by means of the mantras of the three Vedas elaborately with various rituals for deities of different names and forms. (6) Some who strive for spiritual knowledge, attain peace by renouncing all fruitive actions and worship the embodiment of knowledge [the guru, the Lord] by means of sacrifices in the field of spiritual knowledge [see e.g. B.G. 4: 28, 17: 11-13, 18: 70]. (7) Others, whose intelligence is purified by the principles [the *vidhi*] included by You, worship You, absorbed in You, as the one form assuming many forms. (8) Still others worship You, the Supreme Lord, in the form of Lord Śiva, by treading the path described by Lord Śiva that in different ways is presented by many teachers. (9) Even though they as devotees of other divinities are of a different attention, they all worship You who, as the Controller, comprises all the gods [see B.G. 9: 23]. (10) Just like the rivers that, filled by the rain and springing from the mountains, from all sides enter the ocean, oh master, similarly all these paths [of the demigods] finally lead to You [see B.G. 2: 70, 9: 23-25, 10: 24 and 11: 28]. (11) All the conditioned living beings, from the unmoving ones up to Lord Brahmā, are caught in the qualities [*guṇas*] of goodness [*sattva*], passion [*rajas*] and ignorance [*tamas*] of Your material nature [see B.G. 14]. (12) I offer You, the Soul of All Souls my obeisances,

You who, with a detached vision, are present as the witness and the consciousness of everyone, as He who, with this stream of the material modes which was created by Your lower energy, deals with the souls who identify themselves therewith as gods, human beings and animals. (13-14) One considers fire as Your face, the earth as Your feet, the sun as Your eye, the sky as Your navel, and the directions as Your sense of hearing. Heaven is Your head, the ruling demigods are Your arms, the ocean is Your abdomen and the wind is Your vital air and physical strength. The trees and the plants are the hairs on Your body, the clouds are the hair on Your head and the mountains are the bones and nails of Your Supreme Being. Day and night are the blinking of Your eye, the founding father is Your genitals and the rain is regarded as Your semen [see e.g. also 2.6: 1-11]. (15) Just like the aquatics that move about in the water or the small insects in an udumbara fig, in You all the worlds found their origin, including their rulers and the many souls that crowd them, in You, their Inexhaustible One Personality comprising all mind and senses.

(16) **F**or the sake of Your pastimes You in this world manifest various forms, with which the people, to be purified from their unhappiness, full of joy sing Your glories. (17-18) My respects for You, the Original Cause who in the form of Matsya [the fish, see 8.24] moved about in the ocean of dissolution and for Hayagrīva [the Lord with the horse head, see 5.18: 6]. My obeisances unto You, the slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭaba, unto the huge master tortoise [Kūrma, see 8.7 & 8] who held the mountain Mandara, and all glory to You in the form of the boar [Varāha, see 3.13] whose pleasure it was to lift the earth out of the ocean. (19) My obeisances to You, the amazing lion [Nṛsimha, see 7.8 & 9] who removes the fear of every righteous soul, and to You who as the dwarf [Vāmana, see 8.18-21] covered the three worlds in one step. (20) All glories to You, the Lord of the descendants of Bhṛgu [Paraśurāma, see 9.15 & 16] who cut down the forest of conceited nobles, and my obeisances to You, the best one of the Raghu dynasty [Lord Rāma, see 9.10 & 11] who put an end to Rāvana. (21) My obeisances to You, oh Lord of the Sātvatas, oh You who are Lord Vāsudeva [of His consciousness], Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa [of His ego], Lord Pradyumna [of His intelligence] and Lord Aniruddha [of His mind, see further 4.24: 35 & 36]. (22) My obeisances to Lord Buddha [He as the awakened One], the Pure One, the bewilderer of the demoniac descendants of Diti and Dānu. My respects for You in the form of Lord Kalki [the Lord descending 'for the wicked ones'], the annihilator of the meat-eaters [the *mlecchas*] who pose as kings [see also 2.7].

(23) **O**h Supreme Lord, the individual souls in this world are bewildered by Your deluding material energy [*māyā*], and are, because of the false conceptions of 'I' and 'mine' [*asmitā*], driven to wander along the paths of fruitive activities [karma]. (24) As for my own body, children, home, wife, wealth, followers and so on, I too am deluded in foolishly thinking that these would be true, oh Mighty One, while they are more like dream images [that come and go]. (25) Thus groping in the dark with a mentality of wishing to enjoy a world of opposites, I, in not being of the true self or what is eternal while taking misery for the contrary [of happiness], fail to know You who are my dearest self and soul. (26) Like a fool overlooking water that is covered by plants or like someone running after a mirage, I have turned away from You. (27) With a pitiable intelligence because of material desires and actions, I could not find the strength to check my disturbed mind which, by the so very powerful willful senses, was diverted from one thing to another [see B.G. 13: 1-4 & 5.11: 10].

(28) **I**n this condition, I now approach Your feet that for any impure person, I think, are impossible to attain without Your mercy. Only by serving the truthful [of Your devotees, nature and culture, *sat*] a person can develop Your [Kṛṣṇa] consciousness and put an end to the cycle of rebirth in this material world, oh Lord with the lotus navel. (29) I offer my obeisances to You, the Embodiment of Wisdom and the Source of All Forms of Knowledge, You, the Absolute Truth of unlimited potencies who rules over the forces in control of the [conditioned] person. (30) My reverence is there for You, the son of Vasudeva, in whom all living beings reside. You I prove my respect, oh Lord of the Senses, please protect me in my surrender, oh Master.'

Chapter 41

The Lords' Arrival in Mathurā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'While he [Akrūra] was praying, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, having shown His personal form in the water, withdrew Himself the way an actor winds up his performance. (2) When he saw that the image had disappeared, he emerged from the water, quickly finished his different ritual duties and surprised went to the chariot. (3) Hṛṣīkeśa asked him: 'Have you seen something miraculous on the earth, in the heavens or in the water? We gather you did!'

(4) Śrī Akrūra said: 'Whatever wonderful things there may be out here on earth, in the sky or in the water, are all situated in You who comprise everything; what would I, seeing You, have not seen? (5) Beholding You, the One Person in whom all wonders of the earth, the sky and the waters are found, oh Absolute of the Truth, what else that I see in this world would amaze me?'

(6) With those words the son of Gāndinī [Akrūra] drove the chariot forward to take Rāma and Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, [where they arrived] at the end of the day. (7) The people of the villages who here and there on the road approached Them, were pleased to see the sons of Vasudeva, oh King, and could not take their eyes off Them. (8) In the meantime, Nanda, the *gopas* and the rest of the inhabitants of Vraja had arrived there and stayed in a park outside the city to wait for Them. (9) Catching up with them the Supreme Lord, the Master of the Universe, with a smile said to humble Akrūra while taking his hand into His own: (10) 'You go ahead of Us to the city with the chariot and go home. We will rest here and then see the city.'

(11) Śrī Akrūra said: 'How can I enter Mathurā without the two of You, oh Master? Do not let me down, oh Lord, oh Caretaker of the Devotees, I am Your devotee! (12) Please, oh supreme well-wisher, come together with Your elder brother, the *gopas* and Your friends to our house, so that my mansion is graced with its Master, oh Lord of the Beyond. (13) Please, bless with the dust of Your feet this home of us householders attached to rituals, and may by that purification my forefathers, the sacrificial fires and the demigods be satisfied. (14) The great king Bali, by bathing Your two feet, became glorious [see 8.19]

and achieved unequalled power, as also the destination reserved for unalloyed devotees. (15) The purified water washing from Your feet that Lord Śiva received on his head [9.9], has sanctified the three worlds, so that the sons of king Sagara [9.8] attained heaven [9.9]. (16) Oh God of the Gods, oh Master of the Universe about whom one piously hears and chants, oh Best of the Yadus, oh Lord Praised in the Verses, oh Lord Nārāyaṇa, let there be the obeisance unto You.'

(17) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'I will come to your house accompanied by My elder brother. After killing My enemy in the midst of the Yadus [Kāṁsa], I will grant My well-wishers the satisfaction.'

(18) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'After thus being addressed by the Supreme Lord, Akrūra somewhat disheartened entered the city. He informed Kāṁsa on his efforts and thereupon went home. (19) Later in the afternoon Kṛṣṇa, together with Saṅkarṣaṇa [Rāma] and the *gopas*, entered Mathurā to take a look around. (20-23) There He saw the high gates and doorways of crystal, front doors and immense archways of gold, storehouses of copper and brass and inviolable moats, [everywhere] beautified by public gardens and attractive parks. The intersections decorated with gold, the mansions with their pleasure gardens, the assembly halls of the guilds and the houses with their columned balconies, as also the ornate paneled rafters, were bedecked with vaidūrya gems, diamonds, quartz crystals, sapphires, coral, pearls and emeralds. Sounds vibrated of the pet doves and peacocks that sat in the openings of the lattice windows and on the gem-studded floors. The avenues, streets and courtyards were sprinkled with water and [for a welcome] were strewn with garlands, new sprouts, parched grains and rice. The doorways of the houses were nicely decorated with pots filled with yogurt smeared with sandalwood paste, ribbons and flower petals, rows of lamps, leaves, bunches of flowers, trunks of banana trees and betel nut trees and flags. (24) As the sons of Vasudeva entered there surrounded by Their friends, oh King, the women of the city, eager for a look, all hurried to stand along the main road and climb on top of the houses. (25) Some had put on their clothes backwards and forgotten one of their pair of ornaments, putting on only one earring or one set of ankle bells. Other ladies made up one eye but not the other one. (26) Some in their excitement had abandoned the meals they were taking or did not finish their massage. They left their bathing or, hearing the commotion, got up not finishing their nap. Others as mothers put aside the infant they were feeding milk. (27) Striding like a bull elephant in rut, He boldly stole their minds with the glances of His lotus eyes and the game of His

smiles. With His body, that source of pleasure to the Goddess of Fortune, He afforded their eyes a festival. (28) Seeing Him whom they repeatedly had heard about, their hearts melted. Receiving the honor of being sprinkled by the nectar of His glances and broad smiles, they, with goose pimples, through their eyes innerly embraced their idol, this embodiment of ecstasy, and gave up their endless distress [of missing Him], oh subduer of the enemies. (29) With faces out of love blooming like lotuses the women, having climbed on the rooftops of their mansions, showered Balarāma and Keśava with flowers. (30) With yoghurt, barleycorns and pots filled with water, fragrant substances and other items of worship, the brahmins honored the Two joyfully at every step. (31) The women of the city said: 'Oh what great austerity the *gopīs* must have performed to may constantly witness these Two, who for human society are the greatest source of pleasure.'

(32) **K**rṣṇa, the elder brother of Gada [see 9.24: 46], saw a certain washerman, a dyer of clothes, coming His way and asked him for first class, clean garments. (33) 'Please, oh best man, give the two of Us some suitable clothes. When you donate them to Us, who deserve it, that will bring You the highest benefit, that suffers no doubt!'

(34) **R**equested by the Supreme Lord who is complete and perfect in every way, he, most falsely proud as a servant of the king, indignantly said full of anger: (35) 'Is it no impudence of You who roam the mountains and the forests, to put on garments like these belonging to the king? (36) Get lost You fools, do not beg like this if You want to live! I swear, people as bold as You, are arrested, looted and killed by the king's men!'

(37) **T**hus humiliating Them, he raised the anger of the son of Devakī who, with the side of one hand, hit his head from his body. (38) When his assistants fled in all directions, they left behind bundles of clothes. Acyuta took the garments. (39) Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma dressed Themselves with a set of clothes to Their liking, left several of them behind on the ground and gave the rest to the *gopas*. (40) Thereupon a weaver came who, full of love for Them, befittingly ornamented Their clothes with pieces of cloth of different colors. (41) Kṛṣṇa and Rāma with each His own specific high quality outfit and nice decorations, looked as resplendent as a pair of young elephants, one light and one dark, adorned for a festival. (42) The Supreme Lord being pleased with the weaver, granted him *sārūpya*, that he in this world would be liberated with a similar form and the same supreme opulence, physical strength, influence, memory and sense control [the grace of His characteristics, see also *mukti*].

(43) **T**hey both next went to the house of Sudāmā ['well-giving'], the garland-maker. Seeing Them he stood up and bowed down putting his head to the ground. (44) He brought seats for Them, water to wash Their feet and hands, presents and such, and honored Them and Their companions with garlands, betel nut and sandalwood paste. (45) He said: 'Our birth has been worthwhile and the family has been purified, oh Master. Together with me, my forefathers, the gods and the seers are satisfied that You came here. (46) You two, who constitute the Ultimate Cause of the Universe, have with Your plenary portions descended to this world for its protection and happiness. (47) Even though You reciprocate with those who are of worship, with You there is no bias in Your vision. You as the Soul of the Universe, as well-wishing friends are equal to all living beings. (48) You Two should order me, Your servant, what I should do for You. For this is for anyone the greatest blessing: to be appointed by You.'

(49) **Ś**uka said: 'Thus understanding what to do, oh best of kings, Sudāmā, steeped in love, presented garlands made of fresh and fragrant flowers. (50) Beautifully adorned with them, the two benefactors Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, who together with Their companions were most satisfied, granted the surrendered soul who bowed down, every benediction he wished. (51) He chose for an unshakable devotion unto Him alone, the Supreme soul of the Complete Whole, for friendship with His devotees and for divine mercy towards all living beings. (52) Thus blessing him with prosperity, a thriving family, strength, a long life, renown and beauty, He left together with His elder brother.'

Chapter 42

The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

(1) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Walking the king's road, Kṛṣṇa saw a woman carrying a tray with ointments for the body. She was hunchbacked [*], was young and had an attractive face. The Bestower of the Essence with a smile asked where she was going. (2) 'Who are you with your nice thighs? Ah dear woman, look at those ointments! Please tell Us honestly for whom this all is meant. Offer, if you want, the two of Us that ointment for the body, then there will soon be the supreme benefit for you.'

(3) **The maidservant** said: 'Oh handsome One, I am a servant of Kāṁsa known as Trivakrā ['three-bend'] respected indeed for my work with ointments. Prepared by me they are very dear to the chief of the Bhojas. But okay, who else but the two of You would deserve them?'

(4) **With** her mind overwhelmed by the beauty, charm and sweetness of Their talks, smiles and glances, she gave Them plenty of ointment. (5) Adorning Their bodies with the colors that contrasted with Their complexions, the ointments proved to be of the highest quality. Thus being anointed They appeared beautifully. (6) To deliver proof of the benefit of meeting Him, the satisfied Supreme Lord decided to straighten the crooked back of Trivakrā who had such an attractive face. (7) With both His feet pressing down on her toes, Acyuta with both His hands took hold of her chin and raised her up with two fingers pointing upwards. (8) Thereupon all of a sudden straight by Mukunda's touch, she had become a most perfect woman with evenly proportioned limbs, large hips and breasts. (9) Thus endowed with beauty, quality and good feelings she was roused to the notion of sleeping with Him. With a smile she addressed Keśava while pulling at the end of His upper garment. (10) 'Come, oh hero, let us go to my house. I cannot bear to leave You here; please, oh Best of All Men, have mercy with me whose head is reeling.'

(11) **With** this request of the woman Kṛṣṇa glanced at Balarāma who watched what happened and then at the *gopas*. He laughed and said to her: (12) 'Oh you with your beautiful eyebrows, I will visit your home where men may find relief of their anxieties, when I have

accomplished what I came for. That will do good to us, travelers far from home. For you are the best one might wish for.'

(13) **A**fter leaving her behind with these sweet words, He, walking down the road with His brother, was by the merchants honored with various offerings of betel nut, garlands and fragrant substances. (14) With Him before their eyes the women could not think straight any longer. Agitated by Cupid, they stood nailed to the ground with their clothes, bangles and hair in disarray. (15) After asking the residents for the place of the sacrificial bow, Acyuta entered there. It was a bow as magnificent as a rainbow, the bow of Indra. (16) The bow was guarded by many men and worshiped with the greatest wealth. Kṛṣṇa forced His way past the guards who blocked Him and picked it up. (17) Before the eyes of the guards He lifted it easily with His left hand and pulled the string in a second. Lord Urukrama ['giant-step'] broke it in two like an elephant eager for a piece of sugar cane. (18) The sound of the breaking bow penetrated all directions of the sky and the earth, and made Kāṁsa, who heard it, tremble with fear. (19) Trying to get hold of Him, He and His comrades were surrounded by the guards who enraged had taken up their weapons and shouted: 'Grab Him, kill Him!' (20) Seeing their evil intentions, Balarāma and Keśava each took up a piece of the bow and vehemently struck them down.

(21) **A**fter They had also slain an armed force that was sent by Kāṁsa, the Two walked out of the gate of the arena, happy to observe the exciting riches of the city. (22) The citizens who had witnessed Their amazing heroic act deemed Them, because of their strength, boldness and beauty, the finest among the gods. (23) Freely wandering around, the sun began to set and Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, accompanied by the *gopas*, returned to the place outside the city where they had left their wagons. (24) The [predictions of] benedictions in Mathurā, expressed by the *gopīs* who were tormented by feelings of separation when Mukunda left, [10.39: 23-25], all came true, for now these people had the full vision of the body of this paragon of male beauty, of Him, the shelter so much desired by the Goddess of Fortune that she forgot about others worshiping her. (25) After the both of Them had washed Their feet and eaten boiled rice with milk, They, aware of Kāṁsa's scheme, spent the night there quite comfortably. (26-27) But Kāṁsa stayed awake a long time, having heard of the game Govinda and Rāma had played in breaking the bow and killing his small army of guards. In his fear he saw with his bad mind, in his sleep as also being awake, many bad omens and messengers of death. (28-31) In the mirror he could not see the reflection of his own head and for no

reason he saw a double image of the heavenly bodies. In his shadow he saw a hole and he could not hear the sound of his breath. He saw a golden hue over the trees and could not spot his own footprints. In his sleep he was embraced by ghosts, he rode a donkey and swallowed poison. He saw someone going about naked being smeared with oil and wearing a garland of nalada flowers [indian spikenards, a Valerian type]. In his sleep as also awake seeing these and similar omens, he was mortally afraid and could not sleep anymore.

(32) **W**hen the night had passed, oh descendant of Kuru and the sun rose above the water, Kaṁsa held the great wrestling festival he organized. (33) The king's men ceremoniously vibrated musical instruments and drums in the arena, having decorated the galleries with garlands, flags, ribbons and arches. (34) The citizens and the people from elsewhere, headed by the state officials and the brahmins, were comfortably seated upon them, while the royalty received special seats. (35) Kaṁsa surrounded by his ministers sat on the royal dais, but positioned there in the midst of his governors, his heart trembled. (36) As the musical instruments played in rhythms appropriate for the wrestling, the richly ornamented wrestlers proudly entered together with their instructors and sat down. (37) Canura, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śāla and Tośāla, enthused by the pleasing music, took their place on the wrestling mat. (38) The *gopa* Nanda and the cowherds he led, were called forward by the king of Bhoja [Kaṁsa] to present their offerings and next sat down in one of the galleries.'

*: The pupils of Prabhupāda elucidate: 'According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the young hunchbacked girl was actually a partial expansion of the Lord's wife Satyabhāmā. Satyabhāmā is the Lord's internal energy known as Bhū-śakti [see 10.39: 53-55], and this expansion of hers, known as Pṛthivī, represents the earth, which was bent down by the great burden of countless wicked rulers. Lord Kṛṣṇa descended to remove these wicked rulers, and thus His pastime of straightening the hunchback Trivakrā, as explained in these verses, represents His rectifying the burdened condition of the earth.'

Chapter 43

Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After Kṛṣṇa and Rāma had washed Themselves, oh chastiser of the enemies, They heard the vibrations of kettledrums for the wrestling match and went hither to take a look. (2) When Kṛṣṇa reached the gate of the arena He saw the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa standing there, directed by his keeper. (3) Tightening His clothes and tying together His curly locks, He spoke to the elephant keeper with words as grave as the rumbling clouds: (4) 'Elephant keeper, oh elephant keeper, let Us pass, move aside right now, or else I will send you, together with your elephant, today to the abode of Yama [the lord of death].'

(5) Thus being threatened the elephant keeper got angry and goaded the furious elephant that was like Yama, time and death, in the direction of Kṛṣṇa. (6) The master elephant ran toward Kṛṣṇa and violently seized Him with his trunk, but Kṛṣṇa, dealing him a blow, escaped from the grip and disappeared between his legs. (7) Angry about not seeing Him anymore, he spotted Him by his sense of smell and grabbed Him with the end of his long nose, but Kṛṣṇa used force and freed Himself once more. (8) Kṛṣṇa seized him by the tail and dragged him, that mountain of power, for twenty-five bow-lengths with the ease with which Garuḍa plays with a snake. (9) Acyuta, moving him to the left and the right, was also moved about by him, just like a calf does with a young boy [at its tail. See also 10.8: 24]. (10) The moment they came to stand face to face, He slapped the elephant with His hand and then quickly moved away again. Thus He hit him at every step and then made him trip. (11) Running away He pretended to fall to the ground, but then He suddenly got up so that the elephant angrily came to strike the earth with his tusks. (12) With his prowess foiled that lord of the elephants was driven into a frenzy, and urged on by his keepers, he furiously attacked Kṛṣṇa again. (13) The Supreme Lord, the killer of Madhu, confronting him in his attack, with His hand seized him by his trunk and made him fall to the ground. (14) With the ease of a lion jumping on the fallen giant, the Lord yanked out a tusk and killed the elephant as also his keepers with it.

(15) Leaving aside the dead elephant He, being sprinkled with drops of the elephant's blood and sweat, took the tusk on His shoulder

and entered [the arena] with His lotus face shining with the fine drops that had appeared by His own perspiring. (16) Oh King, Baladeva and Janārdana, surrounded by several cowherd boys, thus appeared before the audience with the elephant's tusks as their chosen weapons. (17) For the wrestlers He was lightning, for the men He was the best, and for the women He was Cupid incarnate. For the cowherds He was a relative, for the impious rulers He was a chastiser, and for His parents He was a child. For the king of Bhoja He was death, for the unintelligent souls He was merely a material form, for the yogis He was the Supreme Reality, and for the Vṛṣṇis He was the most worshipable deity. In these ways being regarded differently, He entered the arena together with His brother [see * and rasa]. (18) When Kāmsa saw that Kuvalayāpīḍa had been killed and that the two of Them were invincible, his mind was overtaken by a very great anxiety, oh ruler of man. (19) The two mighty-armed Lords, the way They were dressed in each His own garments, with ornaments and garlands, looked in Their excellent costumes like two actors and radiated, being present in the arena, with an effulgence that overwhelmed the minds of all onlookers. (20) The people sitting in the galleries, the citizens and the people from outside, oh King, seeing the two Supreme Personalities, in sheer delight opened their eyes and mouths wide, and drank in the vision of Their faces, never getting enough of Them. (21-22) As if they were drinking Them through their eyes, licking Them up with their tongues, smelling Them through their nostrils and embracing Them with their arms, they spoke with each other commemorating the beauty, qualities, charm and bravery they had seen and heard from Them: (23) 'These two who descended to this world in the home of Vasudeva, are no doubt the direct expansions of Hari, the Supreme Personality. (24) This one here was born from Devakī and brought to Gokula, where He, growing up in the house of Nanda, lived in secret all the time. (25) He put an end to Pūtanā, the whirlwind-demon and the two Arjuna trees, and also ended the lives of others like Śankhacūda, Keśī and Dhenuka. (26-27) He saved the cows and their tenders from the forest fire, He subdued the serpent Kāliya and sobered up Indra by delivering all the residents of Gokula from rain, wind and hail, when He for seven days with one hand held up the best of all mountains. (28) The *gopīs* seeing His always cheerful, smiling face and glance, that are free from fatigue, could transcend all sorts of distress and live happily. (29) They say that, because of Him, this Yadu dynasty will become very famous and, being protected in every way, will achieve all riches, power and glory. (30) And this brother of His, the lotus-eyed Rāma, He is of all opulence and killed Pralamba, [and we think... **] Vatsāsura, Bakāsura and others.'

(31) **W**ith the people thus speaking and the musical instruments resounding, Cāṇūra addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, using these words: (32) 'Oh son of Nanda, oh Rāma, You two heroes are well respected and skillful at wrestling; the King heard about it, wanted to see that and called for You. (33) When citizens in mind, deeds and words perform to the pleasure of the King, they will acquire good fortune, but not acting so they achieve the opposite. (34) The *gopas* evidently are always very happy to tend their calves and play and romp, as they wander about deep in the forests. (35) Let us together with the two of You therefore act to the pleasure of the King. Everybody will be pleased with us, for the King embodies the interest of all living beings.'

(36) **W**hen Kṛṣṇa heard this He, welcoming the fight and [thus] considering it desirable, spoke words befitting the time and place [see also 4.8: 54]: (37) 'Even though we wander in the forest, we are also subjects of the Bhoja King. Therefore we must always do whatever pleases him, for that will bring us the supreme benefit. (38) We young boys should, befittingly, contest with those equal in strength. The wrestling match should take place in such a manner that the assembled audience in this arena will not fall from its belief.'

(39) **C**āṇūra said: 'You who sported to kill the elephant that had the strength of a thousand elephants, are not a boy or a youngster, and neither is Balarāma, who is the strongest of the strong! (40) Therefore the two of You should fight with those who are strong. There surely is no injustice in that, it is Your prowess against mine, oh descendent of Vṛṣṇi, and let Balarāma take it up with Muṣṭika.'

*: Thus one speaks of ten rasas, attitudes or moods toward Kṛṣṇa: fury [perceived by the wrestlers], wonder [by the men], conjugal attraction [the women], laughter [the cowherds], chivalry [the kings], mercy [His parents], terror [Kāmsa], repulsion [the unintelligent], peaceful neutrality [the yogis] and loving devotion [the Vṛṣṇis].

** : Vatsāsura and Bakāsura were factually killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 44

The Wrestling Match and the Killing of Kāmsa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord Madhusūdana thus firmly determined, positioned Himself opposite to Cāṇūra, and so did the son of Rohiṇī with Muṣṭika. (2) They seized each other's hands, blocked each other's legs with their legs, and then pulled and pushed with force to attain the victory. (3) With elbows against elbows, knees against knees, heads against heads and chests against chests, they struck each other. (4) Wheeling, shoving, crushing and throwing down, releasing, running in front and running behind, they offered each other resistance. (5) Desiring the victory they hurt each other, lifted each other up and carried each other, pushed each other away and held each other fast.

(6) Compassionate about that fight between the weak and the strong, the women assembled in groups, oh King, and said: (7) 'Alas, what an enormous lack of responsibility on the part of the people present in the king's assembly. Together with the king they wish to see a fight between the strong and the weak! (8) On one side we see the appearances of these two mountains of master wrestlers with limbs as strong as lightning, while on the other side there are these two youths with tender limbs who have not reached maturity yet! (9) This association violates the rules of dharma. There where unrighteousness rises, one should not remain a moment longer! (10) A wise person should not attend an assembly where the members are bent on improprieties. When a human being in silent consent ignorantly subscribes to wrong assumptions, he incurs sin. (11) Just see how wet Kṛṣṇa's lotuslike face is from the effort of dancing around his opponent. He looks like the whorl of a lotus flower with water droplets. (12) Look how Balarāma's face is even more beautiful the way He, laughing and with eyes red like copper, in His anger is focussing on Muṣṭika. (13) How meritorious indeed are the tracts of Vraja where the Original Personality in this disguise of human traits, with a wonderful variety of forest flower garlands, together with Balarāma vibrates His flute, moves about in different pastimes and herds the cows, while His feet are worshiped by the lord on the mountain [Śiva] and the goddess of fortune. (14) What austerities

would the *gopīs* have performed to be allowed to drink in through their eyes the form of such an essence of unequaled, unsurpassed loveliness perfect in itself, ever new and difficult to attain as the only abode of fame, beauty and opulence? (15) The fortunate ladies of Vraja, with their milking, threshing, churning, smearing [with dung], swinging on swings, with their crying babies, their sprinkling, cleaning and so on, sing about Him, with their minds attached and choked up with tears, and thus find their way thanks to their consciousness of Urukrama. (16) The women who hear Him playing the flute, while He together with the cows early in the morning leaves and late in the evening returns to Vraja, in utter piety hurry outside to meet Him on the road with His smiling, merciful face and glances.'

(17) **W**hile they were speaking thus, the Supreme Lord, the Controller of Mystic Power, decided to kill His enemy, oh hero of the Bhāratas. (18) When their parents [in prison] heard about the women's words of concern about their sons they, in their love, burned full of remorse being overwhelmed with sorrow, for they did not know how strong their sons were. (19) As Acyuta and His opponent fought each other with all the different wrestling techniques, Balarāma and Muṣṭika did the same. (20) Due to the crushing, lightning hard blows dealt by the hands and feet of the Supreme Lord, Cāṇūra felt more and more pained and exhausted, and was physically completely broken. (21) Clenching both his hands into fists he with the speed of a hawk fell upon the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva and enraged struck Him on His chest. (22-23) No more being moved by his blows than an elephant hit with a flower garland, the Lord seized Cāṇūra by his arms, whirled him several times around and threw him with great force to the ground. Crashing like a massive festival column he, with his clothes, hair and garland all scattered, lost his life. (24-25) Likewise also Muṣṭika, after striking the powerful Lord Balabhadra with his fist, received a violent blow from His palm so that he trembling, giving up blood from his mouth, right where he stood, fell lifeless to the ground like a tree struck down by the wind. (26) Then Kūṭa stepped forward. Nonchalantly he with great ease was killed by the fist of Rāma, the best of all fighters, oh King. (27) Thereupon Śāla was kicked in the head by Kṛṣṇa and Tośāla was torn to pieces by Him, so that they both fell. (28) After Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śāla and Tośāla had been killed, the remaining wrestlers all fled away hoping to save their lives. (29) Kṛṣṇa and Rāma joined Their young cowherd friends, sported with them, played musical instruments and danced about, tinkling with Their ankle bells. (30) Except for Kāmsa all the people rejoiced in the accomplishment of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, while the leading brahmins and *sādhus* exclaimed: 'Excellent, excellent!'

(31) **S**eeing the best of his wrestlers killed or fled away, the Bhoja king silenced his instrumental music and spoke the words: (32) 'Expel the two sons of Vasudeva who behaved so badly from the city, seize the *gopas*' wealth and tie up that fool Nanda! (33) And ignorant Vasudeva, that darn dullard, and my father Ugrasena and his followers, should, for their siding with the enemy, be killed right away.'

(34) **W**hile Kāṁsa thus most angrily was raving, the Imperishable Lord with ease jumped up and quickly climbed on the high royal dais. (35) Seeing Him coming, his own death, Kāṁsa, smart as he was, immediately stood up from his seat and took up his sword and shield. (36) Kāṁsa, sword in hand moved about from the left to the right as quick as a hawk in the sky, but he was seized by the force of the Lord's irresistible and fearsome strength, like a snake by the son of Tārṁśya [Garuḁa]. (37) He grabbed him by the hair and knocked the crown off his head. The Lord with the Lotus Navel then hurled him from the high platform down into the wrestling arena, whereupon He, the Independent Support of the Entire Universe, threw Himself on top of him [to kill him]. (38) Like a lion with an elephant, He dragged him dead along the ground before the eyes of all the people, from whom then loudly arose an 'Oh, oooh!' sound, oh King of the humans. (39) Since he, constantly being filled with anxiety, had seen Him, the Controller with the *cakra* in His hand, before his mind's eye whenever he drank or ate, walked, slept or breathed, he [being liberated] thus obtained that very same so most difficult to acquire form [see also *sārūpya* 10.41: 42 and 10.29: 13]. (40) His eight younger brothers Kāṁka, Nyagrodhaka and the rest, then infuriated attacked to avenge their brother. (41) Thus rushing forward ready to strike, they were beaten down by Balarāma who wielded His club like the lion king ruling the animals. (42) Kettledrums resounded in the sky and Brahmā, Śiva, the other gods and expansions of the Lord, being pleased, chanted praises and showered flowers upon Him while their wives were dancing.

(43) **T**he wives [of Kāṁsa and his brothers], oh Emperor, grieving over the death of their well-wishers, approached the spot with tears in their eyes and beating their heads. (44) Embracing their husbands lying on the hero's bed, the women lamented loudly, shedding a river of tears: (45) "Alas, oh master, my dearest, oh defender of the holy duty, oh kindness, oh you so full of compassion for the ones unprotected! The very moment that you found your death we, your household and offspring, have found our death. (46) This city

bereft of you, its master, does, just like us, oh most heroic of men, not appear as beautiful now that its festivity and bliss has all ended. (47) The terrible violence you have committed against innocent living beings, has brought you in this condition, oh dearest. How can he who causes harm to other living beings end well? (48) He who is neglectful of Him, the One who for certain is the origin, maintenance and disappearance of all living beings in this world, can never prosper in happiness.'

(49) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, the Maintainer of All the Worlds, consoled the wives of the king [and his brothers], and arranged as prescribed the funeral rites for the deceased. (50) Kṛṣṇa and Rāma thereupon freed Their father and mother from their fetters and proved Their respect for them by touching their feet with Their heads. (51) Devakī and Vasudeva offered, in recognition of [Them as being] the Controllers of the Universe, their obeisances with joined palms and - apprehensively - did not embrace their sons.'

Chapter 45

Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher's Son

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Knowing that His parents had arrived at the notion that He would be the Supreme Personality, He said to Himself: 'This should not be so'. And thus He expanded His personal illusory potency [His *yogamāyā*] that bewilders the people. (2) Approaching them together with His elder brother, He, the Greatest Devotee of All [the Sātvatas], with humility bowed down to His parents in order to satisfy them and respectfully said: 'Dear father and mother! (3) Oh father, because of Us you were always afraid and could never enjoy anything of the toddler age, the boyhood and youth of your two sons [*]. (4) As ordained by fate We, being deprived of living in your presence, could not experience the cherished happiness of children living at home with their parents. (5) A mortal man is never, not even for a lifespan of a hundred years, capable of repaying the debt to his parents. He took his birth from them and by them he is maintained. They are the source of the body suitable for all goals of life [*all puruṣārthas*, compare 10.32: 22]. (6) A son who, even though capable, with his resources and wealth does not provide for their sustenance, will after his death be forced to eat his own flesh [see also 5.26]. (7) When one is capable of, but not maintains one's mother and father, the elderly, one's chaste wife, one's very young child, one's spiritual master, a [depending] brahmin or anyone seeking one's protection, one is a person who is dead even though he breathes [see B.G. 11: 33]. (8) Because of Kāmsa who always disturbed Our minds, We could not honor you and have spent Our days [of youth] without being of any consequence to you. (9) Please, oh father and mother, forgive Us the fact that We, controlled by others, from Our part could not serve you and that the hardhearted one [Kāmsa] thus could cause such great pain.'

(10) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus bewildered by the words of Him, the Lord and Soul of the Universe who through His *māyā* appeared as a human being, they raised Them upon their laps to experience the joy of closing Them in their arms. (11) Bound by the rope of affection crying a river they, with their throats full of tears being overwhelmed, could not say a word, oh King. (12) The Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, who thus comforted His parents, then made His maternal grandfather Ugrasena, King over the Yadus. (13) He told him: 'Please,

oh great King, with Us as your subjects, take command, for because of the curse of Yayāti [see 9.18: 42] one, being born as a Yadu, should not sit on the throne. (14) When I am there as a servant to attend to you, the demigods and such will bow down before you to offer you tribute. Then what may be expected from the other rulers of men?'

(15-16) **A**ll His close relatives and other relations, the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas, Madhus, Dāśārhas, Kukuras and other clans, who, disturbed in their fear of Kāṁsa, had fled in all directions, were honored and consoled, for living in foreign regions had made them weary. He, the Maker of the Universe, brought them back to their homes and satisfied them with valuable gifts. (17-18) Protected by the arms of Kṛṣṇa and Saṅkarṣaṇa they in their homes enjoyed the complete fulfillment of their desires because, now that they day after day saw the loving, always cheerful, beautiful lotus face and merciful, smiling glances of Mukunda, with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma the fever [of a material existence] had ended. (19) Even the elderly were youthful and full of strength and vitality, now that they, there [in Mathurā], time and again through their eyes could imbibe the nectar of Mukunda's lotus face. (20) Thereupon the Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, and Saṅkarṣaṇa approached Nanda, oh great King. They, embracing him, said: (21) 'Oh father, with the great affection and fondling of you both, you have cherished Us greatly. The love the parents have for their children is truly greater than the love they have for each other. (22) They are father and mother who nourish, like they were their own sons, the children who were abandoned by relatives unable to maintain and protect them. (23) Please return all together to Vraja, dear father, We will come to see you, relatives frustrated in your love, after We have made Our friends [out here] happy.' (24) The Supreme Lord, the Infallible One, thus appeasing Nanda and the people from Vraja, thereupon respectfully honored them with clothing, jewelry and pots and such.

(25) **T**hus being addressed, Nanda engulfed by affection, embraced Them with tears filling his eyes, and went together with the *gopas* to Vraja. (26) The son of Śūrasena [Vasudeva], oh King, then arranged for a priest and brahmins to properly perform the second-birth initiation of his sons. (27) For their remuneration he donated in worship fully decorated cows with golden chains and ornaments, complete with calves and linen wreaths. (28) Magnanimously he gave them in charity the cows that were stolen away by Kāṁsa, the same cows he previously had donated within his mind the very day Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were born [see 3.10: 11-12]. (29) After having been initiated into the twice-born status, They, of proper vows, took the vow

of celibacy [to be a student] from Garga, the preceptor of the Yadus [see also *gāyatrī* and *brahmacārya*]. (30-31) The Lords of the Universe who are the source of any form of knowledge, concealed in Their human activities the perfection of Their omniscience not founded on any knowledge from the outside. They [nevertheless] then desired to reside in the school of the *guru* and approached Sāndīpani, a native of Kāsī [Benares], who dwelt in the city of Avantī [Ujjain]. (32) Thus obtaining [the company of] these self-controlled souls, he was by Them respected as if he was the Lord Himself. Doing this They in Their devotion formed an irreproachable example of service to the teacher. (33) That best of the twice-born souls as Their *guru*, taught Them, contented as he was with Their pure love and submissive acts, all the Vedas with their corollary literatures and philosophical treatises [Upaniṣads], [**] (34) the Dhanur-veda [military science, archery] along with all its secrets [the mantras], the dharma [the codes of human conduct, the laws] and the *nyāya* [the methods of logic] as also the *ānvīkṣikīm* [the knowledge of philosophical debate or *tarka*] and the six aspects of the *rāja-nītim* [political science, see ***]. (35-36) As the best of all first class persons and as the promulgators of all knowledge They, oh ruler of man, fixed in concentration, fully assimilated with simply having heard it only once, the complete of the sixty-four arts in as many days and nights [*4], and satisfied Their preceptor, oh King, by offering him compensation [*gurudakṣinā*]. (37) Oh King, in consideration of the amazing greatness of Their superhuman intelligence, the brahmin, after consulting with his wife, arrived at the wish to see his child again that had perished in the ocean at Prabhāsa [see also 1.15: 49, 3.1: 20, 3.3: 25]. (38) 'So be it' the two great warlords of unlimited prowess said and next mounted a chariot to head for Prabhāsa. Having arrived there, they walked up to the shore to sit there for a moment. The [god of the] ocean recognized Them and offered Them tribute [compare 9.3: 13]. (39) The Supreme Lord said to him: 'Present Us at once the son of Our guru, a young boy you have seized here with a mighty wave.'

(40) **T**he person of the ocean said: 'It was not I who took him away, oh Lord, it was a powerful Daitya named Pañcajana, oh Kṛṣṇa, a demon who moves through the water in the form of a conch. (41) He, who lives here, indeed has kidnapped him.' Hearing that, the Master quickly entered the water and killed him, but He could not find the boy in his belly. (42-44) He took the conch shell, which had grown as a part of the demon, returned to the chariot and went to the beloved city of Yamarāja [the lord of death] known as Samyamanī [*5]. [Arriving there,] Janārdana, together with the Lord who has a plow for His weapon [Balarāma], blew loudly on His conch shell [see also B.G.

1: 15] so that Yamarāja, he who restrains the living beings, could hear the sound. Overflowing with devotion Yamarāja worshiped Them elaborately and humbly bowing down said to Kṛṣṇa, who dwells in the heart of each: 'What can I do for the two of You, oh Viṣṇu who, for Your pastime, has appeared in the form of [two] human beings?'

(45) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Please bring Me the son of My guru who was brought here because of his karmic bondage, oh great King. It is My command that should be given priority.'

(46) **S**o be it', he said, and brought forward the preceptor's son. The Best of the Yadus gave him back to Their guru to whom They then said: 'Please make another wish.'

(47) **T**he honorable guru said: 'My dear Boys, I am completely fulfilled by the remuneration for the guru the two of You have offered. What more could a spiritual master wish from Persons like You? (48) Please go home, oh heroes, may Your fame purify [the entire world] and may the mantras [Your appearance and delight] ever be fresh in this life and in the next [see also 10.13: 2]!'

(49) **T**hus by Their guru permitted to leave, They reached Their city on Their chariot, that was as fast as the wind and thundered like a cloud. (50) The citizens who had not seen Balarāma and Janārdana for many days, all rejoiced to see Them again, like having regained a lost treasure.'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī points out: 'The *kaumāra* stage lasts until the age of five, up to *pauganḍa* age ten and *kaiśora* to age fifteen. From then on, one is known as *yauvana*.' According to this statement, the *kaiśora* period ends at the age of fifteen. Kṛṣṇa was only eleven years old when He killed Kāmsa, according to Uddhava's words: *ekādaśa-samās tatra gūdhārcih sa-balo 'vasat*. 'Like a covered flame, Lord Kṛṣṇa remained there incognito with Balarāma for eleven years' (S.B. 3.2: 26). The three years and four months that Lord Kṛṣṇa stayed in Mahāvana were the equivalent of five years for an ordinary child, and thus in that period He completed His *kaumāra* stage of childhood. The period from then to the age of six years and eight months, during which He lived in Vṛṇḍāvana, constitutes His *pauganḍa* stage. And the period from the age of six years and eight months through His tenth year, during which time He lived in Nandīśvara [Nandagrāma], constitutes His *kaiśora* stage. Then, at the age of ten years and seven months, on the eleventh lunar day of the dark fortnight of the month of Caitra, He went to Mathurā, and on the fourteenth day thereafter

He killed Kamsa. Thus He completed His *kaiśora* period at age ten, and He eternally remains at that age. In other words, we should understand that from this point on the Lord remains forever *a kiśora*.'

** : These are the so-called *aṅgas* and Upaniṣads. The six *aṅgas* are: *śikṣā* (phonetics), *chanda*, (prosody), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *jyotiṣa* (astronomy), *kalpa* (content and rules for the rituals) and *nirukta* (etymology).

*** : The six aspects of political science are: (1) *sandhi*, making peace; (2) *vigraha*, war; (3) *yāna*, marching or expedition; (4) *āsana*, sitting tight or encampment; (5) *dvaiddha*, dividing one's forces or separating one's allies; and (6) *saṁśaya*, depending on allies or seeking the protection of a more powerful ruler.

*4: The Lords learned: (1) *gītām*, singing; (2) *vādyam*, playing on musical instruments; (3) *nṛtyam*, dancing; (4) *nāṭyam*, drama; (5) *ālekhyam*, painting; (6) *viśeṣaka-cchedyam*, painting the face and body with colored unguents and cosmetics; (7) *taṇḍula-kusuma-bali-vikārāḥ*, preparing auspicious designs on the floor with rice and flowers; (8) *puṣpāstaraṇam*, making a bed of flowers; (9) *daśana-vasanāṅga-rāgāḥ*, coloring one's teeth, clothes and limbs; (10) *maṇi-bhūmikā-karma*, inlaying a floor with jewels; (11) *śayyā-racanam*, covering a bed; (12) *udaka-vādyam*, ringing waterpots; (13) *udaka-ghātaḥ*, splashing with water; (14) *citra-yogāḥ*, mixing colors; (15) *mālya-grathana-vikalpāḥ*, preparing wreaths; (16) *śekharaṇīya-yojanam*, setting a helmet on the head; (17) *nepathya-yogāḥ*, putting on apparel in a dressing room; (18) *karṇa-patra-bhangāḥ*, decorating the earlobe; (19) *sugandha-yuktiḥ*, applying aromatics; (20) *bhūṣaṇa-yojanam*, decorating with jewelry; (21) *aindrajālam*, jugglery; (22) *kaucumāra-yogaḥ*, the art of disguise; (23) *hasta-lāghavam*, sleight of hand; (24) *citra-śākāpūpa-bhakṣya-vikāra-kriyaḥ*, preparing varieties of salad, bread, cake and other delicious food; (25) *pānaka-rasa-rāgāsava-yojanam*, preparing palatable drinks and tinging draughts with red color; (26) *sūcī-vāya-karma*, needlework and weaving; (27) *sūtra-krīḍā*, making puppets dance by manipulating thin threads; (28) *vīṇā-ḍamarukavādyāni*, playing on a lute and a small X-shaped drum; (29) *prahelikā*, making and solving riddles; (29a) *pratimālā*, capping verses, or reciting poems verse for verse as a trial of memory or skill; (30) *durvacaka-yogāḥ*, uttering statements difficult for others to answer; (31) *pustaka-vācanam*, reciting books; and (32) *nāṭikākhyāyikā-darśanam*, enacting short plays and writing anecdotes. (33) *kāvya-samasyā-pūraṇam*, solving enigmatic verses; (34) *paṭṭikā-vetra-bāṇa-vikalpāḥ*, making a bow from a strip of cloth and a stick; (35) *tarku-karma*, spinning with a spindle; (36) *takṣaṇam*, carpentry; (37) *vāstu-vidyā*, architecture; (38) *raupya-ratna-parīkṣā*, testing silver and jewels; (39) *dhātu-vādaḥ*, metallurgy; (40) *maṇi-raga-jñānam*, tinging jewels with various colors; (41) *ākara-jñānam*, mineralogy; (42) *vṛkṣāyur-*

veda-yogāḥ, herbal medicine; (43) *meṣa-kukkuṭa-lāvaka-yuddha-vidhiḥ*, the art of training and engaging rams, cocks and quails in fighting; (44) *śuka-śārikā-pralāpanam*, knowledge of how to train male and female parrots to speak and to answer the questions of human beings; (45) *utsādanam*, healing a person with ointments; (46) *keśa-mārjana-kausālam*, hairdressing; (47) *akṣara-muṣṭikā-kathanam*, telling what is written in a book without seeing it, and telling what is hidden in another's fist; (48) *mlecchita-kutarka-vikalpāḥ*, fabricating barbarous or foreign sophistry; (49) *deśa-bhāṣā-jñānam*, knowledge of provincial dialects; (50) *puṣpa-śakaṭikā-nirmiti-jñānam*, knowledge of how to build toy carts with flowers; (51) *yantra-māṭṛkā*, composing magic squares, arrangements of numbers adding up to the same total in all directions; (52) *dhāraṇa-māṭṛkā*, the use of amulets; (53) *samvācyam*, conversation; (54) *mānasī-kāvya-kriyā*, composing verses mentally; (55) *kriyā-vikalpāḥ*, designing a literary work or a medical remedy; (56) *chalitaka-yogāḥ*, building shrines; (57) *abhidhāna-koṣa-cchando-jñānam*, lexicography and the knowledge of poetic meters; (58) *vastra-gopanam*, disguising one kind of cloth to look like another; (59) *dyūta-viśeṣam*, knowledge of various forms of gambling; (60) *ākarṣa-krīḍa*, playing dice; (61) *bālaka-krīḍanakam*, playing with children's toys; (62) *vaināyikī vidyā*, enforcing discipline by mystic power; (63) *vaijayikī vidyā*, gaining victory; and (64) *vaitālikī vidyā*, awakening one's master with music at dawn [see also Kṛṣṇa book chapter 45].

*5: *Samyama* means self-control, restraint, holding together, the integration of concentration [*dhāranā*], meditation [*dhyāna*], and absorption [*samādhi*] in yoga.

Chapter 46

Uddhava Spends the Night in Gokula Talking with Nanda

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The best adviser of the Vṛṣṇis was Kṛṣṇa's beloved friend Uddhava [see also 3.2], a direct disciple of Bṛhaspati and a man of the finest intelligence. (2) One day the Supreme Lord Hari, who removes the distress of the surrendered souls, grabbed his hand and spoke to him, His dearest and most faithful devotee. (3) 'Please Uddhava, oh gentle soul, go, for the satisfaction of My parents, to Vraja and relieve, through My message, the *gopīs* from the mental pain of being separated from Me. (4) With their minds fixed on Me, they, absorbed in Me, have made Me the purpose of their lives and abandoned all their material ties [with their husband, home and children, see 10.29: 4]. Understanding the souls who for My sake left behind this world and its moral obligations, I sustain those who have only Me as their beloved and dearest Self. (5) My best one, when the women of Gokula remember Me, their dearest object of love being far away, they become stunned being overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation [see also B.G. 2: 62-64]. (6) With My promises to return, the cowherd women who are fully dedicated to Me, with great difficulty manage to hold on and in some way keep their lives somewhat going.'

(7) Śrī Śuka said: 'After having said this, oh King, Uddhava respectfully accepted the message of his Maintainer, mounted his chariot, and set off for the cowherd village of Nanda. (8) Just as the sun was setting, the fortunate soul reached Nanda's pastures, passing there unnoticed because of the dust of the hooves of the animals coming home. (9-13) With the sounds of the bulls in rut fighting each other for the fertile cows, with the cows with filled udders running after their calves, with the beauty of the white calves capering here and there, and with the milking and the loud reverberation of flutes, the finely ornamented *gopīs* and *gopas*, auspiciously singing about the deeds of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, were resplendent to behold. It was all most attractive with the homes of the *gopas* filled with incense, lamps and flower garlands for the worship of the fire, the sun, the guests, the cows, the brahmins, the forefathers and the gods [see also 10.24: 25]. The forest, flowering on all sides, echoed with the swarms of bees,

singing birds, the kārāṇḍava ducks and the swans crowding around the adorning bowers of lotuses. (14) After having arrived there, Nanda approached the dear follower of Kṛṣṇa and embraced him, happy to be reverential with Lord Vāsudeva in mind. (15) He fed him with the finest food, had him comfortably seated on a nice sofa to be relieved of the fatigue and had his feet massaged and so on. Then he inquired: (16) 'Oh dear and most fortunate soul, does our friend the son of Śūra [Vasudeva] who is so devoted to his well-wishers, fare well now that he is released and was reunited with his children? (17) What a luck that the wicked Kāmsa, who constantly hated the always righteous and saintly Yadus, together with his followers has been killed because of his sins! (18) Is Kṛṣṇa still thinking of us, His mother, His well-wishers and friends, the *gopas* of Vraja of whom He is the master, the cows, Vṛṇḍāvana forest and the mountain [see 10.24: 25]? (19) Is Govinda coming back to see His relatives once again, so that we may glance upon His face, His beautiful nose, His nice smile and eyes? (20) Kṛṣṇa, that so very great Soul, has protected us against insurmountable mortal dangers like a forest fire, the wind and rain, as also against a bull and a serpent. (21) The memory of Kṛṣṇa's valorous deeds, playful sidelong glances, smiles and words, my dear, made all of us forget our material actions. (22) In Him the mind of those who see the locations where He played - the rivers, the hills and the different parts of the forest that were decorated by [the prints of] His feet - finds its total absorption. (23) I think that Kṛṣṇa and Rāma who arrived here for a great and divine cause of the gods, as confirmed by Garga [see 10.8: 12], are the two most elevated souls among the demigods. (24) After all, Kāmsa, who had the strength of ten thousand elephants, the wrestlers, and the king of the elephants, have been playfully killed by the both of Them, as easy as animals are by the lion king. (25) A solid bow as long as three *tālas* [tree lengths] was by Him, regal as an elephant, broken like a stick, and for seven days He with one hand held up a mountain! (26) Pralamba, Dhenuka, Ariṣṭa, Tṛṇāvarta, Baka and other demons who had conquered both Sura and Asura, were by Them killed out here with ease.'

(27) Śrī Śuka said: 'Nanda fully immersed in Kṛṣṇa thus over and over remembering Him, became extremely anxious and fell silent, overcome by the force of love. (28) Also mother Yaśodā overhearing the descriptions of her son's activities, in her love with her breasts moistened gave way to her tears. (29) When Uddhava saw the two of them in their love for the Supreme Lord, in this condition of supreme attraction, he, filled with joy, spoke to Nanda. (30) Śrī Uddhava said: 'Having developed a mentality like this for Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual master of all, the two of you are for certain the most praiseworthy of

all embodied beings on the planet, oh respectful souls. (31) Mukunda and Balarāma together constitute the seed and womb of the universe, They are the Original Male Principle [*Puruṣa*] and His Creative Primeval Energy [*pradhāna*], who for Their knowledge and control are followed by the confused living beings. (32-33) The person who, giving up his life, but for a moment immerses his impure mind [in Him], that very instant will immediately eradicate all traces of his karma and find himself heading for the supreme destination in a spiritual form with the luster of the sun. With you, good souls, giving Him, Nārāyaṇa, the Soul and Cause of All, the purest and most exceptional love, what other good deeds would there for you remain to perform? (34) Before long Acyuta, [as] the Lord Supreme, the Master and Protector of the Devotees, will satisfy His parents and return to Vraja. (35) In the [wrestling] arena having killed Kāṁsa, the enemy of all Yādus, Kṛṣṇa will be true to His word that He would return to you. (36) Please do not falter, oh most fortunate souls, you will see Kṛṣṇa in the near future. He is present within the hearts of all living beings like fire in firewood. (37) No one is dear or not dear to Him, nor does He, who is free from false pride, regard anyone superior or inferior. He is of an equal respect for everyone [compare Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka and B.G. 9: 29]. (38) For Him there is no father and mother, no wife, no children and so forth. No one is related to Him, nor is anyone strange to Him, and with Him there is neither a question of a [material] body or birth [compare B.G. 10: 3]. (39) For Him there is no karma in this world obliging Him to appear in wombs of a pure, impure or mixed nature. Yet He for the sake of His pastimes manifests to redeem His saintly devotees [see B.G. 3: 22; 4: 7; 13: 22]. (40) Even though He is transcendental beyond the modes called goodness, passion and ignorance, He accepts it to play by the modes. He, the Unborn One, is thus of creation, maintenance and destruction. (41) Just as for someone when he whirls around, the ground seems to be whirling, so too it appears to a person thinking to be the body, that he himself is the doer, while it is the mind that is acting [*], compare B.G. 3: 27]. (42) He is not just the son of the two of you, He is the Supreme Lord Hari, the Lord of Control who is the Son, the Soul, the Father and the Mother of everyone. (43) All that one sees or hears, what is in the past, the present or in the future, what is stationary, mobile, large or small, can in no way be assigned a status separate from Acyuta. He, the Supersoul, is the reality and welfare of all and everything.'

(44) **W**hile Nanda and Kṛṣṇa's messenger were speaking this way, the night came to an end, oh King, and the *gopīs* who had risen, lighted the lamps in the house for the worship and began to churn the butter. (45) As the women were moving their hips and breasts while

pulling the ropes, they radiated in the light of the lamps, with the rows of bangles on their arms, with their jewels, with their faces red of the *kunkum* and glowing from their earrings and necklaces. (46) All inauspiciousness was dispelled in every direction with the loud singing of the lotus-eyed women of Vraja whose reverberating sound, mixed with the sounds of churning butter, filled the air. (47) When the almighty sun rose, the residents of Gokula saw the golden chariot outside the house of Nanda and wondered: 'Whose chariot is this? (48) Maybe Akrūra has come, that servant of Kāmsa's desires who took our lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to the city of Mathurā. (49) Would he, with his master satisfied, be here now to perform the funeral rites with us?' And while the women were speaking thus, Uddhava came walking who had finished his morning duties.'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī gives a parallel idea: Although our happiness and distress are caused by our own interaction with the material qualities, we perceive the Lord to be their cause.

Chapter 47

The Gopī Reveals Her Emotions: The Song of the Bee

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the women of Vraja saw him, the servant of Kṛṣṇa, with his long arms, with his lotus eyes, wearing a yellow garment and a lotus garland, with his effulgent lotuslike countenance and polished earrings, they were quite astonished and wondered where this handsome, young man came from and to whom he belonged who wore clothes and ornaments like those of Kṛṣṇa. Talking like this they all eagerly crowded around him who enjoyed the protection of the lotus feet of Uttamaśloka [the Lord Praised in the Scriptures]. (3) With due respect bowing down before him in humility and shyly smiling with their glances, sweet words and such, they asked it him, after first having taken him separate and offered him a seat, for they had understood that he was an envoy of the Husband of the Goddess of Fortune. (4) 'We know that you arrived here as the personal associate of the chief of the Yadus who, as your Master, has sent you here to satisfy His parents. (5) We really would not know why else He should have thought of this cow place. Even for a sage the bonds of affection with one's relatives are difficult to relinquish. (6) The interest in others manifested out of self-interest proves itself as friendship for as long as it takes; it is a pretense as good as the interest of bees for flowers or of men for women. (7) Prostitutes abandon a penniless man, citizens deny an incompetent king, graduates leave behind their teacher and priests leave [their attendants] after being compensated. (8) Birds abandon a tree rid of its fruits and guests leave the house where they ate. Animals leave the forest that burned down and a lover likewise leaves the woman he enjoyed to unite with.'

(9-10) Now that Uddhava, the messenger of Kṛṣṇa, had arrived in their midst, the *gopīs*, who thus with their words, bodies and minds were focussed on Kṛṣṇa, put aside their worldly concerns. Without restraint they sang and cried in the constant remembrance of the youth and childhood activities of their Sweetheart. (11) One *gopī* [noted as Rādhā, see also *] seeing a honeybee as she meditated on the association with Kṛṣṇa, imagined it to be a messenger sent by her Beloved and spoke as follows. (12) The *gopī* said: 'Oh honeybee, you friend of a cheater, do not touch my feet with your whiskers still

carrying the *kuṅkum* from His garland, the powder that rubbed off from the breasts of a rival lover. One who sends a messenger like you is derided in the assembly of the Yadus. Let the Lord of Madhu [Himself] be of mercy with the women [instead] [*prajalpa* **]! (13) One time He made us drink the nectar of His bewildering lips and then suddenly abandoned us like we were some flowers. I wonder why the goddess of fortune [Padmā] serves His lotus feet just like you [oh bee]. That must be so because her mind, alas, has been stolen by Kṛṣṇa's chitchat [*parijalpa* ***]. (14) Oh mister six-legs, dear bee, why are you singing so busily about the Master of the Yadus in front of us who are old friends of this Friend of Vijaya [Arjuna] and who left behind their homes? You better sing of His topics before His [new] girlfriends, the pain of whose breasts He [now has] relieved. His sweethearts will provide you the charity you seek [*vi jalpa* *4]. (15) What women in heaven, on earth and below would not be available to Him who, so unattainable, can deceive you with His charming smiles and arching eyebrows? When the wife of the Fortunate One is of worship in the dust of His feet, what then would be our value? Luckily for those feeling bad about it, there is the sound vibration [to be chanted of] 'Uttamaśloka' [*ujjalpa* *5]. (16) Keep your little head away from my feet! I know you, you expert who as a messenger from Mukunda learned the diplomacy of flatter! Why should I make amends with Him who, so ungrateful, has abandoned us, we who for His sake in this life have left behind their children, husbands and everything else [*sañjalpa* *6]? (17) Against all rules He [as Rāma, see 9.10 & 11] as cruel as a hunter shot the king of the monkeys [Vālī], was conquered by a woman [Sītā], disfigured a woman driven by lust [Śūrpanakhā, the sister of Rāvana] and, after consuming His tribute, [as Vāmana] bound up Bali like a crow [see 8.21]. Therefore enough of all friendliness with that Black Boy who impossibly can be given up when we keep talking about His stories [*avajalpa* *7]. (18) Those ears are freed from all sins, that just once enjoyed but a drop of the nectar of the pastimes that He constantly performed. Such a person is completely liberated from the duality, wherefrom any [personal, material] sense of duty is instantly ruined. For that reason many people here [in Vṛndāvana], by therewith rejecting their miserable homes and families, end up wretched and, just like birds, practice the livelihood of begging [*abhijalpa* *8]. (19) We, taking His deceptive words for true, just like the black deer's foolish doe wives who trust the hunter's song, repeatedly experienced this sharp pain of lust that was caused by the touch of His fingernails. Oh messenger, I beg you, talk of something else [*ajalpa* *9]! (20) My sweet little friend, have you been sent back here by my Beloved? Please ask me what you want, you are to be honored by me, my

dearest. Why are you here raising in us these [amorous] feelings for Him that are so impossible to relinquish? For is, oh gentle one, His consort the goddess of fortune Śrī, not always present with Him on His chest [*pratijalpa* *10]? (21) What a pity that the son of Nanda resides in Mathurā now. Does He think so now and then of the household affairs of His father, His friends and the cowherd boys, oh great soul? Or else, does He still talk about us, His maidservants? When will He lay His aguru-scented hand on our heads [*sujalpa* *11]?'

(22) Śrī Śuka said: 'Uddhava, having heard how the cowherd girls were longing to see Kṛṣṇa, in order to pacify them thereupon related to them the message of their Sweetheart. (23) Śrī Uddhava said: 'You have dedicated your minds unto the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva and are thus honorable to all people because you, oh good selves, therewith fulfilled your life's purpose [of giving shape to the emotions of relating to Him]. (24) By means of donations, vows [of poverty, celibacy and fasting], sacrifices, using prayer beads [*japa*], studying and by turning inward, concentrating and meditating, as also by other kinds of auspicious practices [see also *yama*, *niyama*, *vidhi* and *bhāgavata dharma*], bhakti, devotional service unto Kṛṣṇa, is realized. (25) The unexcelled [standard of] devotion unto the Supreme Lord Uttamaśloka, which by you good people fortunately has been established, is even hard to attain for the sages. (26) To your great fortune you have chosen to leave your sons, husbands, physical comforts, relatives and homes, for the sake of that superior, male personality called Kṛṣṇa. (27) By the wholehearted love, which ruled you because of your separation from Adhokṣaja [the Transcendental Lord], oh glorious souls, you have done me [the Lord and everyone] a great favor. (28) Please, good ladies, listen to the message that I for the sake of your happiness, as a faithful servant of my master, brought to you from your Beloved.

(29) **T**he Supreme Lord has said: 'You women are actually never separated from Me, ever being present as the Soul of All. Just as all the elements, the ether, the fire, the air, the water and the earth are part of all beings, I am there as the union of all the elements of the mind, the life air, the senses and the natural modes. (30) By means of Myself I create, destroy and sustain Myself within Myself, through the power of My deluding potency consisting of the material elements, the senses and the modes of nature. (31) The soul full of pure spiritual knowledge, which separately exists free from the association of the modes, is perceived [as the constant witness] in the operations of deep sleep, dream sleep and waking consciousness. (32) The mind by which one meditates on the objects of the senses, constitutes a mirage,

just as a dream constitutes an illusion when one wakes up. Staying alert one should bring under control that what [in the mind] gathers from the input of the senses [compare B.G. 2: 68 and 6: 35-36]. (33) Just as the ocean is the end station for all the rivers, this [insight] is the end conclusion of all Vedic literatures, analysis and yoga, of all intelligent people, renunciation, penance, sense control and truthfulness [compare B.G. 2: 70]. (34) The fact then that I, so dear to your eyes, am situated so far away from you, is according to My wish that your mind - that is subjected to attraction - meditates on Me. (35) The mind of a woman remains more absorbed when her lover is far away, than when she has him present before her eyes. (36) Because in the constant remembrance of Me your minds are totally absorbed in Me and free from all restlessness, you will see Me appear soon. (37) Those remaining here in Vraja while I was sporting at night in the forest [see 10.29: 9] and for that reason did not experience the *rāsa* dance, were as fortunate to achieve Me by thinking of My lustre.'

(38) Śrī Śuka said: 'The women of Vraja hearing the instructions thus imparted by their Beloved, pleased as they were to have their memories revived by the message, thereupon addressed Uddhava. (39) The *gopīs* said: 'Kaṁsa, the enemy of the Yadus, the cause of the suffering, together with his followers has fortunately been killed. What a blessing that Acyuta at present lives happily with His well-wishers who [therewith] achieved everything they desired. (40) Oh gentle soul, maybe the elder brother of Gada [Kṛṣṇa, see 9.24: 46] gives the women of the city, affectionately revering Him bashfully with inviting smiles and glances, the love that belongs to us. (41) How can our Darling, so expert in all matters of love, not be bound by the bewildering gestures and words of the city women, who [just like us] are also constantly of worship? (42) And... does Kṛṣṇa, oh pious soul, remember us; does He ever mention us, village girls, when He freely talks in the company of the city women? (43) Does He still remember those nights in which He enjoyed in Vṛṇḍāvana, that place so enchanting because of the lotus, the jasmine and the moon? He at the time with tinkling ankle bells danced with us, His beloved girlfriends, who glorified Him for His attractive stories. (44) Will that descendant of Daśārha return to this place and with His touch bring back to life us, who are tormented by the sorrow He gave rise to Himself? Will He do that just as Indra with his clouds would [replenish] a forest? (45) But why would Kṛṣṇa come here, now that He, surrounded by all His well-wishers, is happy having attained a kingdom, having killed His enemies and having married the daughters of kings? (46) What purpose would there, for us forest-dwellers or for other women, be to fulfill unto Him, the great Soul and husband of the

goddess of fortune, whose every desire is already fulfilled? He is complete in Himself! (47) The greatest happiness is found in non-expectancy, so even the unchaste Piṅgalā stated [a courtesan, see 11.8]. Yet, for us focused on Kṛṣṇa who very well know this, it is most difficult not to cherish any hope. (48) Who is capable of forgetting the intimate talks with Uttamaśloka, He from whose body the goddess never moves away despite Him not desiring her? (49) In the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa, oh *prabhu*, Kṛṣṇa with the cows and the sounds of the flute wandered through the different places in the forest, by the rivers and the hills. (50) Ah, time and again those places, carrying the glory of His footprints, remind us of the son of Nanda we can never forget. (51) Oh, how can we ever forget Him with our hearts being stolen by His lovely gait, His playful glances, His generous smiles and nectarean words? (52) Oh Master, Master of the Goddess and Master of Vraja; oh Destroyer of the Suffering, oh Govinda, lift Gokula out of the ocean of misery it is submerged in!

(53) Śrī Śuka said: 'With their fever of separation removed by Kṛṣṇa's messages, they thereupon worshiped him, Uddhava, recognizing him as Adhokṣaja Himself. (54) Remaining there for some months he, singing about the topics of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, gave joy to Gokula by dispelling the sorrow of the *gopīs*. (55) All the days that Uddhava dwelled in Nanda's cowherd village, passed for the residents of Vraja in a single moment, because they were filled with discussions about Kṛṣṇa. (56) Seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees, the servant of the Lord took pleasure in reminding the people of Vraja of Kṛṣṇa. (57) Witnessing how confused and such the *gopīs* were in their absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was extremely pleased and offered them all respect while singing the following: (58) 'On this earth these young cowherd women are the only ones [of real success] in acquiring a body, for they achieved the perfection of an exclusive love for Govinda, the Soul of All - a love that is desired by sages, by ourselves and by those afraid of a material existence. Of what use would the [three] brahminical births be [of deriving an existence from one's parents, one's guru and one's sacrifices] for someone who has a taste for the topics of the Unlimited Lord? (59) What is one compared to these women who, impure in their conduct towards Kṛṣṇa, wander through the forests? What is one's position compared to this stage of perfect love for the Supreme Soul? For the soul who is of constant worship, even when not being very learned, most certainly the Lord directly bestows the highest good, the good that, being imbibed, works like the king of all medicines [that is: irrespective the person]. (60) The blessing the Vraja ladies during the *rāsa* dance found in the embrace of Uttamaśloka,

was not bestowed on the goddess on His chest who is so intimately associated with Him, was not His mercy for the heavenly damsels with their lotus flower scent and luster, nor was it granted to any other kind of woman [10.33]. (61) Oh, let me be devoted to the dust of the lotus feet of the *gopīs* in Vṛṇḍāvana! Let me be any of the bushes, creepers or herbs there [in relation] to them, to those women who in worship of the feet of Mukunda, whom one seeks with the help of the Vedas, abandoned the path of civil correctitude and left behind the family members that are so difficult to give up. (62) The feet of the Supreme Lord where the goddess, Lord Brahmā and the other gods with all their desires fulfilled, just like accomplished masters of yoga, can only dream of, were by Kṛṣṇa in the gathering of the *rāsa* dance placed on their breasts, so that they by embracing them could overcome their anguish. (63) I offer my obeisances again and again to the dust of the feet of the women of Nanda's cowherd village, whose loud chanting of Kṛṣṇa's glories purifies the three worlds.'

(64) Śrī Śuka said: '[Uddhava,] the descendant of Daśārha thereupon took leave of Yaśodā, Nanda, the *gopas* and the *gopīs*, mounted his chariot and was about to leave. (65) But when he left, Nanda and the others approached him with various items of worship in their hands and said, affectionately and with tears in their eyes: (66) 'May our mental activities be founded on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, may our words be an expression of His names and may our bodies when they bow down and such, do so for His sake. (67) May there wherever we for our work have to wander to the Lord's disposition, may there with whatever we do and give away in charity, be the attachment to Kṛṣṇa, our Lord.'

(68) After the *gopas* thus had honored him with Kṛṣṇa bhakti, oh first among men, Uddhava returned to Mathurā, the city that [now] enjoyed the protection of Kṛṣṇa. (69) After bringing Kṛṣṇa his obeisances, he told Him about the intense devotion of the residents of Vraja and next gave Vasudeva, Balarāma and the king [Ugrasena] the gifts sent along for them.'

*: To substantiate the claim that this concerns Rādhā, quotes Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī the following verses from the Agni Purāṇa: "At dawn the *gopīs* inquired from Kṛṣṇa's servant, Uddhava, about the Lord's pastimes and recreation. Only Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, immersed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, withdrew Her interest in the talks. Then Rādhā, who is worshiped by the residents of Her Vṛṇḍāvana village, spoke up in the midst of Her girlfriends. Her words were full of pure transcendental knowledge and expressed the ultimate portion of the Vedas."

** : Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī points out that this and the following nine verses exemplify ten kinds of impulsive speech [*citra-jalpa* or strange chatter] spoken by a lover as expressions of god conscious folly or divine madness [*divyonmāda*]. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.182) says to this expression: "*Prajalpa* is speech that denigrates the tactlessness of one's lover with expressions of disrespect. It is spoken in a mood of envy, jealousy and pride."

*** : Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.184): "*Parijalpa* is that speech which, through various devices, shows one's own cleverness by exposing the mercilessness, duplicity, unreliability and so on of one's Lord."

*4: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.186): "According to learned authorities, *vijalpa* is sarcastic speech that is addressed to the killer of Agha and that openly expresses jealousy while at the same time hinting at one's angry pride."

*5: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.188): "The declaration of Lord Hari's duplicitous nature in a mood of spite born of pride, together with jealously spoken insults directed against Him, has been termed *ujjalpa* by the wise."

*6: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.190): "The learned describe *sañjalpa* as that speech which decries with deep irony and insulting gestures the beloved's ungratefulness and so on."

*7: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.192): "Saintly persons have concluded that when a lover, impelled by jealousy and fear, declares that Lord Hari is unworthy of her attachment because of His harshness, lustiness and dishonesty, such speech is called *avajalpa*."

*8: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.194): "When a lover indirectly states with remorse that her beloved is fit to be given up, such speech, uttered like the plaintive crying of a bird, is called *abhijalpa*."

*9: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.196): "A statement spoken in disgust, describing how the male lover is deceitful and brings one misery, and also implying that He gives happiness to others, is known as *ājalpa*."

*10: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.198): "When the lover humbly states that although she is unworthy of attaining her beloved she cannot give up hoping for a conjugal relationship with Him, such words, spoken with respect for her beloved's message, are called *pratijalpa*."

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī explains that the goddess of fortune, Śrī, has the power to assume many different forms. Thus when Kṛṣṇa enjoys other

women, she stays on His chest in the form of a golden line. When He is not consorting with other women, she puts aside this form and gives Him pleasure in Her naturally beautiful form of a young woman.

*11: Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.200): "When, out of honest sincerity, a lover questions Śrī Hari with gravity, humility, unsteadiness and eagerness, such speech is known as *sujalpa*."

Chapter 48

Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, the Soul of All who Sees Everything, with understanding [for Uddhava's report of desirous women] wished to please the serving girl [Trivakrā, as He had promised 10.42: 12], and went to the house of the woman who was troubled by lust [see 10.42: 10]. (2) It was richly endowed with expensive furnishings, replete with sensual articles, and was beautified with strings of pearls and banners, canopies, beds and seats, as also with fragrant incense, oil lamps, flower garlands and sandalwood. (3) Seeing Him arriving at her house, she immediately rose to her feet and, together with her girlfriends, hurried to approach Acyuta properly by respectfully welcoming Him with an excellent seat and so on. (4) Uddhava was honored also, but, correct as he was, he touched his seat and sat on the floor. Krishna, faithful to the ways of human society, then laid Himself without delay upon a luxurious bed [in the inner chambers]. (5) She prepared herself by bathing, anointing her body, dressing up with ornaments and garlands, and by using perfume, bethel nut, a fragrant mouth wash and such, whereupon she shyly and with playful smiles approached Mādhava with tempting glances. (6) Calling forward the lovely woman, who was shy in fear of the novel contact, He took hold of her two with bangles ornamented hands and placed the beauty on the bed to enjoy together with her, she whose only proof of piety consisted of having offered ointment. (7) Smelling the feet of the Unlimited Lord and embracing within her arms, between her breasts, her Lover, the Personification of All Ecstasy, wiped away the pain that because of Cupid burned in her breasts, chest and eyes. Thus she succeeded in losing her so very long standing distress. (8) Because she had offered body ointment to Him, the Master of Enlightenment, she had obtained the Lord who is so hard to obtain. But then she unfortunately [compare 4.9: 31] begged the following: (9) 'Please Beloved, stay here for a few days together with me! Enjoy, for I cannot bear to give up Your association, oh Lotus Flower Eyes.'

(10) **H**e who is of Respect for Others, considerate with her granted her the boon she desired [in the form of a promise], whereupon the Lord of All, together with Uddhava, returned to His own supremely opulent residence. (11) The one who, in full worship

of Viṣṇu, the Controller of All Controllers who is so difficult to honor [other than by pure devotion], choses for a benediction that is spiritually too easy, is with that superficiality not engaged very intelligently [see also 7.15: 36].

(12) **Kṛṣṇa**, the Master, who [also] desired to please Akrūra and wanted to engage him in some business, went together with Uddhava and Balarāma to his house. (13-14) When he saw Them coming, the greatest of all illustrious personalities who were his relatives, he joyfully rose to his feet to greet and embrace Them for a welcome. Bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and Rāma he was greeted in return, whereupon he, after They had taken their seats, worshiped Them as was prescribed. (15-16) The water he had used to wash Their feet he sprinkled over his head, oh King, after which he presented gifts: the finest clothing, sandalwood, garlands and excellent ornaments. With his head bowed down he in worship placed Kṛṣṇa's feet on his lap to massage them, and then with humility, facing down, addressed Kṛṣṇa and Rāma as follows: (17) 'To our good fortune the two of You have killed the sinful Kamsa and his brothers and followers. Thus delivering Your dynasty from endless troubles You made it prosper. (18) You two are the *pradhāna* and *puruṣa* [material and efficient] causes of the universe who are one with the universe. Apart from You not a single cause or effect [*para-apara*] can be found. (19) This universe You created from Your energies, You have subsequently entered. Thus You can be perceived in the many [forms], oh Absolute Truth, we know about from both listening to the scriptures and by direct experience. (20) Just as the earth element and the other elements differently manifest themselves in various species of living mobile and immobile beings, You, the Single One Self-reliant Self, the Supersoul, manifest in a multitude [of souls] within those different life forms. (21) You create, maintain and then again destroy the universe, but You are, with the qualities of Your potencies - [respectively] the passion, the goodness and the ignorance [the *guṇas*], not bound to those actions or their modes. For what could for You, who are the Soul of All Knowledge, constitute a cause of bondage? (22) Because it has never been proven that You are determined by physical matters and such, there is with You no question of a literal birth or of material opposites. For that reason there exists for You in fact no bondage or any liberation [compare 10.14: 26]. And if that appears to be so according to Your sweet will [see e.g. 10.11: 7], it is the consequence of our mistaken notion about You [like in 10.23: 10-11]. (23) For the benefit of this universe You proclaim the classical path of the Veda and assume forms in the mode of goodness when wicked persons adhering to the path of godlessness are obstructing it. (24) You as that very

same person, oh Master, have now descended in the home of Vasudeva together with Your plenary portion [Balarāma]. This You have done in order to spread the fame of this [Yadu] dynasty and to remove from this earth the burden of the hundreds of armies present there, by killing the kings [see also 1.11: 34], belonging to the enemies of the God-fearing souls [see e.g. 7.1: 40-46]. (25) Today, oh Lord, our residence has been most blessed by the arrival of You, Adhokṣaja, the Spiritual Master of the Universe who are the embodiment of all the gods, forefathers, living beings and humans, You from whose feet the water [of the Ganges, see 5.17] washes that purifies the three worlds. (26) What other scholar would there be for us? To whom else should we turn for shelter but to You, the well-wisher whose loving words for His devotees are always faithful? For being grateful to the supporters who worship You, You give all they desire, even Yourself with whom there is never any diminution or increase [see also B.G. 2: 40]. (27) To our fortune, Janārdana, we can see You here, who even for the masters of yoga and the most prominent among the enlightened souls are a goal hard to attain. Please, swiftly cut through the ties of our delusional existence that result from Your material energy: our children, wife, wealth, honorable friends, our home, body and so on.'

(28) Thus extensively being worshiped by His devotee, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, smiled at Akrūra and spoke with words that practically swept him of his feet. (29) The Supreme Lord said: 'You, Our paternal uncle and praiseworthy friend, are Our spiritual master. We are always the ones depending on you and [as your sons] need to be protected, maintained and graced by you. (30) Someone like you belongs to the most elevated among the honorable souls and deserves it to be served by anyone desiring the saintliest and highest good. Demigods are always after their own interests, but pure devotees are not. (31) Not to decry the sacred places that consist of water [rivers] or the deities that are made of clay and stone: they purify in the course of time, but the saints [themselves] bring purification after just once having met them. (32) You certainly are the very best of all Our well-wishers. I would like you to go for Us to the city named after the elephant [Hastināpura] and find out what it is that for the sake of the welfare of the Pāṇḍavas needs to be done. (33) When their father died, they as young boys together with their mother were in great distress. They were by the king [Dhṛtarāṣṭra] taken to his capital, where they are residing since, so I have heard. (34) The King, the son of Ambikā [see 9.22: 25], was blind and was, under the control of his wicked sons [one hundred of them led by Duryodhana, 9.22: 26], weak-minded, so that the sons of his brother [Pāṇḍu] certainly were not treated equally by him. (35) Go and find out whether his actions are good or bad at

present, so that We with that knowledge can make arrangements for the benefit of Our dear friends.'

(36) After Akrūra fully having instructed with these words, the Fortunate One, Lord Hari, returned to His residence together with Uddhava and Saṅkarṣaṇa.'

Chapter 49

Akrūra's Mission in Hastināpura

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'He [Akrūra] went to Hastināpura, the city marked by the glory of the kings of the Pūru dynasty [see family-tree], and saw there the son of Ambikā [Dhṛtarāṣṭra, see 9.22: 25] together with Bhīṣma, Vidura and Pṛthā [Kuntī], as also Bāhlika and his son [Somadatta], Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya, Karṇa, Duryodhana, the son of Droṇa [Aśvatthāma], the Pāṇḍavas and other friends. (3) After the son of Gāndinī [Akrūra, see 9.24: 15] appropriately had greeted his relatives and friends, they inquired with him for news about their kin, whereupon he in turn asked how they were faring. (4) He stayed there for a couple of months in order to find out what the king, who could not raise his voice against his wicked sons, was doing in following the advise of mischievous persons [like Karṇa]. (5-6) Both Vidura and Kuntī told him everything about the unbecoming acts - like the administering of poison - that the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had perpetrated in their intolerance for the influence, skill, strength, bravery, humility and so on of the sons of Pṛthā, whose excellent qualities were loved by the citizens. (7) Now that Pṛthā saw her [Vṛṣṇi-]brother Akrūra before her, she, remembering her place of birth [Mathurā], addressed him and said with tears in her eyes: (8) 'Oh gentle soul, do our parents and brothers, my sisters, nephews and the women of the family, as also my [old girlhood] friends, still remember us? (9) Do the son of my brother, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, the shelter full of care for the devotees, and Balarāma with His lotus petal eyes, still think of the sons of His father's sister? (10) And... will He come to console me with His words, I who with young boys deprived of their father in the midst of enemies am lamenting like a doe between the wolves? (11) Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Greatest Yogi, oh Soul and Protector of the Universe, please watch over this surrendered soul who together with her children is drowning in distress, oh Govinda [see also 1.8: 17-43]! (12) For mankind in fear of death and rebirth, I see no other shelter than Your lotus feet, oh Master and Controller granting liberation. (13) My obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the pure Absolute Truth and Supersoul, the Lord of Yoga and Unifier of Consciousness; You I approach for shelter.'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh King, Your own great-grandmother thus remembering her relatives and Kṛṣṇa, the Controller of the Universe,

began to cry loudly over her misfortune. (15) Akrūra, equanimous in distress and happiness, and the illustrious Vidura, consoled Kuntī by reminding her of those [the gods] who fathered her sons [see family-tree]. (16) When it was about time to leave, he approached the king amidst his supporters, who was fully determined by his sons [and his foster sons] whom he treated unequally. He wanted to relate to him what in friendship was communicated by his well-wishing relatives [Kṛṣṇa and Rāma]. (17) Akrūra said: 'Oh dear, beloved son of Vicitravīrya [9.22: 21-25], to the greater glory of the Kurus you, after the demise of your brother Pāṇḍu, have now assumed the throne. (18) Dutifully protecting the earth and the citizens, delighting the people with your good character, and treating your relatives equally, you will achieve perfection and renown! (19) Acting to the contrary however, you will be condemned in this world and land in darkness. Therefore always be equal toward the Pāṇḍavas and your own sons. (20) No one in this world, oh King, is given a continuous association with whomever. Not even with one's own body the association continues. So what to say about a wife, children and so on? (21) A living being is born alone and dies alone. Alone one enjoys the good consequences [of one's actions] and alone one has to face the bad consequences. (22) The wealth that was acquired by an unintelligent person lacking in dharma, is seized by others in the guise of dependents [like relatives], just like the water of a fish [will be occupied by its own offspring]. (23) Those who, lacking in wisdom, maintain their life, wealth and children in disrespect of dharmic matters and think 'I am the owner', end up destitute and abandoned, being frustrated in their purposes [see 4.31 6.15: 21-23 and 7.15]. (24) Blind to his own dharmic duties being abandoned by them, he, not conversant with the purpose of life and with his goals unfulfilled, has to carry his load [all alone] and will enter the deepest darkness [see also 3.30; 5: 26; 6.1: 40]. (25) Therefore, seeing this world as a dream, oh King, as something magical, as a thing of the mind, bring that mind under control with intelligence and thus find your balance and peace, *prabhu*.'

(26) Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: 'I can never get enough of the auspicious words you speak, oh master of charity, they are, for a mortal like me, as the nectar of immortality! (27) But however pleasing they might be, oh gentle one, they are, just like lightening in a cloud, not fixed in my wavering heart, because I am partial in my attachment to my sons. (28) What person can defy what is ordained by the Lord who descended in the Yadu family in order to diminish the burden of the earth [see B.G. 9: 8]? (29) He whose path is inconceivable, creates this universe by His own creative energy, distributes the modes and enters them. My obeisances unto Him whose actions are inscrutable,

the Supreme Lord with whom we find liberation from the cycle of birth and death.'

(30) Śrī Śuka said: 'The descendant of Yadu [Akrūra] thus being apprised of the mentality of the king, took leave of his well-wishers and returned to the capital of the Yadus. (31) According to the purpose for which he was sent, oh descendant of Kuru, he reported to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa how Dhṛtarāṣṭra was behaving toward the Pāṇḍavas.'

Chapter 50

Kṛṣṇa Uses Jarāsandha and Establishes the City of Dvārakā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Asti and Prāpti, the two queens of Kāṁsa, oh hero of the Bhāratas, were unhappy that their husband had been killed and in distress went to their father's house. (2) They told their father, the king of Magadha named Jarāsandha [see also 1.15: 9, 9.22: 8, 10.2: 1-2, 10.36: 36], everything about the cause of their widowhood. (3) Hearing those bad tidings, oh King, he full of sorrow and indignation embarked upon the extreme endeavor of ridding the earth of the Yādavas. (4) With twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs* he amassed around Mathurā to besiege the royal capital of the Yadus on all sides. (5-6) When Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Hari, saw how his army, like an ocean that overflowed its boundaries, besieged His city and filled His subjects with fear, He as the Ultimate Cause in a Human Form, considered what, to the purpose of His descent into this world, would be the best course of action considering the time and place: (7-8) 'I will surely annihilate his army, this burden of the earth gathered by the king of Magadha, in which he brought together all who, subservient to him, have assumed leadership and now can be counted in *akṣauhiṇīs* of infantry, cavalry, chariotry and elephantry. Jarāsandha however, I should spare so that he again will try to assemble an army. (9) For this purpose I have descended: to remove the burden of this earth, to protect the virtuous souls and put an end to the rest [that is bad]. (10) As soon as after a certain period of time injustice predominates I, in order to protect the dharma, also assume other bodies [see also 2.7 and B.G. 4: 7].'

(11) **W**hile Govinda was thinking this way, suddenly two chariots [from Vaikunṭha] appeared in the sky, as effulgent as the sun, complete with drivers and equipment. (12) Also the Lord's classical divine weapons appeared of their own accord. Seeing them the Lord of the Senses said to Saṅkarṣaṇa: (13-14) 'Oh Respected Soul, please take notice of this imminent danger for the Yadus who are protected by You, *Prabhu*. This is Your chariot that arrived with Your favorite weapons. We indeed were born for this purpose: to act for the benefit of the saintly souls, oh Lord. So please remove now from this earth the burden of these twenty-three armies.'

(15) **A**fter thus having invited Him, the two descendants of Daśārha in armor, resplendent with Their weapons, left the city in Their chariots, accompanied by a very small contingent. (16) Appearing [from the city], the Supreme Personality with Dārūka at the reins, blew His conch shell so that the hearts of the enemy soldiers trembled with fear. (17) Jarāsandha looked at the two of Them and said: 'Kṛṣṇa, You worst of all persons, I do not desire to contest with You. It is shameful to fight with someone who is but a boy, a fool like You, hiding away. Get lost You murderer of Your relatives! (18) And Rāma, if You dare to fight, then muster courage. You either, cut by my arrows, drop Your body and go to heaven, or You kill me!'

(19) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Truly, heroes do not have to vaunt, they simply show their prowess. How, oh King, can We take serious the words of a man who, facing his death, is delirious?'

(20) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The son of Jarā, then marched with his gigantic number of mighty forces toward the two descendants of Madhu, who thereupon were surrounded by the soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers, just like the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust. (21) When the two chariot banners of Hari and Rāma, which were marked by the palm tree and by Garuḍa, could not be seen anymore in the fray, the women of the city who were positioned on the watchtowers, the palaces and gateways, swooned, being stricken by grief. (22) The Lord witnessing how His army was harassed by the most fearsome clouds of arrows that the enemy forces repeatedly rained upon them, then twanged His most excellent bow the Śārṅga, that is worshiped by Sura and Asura. (23) From His quiver He fixed, pulled back and released floods of sharp arrows with which He, whirling around like a burning torch, relentlessly stroke the chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers. (24) Elephants fell down with their foreheads split open, many a horse had its neck severed, chariots including their horses and flags were destroyed, and the arms, legs and shoulders of the charioteers, their masters and the foot soldiers, were cut by the arrows. (25-28) From the cut off limbs of the two-legged humans, the elephants and the horses, the blood flowed in hundreds of streams, which were filled with arms that looked like snakes, people's heads that looked like turtles, dead elephants that resembled islands and dead horses that resembled crocodiles. Hands and thighs appeared like fish, human hair like water weeds, bows like waves and weapons like separate bushes. The rushing streams, disturbing to the timid and inspiring to the intelligent, were crowded with chariot wheels resembling frightening whirlpools and were filled

with precious gems and fine jewelry that looked like stones and gravel. Saṅkarṣaṇa, with His unbound potency, stroke with His plow His furious enemies down one after the other. The military force, dear King, which was supervised by the king of Magadha for the sake of destruction and was as unfathomable, frightening and unsurpassable as the limitless ocean, was for the Lords of the Universe, the two sons of Vasudeva, but a plaything. (29) Despite the fact that one describes Him [in response to philosophers who proclaim His being unconcerned] as playing His game in imitation of the human ways, it is not at all surprising that He, who with His Unlimited Qualities effects the maintenance, creation and annihilation of the three worlds, subdues an opposing party. (30) The so very strong Jarāsandha whose army had been destroyed and who, deprived of his chariot, was left with only his breath, was seized by Balarāma as forcibly as one lion seizing another lion. (31) But, as He was tying him, who had killed so many adversaries, up with the ropes of Varuṇa [compare 5.24: 23] and of normal man, He was checked by Govinda, for He needed Jarāsandha for another purpose.

(32-33) **He** [Jarāsandha], honored by heroes, was ashamed to be released by the two Lords of the Universe and considered to perform penances, but he was on that path checked by the rest of the nobles who explained to him in clear terms, with meaningful words and practical arguments: 'Your being defeated by the Yadus occurred as a consequence of your karmic bondage.' (34) The son of Bṛhadratha, all of whose soldiers had been killed and who had been left alone by the Supreme Lord, then dispirited returned to Magadha.

(35-36) **Mukunda**, who had overcome the ocean of enemy forces without losing His army, was praised by the servants of the three worlds who showered Him with flowers. Then He met the citizens of Mathurā who, with their fever allayed, felt great joy, while His glory was sung by bards, heralds and panegyrists. (37-38) As He entered the city with its sprinkled roads, many banners and festively decorated gateways, conch shells and kettledrums, drums and horns together with vinās, flutes and mṛdaṅgas [two-sided devotional drums] resounded, while the elated citizens loudly recited Vedic verses. (39) The women gazed at Him affectionately with wide open eyes full of love, and covered Him with flower garlands, yogurt, parched rice and sprouts. (40) The countless valuables, consisting of the ornaments of the heroes fallen on the battlefield, were by the Lord all presented to the king of the Yadus [Ugrasena]. (41) And so it happened that the king of Magadha thus with his *akṣauhiṇīs* seventeen times fought against the Yadus who were protected by Kṛṣṇa's military strength.

(42) The Vṛṣṇis with the help of Kṛṣṇa's power entirely destroyed the forces of the king. And every time his soldiers lay dead, he was abandoned and then went away. (43) Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a foreign fighter [Kālayavana] appeared who was sent by Nārada. (44) Having heard about the Vṛṣṇis he arrived with three crores of barbarians [*mlecchas*] and besieged Mathurā, for among the human beings he had found no one who could match him. (45) Seeing him, Kṛṣṇa together with Saṅkarṣaṇa [Balarāma] thought: 'Ah, [an attack] from two sides. A great problem has risen for the Yadus! (46) This Yavana who opposes Us today, is of the same great strength as Jarāsandha, who will also arrive here either today, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. (47) While the two of Us are fighting with him, the son of Jarā, when he comes, will kill our relatives or else move them to his own stronghold. (48) Let us therefore today build a fortress impenetrable to human beings to house our intimates and then kill the barbarian.'

(49) After deliberating on the matter, the Supreme Lord arranged for a fortress [with a circumference] of twelve *yojanas* within the sea, where He had a city built [called Dvārakā or 'many-gated', see also 1: 11] that had all kinds of wonderful facilities. (50-53) The science of the architecture of Tvaṣṭā [Viśvakarmā] could be admired there, who with his expertise constructed the main avenues, courtyards and service roads to the plots of land. It contained splendid gardens and parks with the trees and creepers of the gods and gateways made of quartz with upper levels that with their turrets of gold touched the sky. The service buildings fitted with silver and brass were decorated with pots of gold and had jeweled rooftops. It had houses with floors with precious emeralds, which were occupied by people from the four *varṇas*, it had watchtowers and temples housing the presiding deities, and radiated with the palaces of the Lord of the Yadus. (54) Lord Indra delivered to the Lord the pārijāta [coral-]tree as also the Sudharmā-hall ['good law'] situated in which a mortal is not affected by the laws of mortality. (55) Varuṇa delivered horses as swift as the wind that had a white and exclusively dark-grey color. The treasurer of the gods [Kuvera] delivered the eight mystic treasures [see *nidhi*] and the local rulers contributed with each their own wealth. (56) Now that He had arrived on earth, whatever powers of control the Supreme Lord had delegated to them for their own perfection, were all returned to Kṛṣṇa. (57) After Kṛṣṇa by the power of His yoga had transported all His subjects to that place [*], He consulted with Balarāma, the protector of the citizens, and then unarmed went out by the city gate, wearing a garland of lotus flowers.'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī quotes the following verses here from the Śrī Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khanda: "In the middle of the night, as the citizens of Mathurā slept, Lord Janārdana suddenly removed them from that city and placed them in Dvārakā. When the men awoke, they were all amazed to find themselves, their children and their wives sitting inside palaces made of gold."

Chapter 51

The Deliverance of Mucukunda

(1-6) Śrī Śuka said: 'Seeing Him coming out [of the city, see 50: 57] like the rising moon, most beautiful to behold, with a dark complexion, a yellow silk garment, the Śrīvatsa on His chest, the brilliant Kaustubha gem decorating His neck, His mighty, long four arms and eyes as pink as newly grown lotuses, His always effulgent, clean, joyful smile to His beautiful cheeks, His lotus like face and the display of His shark-shaped earrings, he [Kālayavana] thought: 'This person indeed, with the Śrīvatsa, the four arms, the lotus eyes, wearing forest-flowers and with a great beauty, must be Vāsudeva. Considering the marks as mentioned by Nārada, He, going there without weapons on foot, can be no one else. I shall fight Him without weapons!' The Yavana in pursuit thus decided to catch up with Him who had turned His face and fled away, He, who is unattainable even for mystic yogis. (7) With every step seeming to be within the reach of his hands, the Lord led the leader of the Yavanas over a great distance to a mountain cave. (8) In his pursuit he insulted Him with words like 'Fleeing does not behove someone like You born in the Yadu dynasty!' Yet he, whose mischief had not found its end, could not get hold of Him. (9) Despite being insulted this way, the Supreme Lord entered the mountain cave. The Yavana followed Him, but saw another man lying there. (10) 'And now, after leading me over such a long distance, He lies here like a saint!' Thus erroneously thinking that the man was Acyuta, he struck him full force with his foot. (11) The man woke up after a long period of sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Looking around in every direction, he saw him standing at his side. (12) Oh descendant of Bharata, with the glance the angered man cast on him, he was instantly burned to ashes by a fire that was generated from within his own body [*].'

(13) The honorable king [Parīkṣit] said: 'Who precisely was that person, oh brahmin, of which family was he and of what powers? Why had he retreated into the cave to sleep, and from whose seed was that destroyer of the Yavana born?'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'He is known as Mucukunda. He was born in the Ikṣvāku dynasty as a son of Māndhātā [see 9.6: 38 and 9.7]. He is a great personality devoted to the brahminical order and someone true

to his vow in battle. (15) On the request for help of the gods headed by Indra, who were terrified because of the Asuras, he for a long time was of service to offer them protection. (16) After having secured Guha ['from the cave'; Skanda or Kārttikeya] as their guardian of heaven, they said to Mucukunda: 'Oh King, please desist from the difficult task to protect us. (17) Forgetting all your personal desires, you, oh hero, with abandoning a kingdom in the world of man, have removed those [*asura*] thorns for our protection. (18) Your children, your queens and your other relatives, ministers, advisors and subjects, do not live anymore. Time has swept them away. (19) The Supreme, Inexhaustible Lord of Control is the Time itself, more powerful than the most powerful, who, playing a game of herdsman and flock, sets the mortal beings in motion. (20) We wish you all good fortune, please choose today any benediction from us, except for the boon of liberation that can only be conferred by the Supreme Inexhaustible Lord Śrī Viṣṇu.'

(21) **He**, who for his great fame thus was addressed by the demigods, respectfully saluted them and entered a cave to enjoy the sleep the gods had granted him [**]. (22) After the barbarian was burned to ashes, the Supreme Lord, the great hero of the Sātvatas, revealed Himself to sage Mucukunda. (23-26) He, as dark as a cloud, was clad in a yellow, silken garment, carried the Śrīvatsa on His chest and the brilliant Kaustubha gem that radiated. With His four arms and the beautifying Vaijayantī garland, with His attractive, calm face and glittering shark-shaped earrings, with His affectionate smile appealing to all mankind and His glance, with His youthful handsome form, His noble gait and His fire that was like that of a lion, He formed an appearance of an overwhelming effulgence. Facing this unassailable splendor he, who was highly intelligent, filled with awe hesitantly posed a question. (27) Śrī Mucukunda said: 'Who are You to join with me in the wilderness in a mountain cave, while You with Your feet, that are like the petals of a lotus, walk the thorny ground? (28) Maybe You are the Supreme Lord, the origin of all empowered beings, or else the god of fire, the sun god, the moon god, the king of heaven or perhaps a ruler from another planet. (29) I think You are the leading godhead [Viṣṇu] among the three principal demigod personalities [Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu], the Greatest One, for You dispel the darkness of this cave [the 'heart'] like a lamp with its light. (30) Oh Most Eminent Among All Man, if You like, please describe truthfully for us eager to hear, Your birth, activities and lineage. (31) We from our side, oh tiger among men, are descendants of Ikṣvāku, a family of *kṣatriyas*. I myself was born from the son of Yuvanāśva and am called Mucukunda, oh Lord. (32) Because I remained awake for a long time

and my fatigued senses were overwhelmed by sleep, I for my comfort lay down in this solitary place. Then I was awakened by someone. (33) That person because of his sinful mentality turned to ashes. Immediately thereafter I then saw Your good Self so glorious, oh Chastiser of the Enemies. (34) Because of Your unbearable effulgence we, being diminished in our faculties, cannot behold You, oh most Gracious One; You deserve it to be honored by all embodied beings!

(35) Thus being addressed by the king, the Supreme Lord and Origin of the Entire Creation replied, with a broad smile using words rumbling as deep as the clouds. (36) The Supreme Lord said: 'There are thousands of My births, activities and names, My dear one, limitless as they are, they cannot even be enumerated by Me! (37) Some time, after many lives, one may succeed in counting all the dust particles of the earth, but that will never be accomplished with My qualities, activities, names and births. (38) Not even the greatest sages enumerating My births and activities, which take place in respect of the three aspects of time [past, present, future], oh King, can reach the end [compare 8.5: 6 and 8.23: 29]. (39-40) Nonetheless, oh friend, just listen to what I have to tell you about My current birth. In the past I was beseeched by Lord Brahmā [see 3.9 and also 10.14] to secure the dharma and destroy the demons who constituted a burden to the earth. Thus I descended into the Yadu dynasty in the home of Vasudeva, and because of that fact the people call Me Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva. (41) I killed Kālanemi [see 10.8: 56] as also Kāmsa [10.44], Pralamba [10.18] and others who were hateful with the virtuous souls. This Yavana, oh King, was burned by your scorching glance. (42) I, the one person caring for the devotees, approached this cave for the sake of favoring you, for in the past you have often prayed for it. (43) Tell Me what blessing you want from Me, oh saintly King, I will fulfill all your wishes. Any person who has satisfied Me, will never again need to lament.'

(44) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being addressed Mucukunda bowed down to Him and spoke. Knowing He was Nārāyaṇa, the [original] Godhead, he filled with joy remembered the words of Garga [***]. (45) Śrī Mucukunda said: 'Man being cheated by Your bewildering potency *māyā*, oh Lord, is not of worship for You. Not understanding the true purpose of life he - whether he is male or female - seeking his happiness gets entangled in household affairs that make him unhappy. (46) The person who somehow or other in this world attains the rarely obtained, highly evolved human form of life and not an idle [animal] form, oh sinless one, will, with an impure mind, not be of worship at Your lotus feet, and like an animal be fallen in the blind well of his

home. (47) Oh Unconquerable One, I thus have wasted my time with building a kingdom and acquiring opulence. All of this is now gone. Intoxicated like an earthly ruler who mistakes his mortal frame for himself, I suffered endless anxieties; I got attached to children, wives, riches and land. (48) Minding this body, which is a confinement like a pot or a wall, I thus thought myself to be a god among man. Surrounded by chariots, elephants, horses, infantry and generals I traveled around on this earth, but, in my great pride, I never seriously regarded You. (49) Forgetful about what needs to be done, hankering for sense objects and endlessly ruminating with an ever growing greed, one is suddenly placed before You, who are as attentive as a hungry snake licking its fangs to kill a mouse. (50) The same vehicle of time, the body which first was called 'the king', riding in chariots furnished with gold or on fierce elephants, is unavoidably in the course of time named 'feces', 'worms' and 'ashes' [see also 16.4: 2-6]. (51) Full circle having conquered the directions, without further conflicts, being seated on a throne and praised by rulers alike, the person in his home is led about like a pet animal, while deriving his happiness from intercourse with women, oh Lord. (52) Reaching in that situation for having more than others, he, by strictly avoiding pleasures, performs his duties with penance, but thinking of himself as 'I am mightier, I am my own master' he, whose urges are so pronounced, cannot attain happiness. (53) When the wandering person reaches the end of his material existence, he, oh Infallible One, may find association with those who are good and honest [the *sat-sanga*]. With that good company thereupon devotion unto Him will develop, He who, as the Lord of the Higher [cause] and Lower [effects], for pious souls is the only goal. (54) Oh Lord, I think that with the spontaneous disappearance of my attachment to my kingdom, You have shown me Your mercy. For that is what the saintly rulers of endless stretches of land pray for, when they enter the forest in want of their solitude. (55) I do not desire anything else but to be of service at Your feet, for they are, to those not desiring a material life, the object of desire, the boon that is sought, oh Almighty One. Which faithful man of worship for You, the Bestower of the Path of Emancipation, oh Lord, would choose as a boon for that which causes his bondage? (56) Therefore, oh Lord, entirely putting aside the worldly blessings because of which one is entangled in the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness, I approach You, the Original Person of Pure Knowledge, who, free from mundane designations and duality, are transcendental to the modes. (57) Tormented by disturbances I, for a long time, was full of sorrow being distressed in the world. With my six enemies [the senses and the mind] never being satisfied, there was no way to find peace, oh Bestower of the Shelter. Please, oh Lord,

protect me who, facing these dangers, oh Supreme Soul, has approached Your lotus feet, the truth that is free from sorrow and fear.'

(58) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Oh great King, emperor of all, you have a pure and capable mind, for, even though you were tempted to ask for benedictions, you were not spoiled by desires. (59) Please know that I tempted you with benedictions in order to ascertain whether you are free from bewilderment. The exclusive[ly to Me devoted] intelligence of the *bhaktas* is never diverted by material blessings. (60) Those who, not devoted to Me, occupy themselves with breathing exercises and such, did not diminish their material desires [the *vāsanās*], oh King, so that one sees that their minds again assert themselves [materially]. (61) Wander this earth at will, and may there, with your mind fixed on Me, for you thus always be an uninterrupted devotion unto Me. (62) Following the dharma of the ruling class you have killed living beings when you were hunting and with other actions. That sin you should now uproot completely by fully immersing yourself in penances with Me as your shelter. (63) In your birth following this one, oh King, you, becoming a supreme well-wisher to all living beings, will be a fine brahmin and attain Me for certain [see also B.G. 5:29].'

*: Mucukunda, the man asleep, as stated hereafter fought for a long time on behalf of the demigods and finally took as his benediction the right to sleep undisturbed. The *paramparā* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī quotes the Hari-vamśa that explains he secured the further benediction of being able to destroy anyone who disturbed his sleep. He further elucidates that Mucukunda made this rather morbid request to scare Lord Indra, who, so Mucukunda thought, might otherwise wake him up repeatedly to request his help in fighting Indra's cosmic enemies. Indra's consent to Mucukunda's request is described in the Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa as follows: "The demigods declared, 'Whoever awakens you from sleep will suddenly be burnt to ashes by a fire generated from his own body.' "

** : Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gives the following lines from an alternate reading of this chapter. These lines are to be inserted between the two halves of this verse:

*nidrām eva tato vavre
sa rājā śrama-karṣitaḥ
yaḥ kaścin mama nidrāyā
bhaṅgam kuryād surottamāḥ*

sa hi bhasmī-bhaved āśu

*tathoktaś ca surais tadā
svāpaṁ yātaṁ yo madhye tu
bodhayet tvāṁ acetanaḥ
sa tvayā dr̥ṣṭa-mātras tu
bhasmī-bhavatu tat-kṣaṇāt*

"The King, exhausted by his labor, then chose sleep as his benediction. He further stated, 'Oh best of the demigods, may whoever disturbs my sleep immediately be burned to ashes.' The demigods replied, 'So be it,' and told him, 'That insensitive person who wakes you in the middle of your sleep, will immediately turn to ashes simply by your seeing him.'"

***: The *paramparā* states: 'Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī informs us that Mucukunda was aware of the prediction of the ancient sage Garga that in the twenty-eighth millennium the Supreme Lord would descend. According to Ācārya Viśvanātha, Garga Muni further informed Mucukunda that he would personally see the Lord. Now it was all happening.'

Chapter 52

The Lords Leap from a Mountain and Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being blessed by Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Ikṣvāku [Mucukunda] circumambulating Him bowed down and left through the mouth of the cave. (2) Noticing that the human beings, the animals, plants and trees were all in a poor condition [were small], he concluded that the Age [the *yuga*] of Kali had arrived and went in the northern direction [compare 1.15: 44]. (3) He had faith in the process of penance, was of self-control and free from attachments and doubts. With his mind thus absorbed in Kṛṣṇa he entered the realm of the mountain Gandhamādana ['the nice smell']. (4) Reaching Badarikāśrama [see e.g. 3.4: 4, 4.12: 16, 5.4: 5, 7.11: 6], the residence of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, he who conquering all duality had found peace in his austerity, worshiped the Lord. (5) The Supreme Lord returned to His city Mathurā that was surrounded by the Yavanas, killed the barbarian army and brought their riches to Dvārakā. (6) As Acyuta was engaged in taking the wealth with oxen and men, Jarāsandha arrived on the scene leading twenty-three armies. (7) Seeing the mighty waves of soldiers of the enemy armies, the two Mādhavas adopting a human course, quickly ran away, oh King. (8) Abandoning the load of riches, appearing afraid but factually being free from fear, They on Their lotus petal feet covered many *yojanas*. (9) Seeing the Two escape, the mighty ruler of Magadha loudly laughed and pursued the Lords with charioteers and soldiers, not being quite aware of Their special nature. (10) Exhausted from full speed having run a long distance, They climbed a very high mountain known as Pravaraṣaṇa ['the rainy one'] where the mighty Lord [Indra] is always showering rains. (11) Knowing that They were hiding on the mountain, but not exactly where, oh King, he [Jarāsandha], with firewood set ablaze the mountain on all sides. (12) Quickly leaping down from the eleven *yojanas* high, everywhere burning mountain, They fell to the ground. (13) Not being seen by Their opponent or his helpers, the two finest Yadus returned to Their city that had the ocean as its moat, oh King. (14) The king of the Magadhas mistakenly thought that Balarāma and Keśava had burned in the fire, pulled back his huge force and returned to Magadha. (15) As previously stated, the opulent sovereign of Ānarta, named Raivata, on the order of Brahmā gave Balarāma his

daughter Raivatī in marriage [9.3: 33-36]. (16-17) The Supreme Lord Govinda, oh hero among the Kurus, married with Vaidarbhī [Rukmiṇī] the daughter of Bhīṣmaka, on her own request. She was a plenary portion of the Goddess of Fortune. With force overruling Śālva and the other kings in support of Śiśupāla, He accomplished this [by stealing her away] before the eyes of all the people, just like the son of Tārṣya [Garuḍa, stole] the nectar from heaven.'

(18) **T**he honorable king said: 'In the manner of a Rākṣasa [by kidnapping thus], so I heard, the Supreme Lord thus married Rukmiṇī, the daughter of Bhīṣmaka with the charming face. (19) Oh lord, I would like to hear how Kṛṣṇa, He with His immeasurable potency, stole away His bride and [therewith] defeated such kings as Jarāsandha and Śālva. (20) What intelligent person, oh brahmin, can ever get enough of listening to the righteous, enchanting and always new stories [see 10.45: 48] we hear about Kṛṣṇa, which remove the worldly contamination?'

(21) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'There was a king named Bhīṣmaka, the great ruler of Vidarbha, who had five sons and one daughter with an exceptionally pretty face. (22) Rukmī was the first born son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmabāhu, Rukmakeśa and Rukmamālī. Rukmiṇī was their chaste sister [*rukma* means: 'what is bright or radiant']. (23) Hearing Mukunda's beauty, prowess, character and opulences being sung by those who came to her family home, she deemed Him a suitable husband. (24) Kṛṣṇa knowing her to be a repository of intelligence, auspicious marks, magnanimity, beauty, good behavior and other qualities, likewise considered her a suitable wife, and decided to marry her. (25) But Rukmī, who hated Kṛṣṇa, prevented this, even though his family wanted to give his sister to Kṛṣṇa, oh King. He thought of Śiśupāla. (26) The princess of Vidarbha with her dark eyes, was unhappy with that knowledge. She pained her mind and quickly sent a certain dependable brahmin to Kṛṣṇa. (27) After arriving in Dvārakā he was ushered in by the gatekeepers and saw the Original Personality sitting on a golden throne. (28) The moment the Lord who is good to the brahmins, saw him, He came down from His throne, seated him and performed worship the same way the residents of heaven worship Him. (29) With him having eaten and rested, He who is the goal of the devotees approached him to personally massage his feet. Patiently He asked him: (30) 'Oh My best one, are the religious activities supported by your first-class, twice-born seniors, proceeding without too much difficulty, and are you always happy within? (31) When a brahmin remains satisfied with whatever [comes his way] and does not fail in his religious duty, that

will bring him all he desires. (32) Dissatisfied he, even as a master of enlightened souls, will keep moving from world to world, while satisfied he, even when he possesses nothing, will sleep well with all his limbs [and mind] free from distress. (33) I bow My head again and again to those brahmins who are satisfied with what they get, for they, peaceful and free from false ego, are the best well-wishers of all living beings [see also B.G. 2: 71, 12: 13-14]. (34) Are you faring well as a subject to your king? He in whose kingdom the people being protected lead a happy life, is very dear to Me. (35) Where have you come from, crossing the [ocean of] troubles, and for what purpose have you come here? Please tell Us everything, if it is not a secret. What is it that We may do for you?'

(36) After the Supreme One, who for the sake of His pastimes assumes His bodies, thus had asked these questions, the brahmin related everything to Him. (37) 'Śrī Rukmiṇī told me: 'Oh Most Beautiful One of all the Worlds, I heard about Your qualities. For all who listen and whom You have entered through the openings of their ears, You thus remove the distress of their bodies. To those who have eyes, the sight of Your beauty constitutes the complete fulfillment of their life's purpose. Therefore I have without any shame devoted my mind to You Acyuta! (38) Who, oh Mukunda, compares to Your greatness, Your lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youth, property and influence? Which sober and marriageable girl of a noble birth would, coming of age, not choose You for her husband, oh lion among men, oh You who fills the mind of every member of society with joy? (39) I thus have chosen Your good Self, oh dear Lord, for my husband. I offer myself hereby to You as Your wife, oh Omnipotent One. Please accept me! May the king of Cedi [Śiśupāla], who like a jackal wants to steal away the portion belonging to the king of the animals, never touch what is allotted to the [real] hero. (40) When I sufficiently have worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord, by the performance of pious works, with sacrifices, charity, observances and vows, by honoring the gods, the gurus and the brahmins, and with other activities, may [Kṛṣṇa] the elder brother of Gada [9.24: 46] then [please] come and take my hand, and not the son of Damaghoṣa or others like him? (41) Come tomorrow when the marriage takes place, unseen to Vidarbha, oh Invincible One. Fight surrounded by Your officers then to crush the armed resistance of the kings of Caidya and Magadha, and next, as the reward for Your valor, marry me in the *Rākṣasa* style [by taking me with You]. (42) You may wonder how, with me moving within my quarters, You can carry me away without killing my relatives. Let me tell You how: the day before there is a large ceremonial procession outside [the palace] for the presiding

deity of the family. In that ceremony the new bride approaches the goddess Girijā [Ambikā in her temple]. (43) Great souls like [Śiva] the husband of Ūma, in order to overcome their own ignorance, long to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet. When I, oh Lotus-eyed One, cannot obtain Your mercy, I should, being weakened by vows, give up my life to attain You [only] after hundreds of births.' (44) The brahmin ended with: 'This is the confidential message I bring you, oh Lord of the Yadus, please consider what needs to be done right now in this matter.'

Chapter 53

Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmiṇī

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When [Kṛṣṇa] the descendant of Yadu heard the confidential message of the princess of Vidarbha, He took the hand of the messenger into His own and addressed him with a smile. (2) The Supreme Lord said: 'I as well have to think of her constantly and cannot sleep at night. I know that Rukmī in his enmity is against My marriage with her. (3) I will bring her, that indisputable beauty who deems Me the best, over here and crush in battle that half-breed royalty, the way one ignites a fire from firewood!'

(4) Śrī Śuka said: 'Knowing the exact [astronomical] time of Rukmiṇī's marriage, Madhusūdana told His charioteer: 'Dārūka, get the chariot immediately ready.' (5) He brought the chariot yoked with the horses Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka [*], and stood with folded palms before Him. (6) Śauri mounted His chariot together with the brahmin and drove swiftly with His horses in a single night to the Vidarbha kingdom. (7) King Bhīṣmaka, who out of affection for his son [Rukmī] obeyed his control, was about to give his daughter away to Śiśupāla and saw to it that the required duties were performed. (8-9) The city was thoroughly cleansed and its avenues, streets and intersections were abundantly sprinkled with water. It was decorated with banners on flagpoles and with archways. The women and men of the city in their opulent homes aromatic with aguru, arrayed in spotless clothing, wearing their jewels, having smeared their bodies with fragrant substances and having decorated themselves with flowers and other ornaments. (10) He [Bhīṣmaka] saw to it that the forefathers, the demigods and the brahmins were worshiped according to the rules, oh King, that they were properly fed and that the auspicious mantras were recited. (11) The bride properly bathed, cleaned her teeth, put on her auspicious marriage necklace as also a brand-new set of clothes and adorned herself with the most excellent jewels. (12) For the protection of the bride, the best among the brahmins recited mantras from the Sāma, Ṛg and Yajur Veda, and the priests expert in the Atharva mantras poured oblations of ghee to pacify the ruling planets. (13) The king, very well versed in the *vidhi*, donated gold, silver, clothing and sesame seeds mixed with raw sugar to the brahmins. (14) King Damaghoṣa, the lord of Cedi, the same way arranged for the knowers of the mantras to perform for his son

[the bridegroom] everything that was conducive to his prosperity. (15) He traveled to Kuṇḍina [Bhīṣmaka's capital] accompanied by hordes of elephants dripping with *mada*, golden chariots decorated with garlands and many regiments infantry and cavalry. (16) The master of Vidarbha met him half way to prove his respects, and with pleasure settled him in a specially constructed residence. (17) Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and Vidūratha, who all sided with Śiśupāla, came together with Pauṇḍraka and thousands of others. (18-19) Those who were inimical towards Kṛṣṇa and Rāma had decided on the following: 'When Kṛṣṇa together with Rāma and the other Yadus comes to steal Śiśupāla's bride we, in order to secure her, together will join to fight Him.' All the kings thus had arrived with a complete contingent of troops and vehicles.

(20-21) **W**hen Lord Balarāma heard about these preparations of the hostile kings and that Kṛṣṇa had set off alone to steal the bride, He, fearing a fight, filled with love for His brother swiftly went to Kuṇḍina together with a mighty force of elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers on foot. (22) The daughter of Bhīṣmaka with her lovely hips who awaited the arrival of Kṛṣṇa, did not see the brahmin return and then wondered: (23) 'Alas, only three *yamas* [nine hours] remain before I will marry. How unlucky I am, the Lotus-eyed One does not come and I do not know why, nor has as yet the brahmin carrying my message returned. (24) Perhaps the One Faultless in Mind and Body, despite His initial willingness saw something contemptible in me, so that He does not come to take my hand. (25) What a misfortune! The creator is not favorably disposed towards me, nor is the great Lord Śiva... or maybe Devī has turned against me, his consort [known as] Gaurī, Rudrāṇī, Girijā or Satī.'

(26) **R**uminating this way the young girl, whose mind had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, closed her eyes brimming with tears, aware of the time [that was left]. (27) While the bride thus was waiting for Govinda's arrival, oh King, her left thigh, arm and eye twitched, foretelling something desirable. (28) That very moment the purest one among the brahmins appeared, following the command of Kṛṣṇa, to see the divine princess who stayed in the inner chambers of the palace. (29) Noticing his joyful face and the relaxed movements of his body she, as an expert in telling signs, inquired with a pure smile. (30) He told her about the arrival of Yadunandana [the 'Child of the Yadus'] and related the words He had said to assure her that He would marry with her. (31) Realizing that He had come, the mind of Vaidarbhī cleared, whereupon she gladdened knew no better answer than to bow down to the dear brahmin. (32) [The king] hearing that Rāma and

Krishna had arrived eager to witness his daughter's marriage, accompanied by the sounds of instruments came to welcome Them with abundant offerings. (33) As was prescribed he performed worship with desirables like honey-milk [*madhu-parka*], and brought new clothes. (34) Generously arranging for an opulent place to stay he afforded Them, Their soldiers and associates, proper hospitality. (35) With all that was wanted he was thus of respect for the kings who had assembled, according to each his power, age, strength and wealth. (36) The residents of Vidarbha-pura hearing that Kṛṣṇa had arrived, all came to drink in His lotus face with the cupped palms of their eyes [and said]: (37) 'He who also possesses such a perfect body, is the only one to deserve Rukmiṇī as a wife. He is the most suitable husband for princess Bhaiṣṁī! (38) May Acyuta, the Cause of the Three Worlds, be pleased with whichever of our good deeds and be as merciful to accept the hand of Rukmiṇī.' (39) This is what the citizens bound to their increasing pure love said.

The bride protected by guards left the inner palace and went to the temple of Ambikā [see also 10.52: 42]. (40-41) Going there on foot to see the lotus petal feet of Bhavānī, she, totally absorbed in meditating on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, kept silent in the midst of her mothers and female companions. She was guarded by the valiant, armed soldiers of the king, and while they stood prepared with their weapons raised, cymbals and *mṛdaṅgas*, conch shells, horns and other wind instruments were played. (42-43) The bride was accompanied by the well ornamented wives of the brahmins, thousands of prominent courtesans carrying various items of worship and presents, flower garlands, fragrances, clothing and jewelry, as also by singers who sang and offered prayers, by musicians and bards and by chroniclers and heralds. (44) Reaching the temple of the goddess she washed her feet and lotus like hands, sipped water for purification and entered, sanctified and peaceful, the place where Ambikā resided. (45) The so very young girl was by the elderly wives of the brahmins, who were well acquainted with the injunctions, accompanied in offering her respects to Bhavānī, who was there together with her consort Lord Bhava [Śiva]. (46) [She prayed:] 'Again and again, oh Ambikā, I offer you and also your children [Ganeśa and Kārtikeya] my obeisances. Please allow Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, to be my husband.'

(47-48) **W**ith different offerings of water, fragrant substances, whole grains and incense, gifts of clothing, garlands, necklaces and ornaments, and an array of lamps, she offered worship, as also did the wives of the brahmins with savories, cakes, prepared betel nut, sacred threads, fruits and sugar cane. (49) The women gave her what

remained of the offering as also their blessings, whereupon the bride bowed down to them and to the deity and ate some of the food that was sacrificed. (50) Then she ended her vow of silence and left the temple of Ambikā, while she with her hand, beautified by a jeweled ring, held on to a maidservant. (51-55) With her well-formed waist, the earrings decorating her face, her pure beauty, the gem-studded belt on her hips and her budding breasts, she was just like the illusory potency of the Lord which bewilders even the sober souls [Māyādevī, see also 8.12: 38-40; 10.2***]. Seeing her pure smile, her bimba red lips reflected in her jasmine-bud teeth, her gait like a royal swan as she walked her feet which were tinkling and were beautified by the effulgence of her finely crafted ankle bells, the assembled and respectable heroes were bewildered and distressed by the lust she generated. With her, on the pretext of the procession, offering her beauty to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the minds of the kings, who saw her broad smiles and shy glances, were stolen, and their weapons dropped to the ground as they fainted and fell from their horses, elephants and the chariots on which they were seated. Slowly walking, she put the two whorls of her lotus flower feet one before the other, meanwhile eagerly expecting the arrival of the Supreme Personality. Throwing aside her hair with the nails of her hand she, coyly looking at the kings present, from the corners of her eyes that very moment spotted Acyuta. Straight in front of the eyes of His enemies Kṛṣṇa then seized the king's daughter who stood prepared to mount His chariot. (56) He lifted her onto His chariot which was marked with [the flag of] Garuḍa, drove back the circle of kings and slowly left the place with Balarāma in front, just like a lion would do removing his prey from the midst of jackals. (57) The adversaries headed by Jarāsandha, could in their conceit, with their honor ruined, not bear the defeat: 'We archers are damned with those cowherds, like a bunch of puny animals, stealing the honor of us, the lions!'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī quotes the following text of the Padma Purāṇa describing Lord Kṛṣṇa's chariot horses: "Śaibya was green like a parrot's wings, Sugrīva yellow-gold, Meghapuṣpa the color of a cloud, and Balāhaka whitish."

Chapter 54

Rukmī's Defeat and Kṛṣṇa Married

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'And so they all [realizing that they had been robbed], most angrily and in armor, mounted their vehicles and with their bows ready, each surrounded by his own troops, went after Them. (2) When the Yādava army noticed that they were being followed, the officers stopped to face them, oh King, and twanged their bows. (3) From the backs of their horses, the shoulders of their elephants and the seats of their chariots, the [enemy] masters of arms released a rain of arrows the way the clouds release their water over the mountains. (4) The moment the slender-waisted girl saw the army of her Lord being covered by heavy rains of arrows, she embarrassed looked at His face with eyes full of fear. (5) The Supreme Lord laughed and said: 'Do not be afraid, oh you with your beautiful eyes, your troops will destroy this enemy force right now.' (6) The heroes Gada [Kṛṣṇa's younger half-brother], Saṅkarṣaṇa and the others, could not tolerate the display of power of the enemy forces, and thus they struck their horses, elephants and chariots down with arrows of iron. (7) The heads of those riding the chariots, the horses and the elephants, fell by the thousands to the ground, complete with earrings, helmets and turbans. (8) One could see the heads of horses, donkeys, mules, elephants and camels, as also [loose] heads of humans, clubs and bows, hands with swords, hands without fingers, thighs and legs. (9) The kings headed by Jarāsandha who, eager for the victory, saw that their armies were annihilated by the Vṛṣṇis, lost their courage and left. (10) They approached and addressed Śiśupāla who, with the wife of his choice being stolen away, was dispirited and perturbed with a dried up face that had lost all its color. (11) [Jarāsandha said:] 'Oh Sir, tiger among men, please give up your gloom, for the embodied beings there is no permanence of desirable or undesirable matters. (12) The way a woman that is made of wood dances to the desire of a puppeteer, this world, which is concerned with joy and sorrow, is controlled by the Lord. (13) I myself with twenty-three armies have lost seventeen battles with Śauri [Kṛṣṇa]. Only one I have won. (14) Nevertheless I never lament or rejoice, for I know that the world is driven by Time and fate combined. (15) Also now we all, leaders of the commanders of heroes, have been defeated by Yadus with a meager entourage who were protected by Kṛṣṇa. (16) Our enemies,

with the time in their favor, have won now, but then again, when our time has come, we will win.'

(17) Śrī Śuka said: 'Śiśupāla thus persuaded by his friends, went back to his city with his company, and so too each of the surviving kings returned to his own place. (18) The mighty Rukmī however, who hated Kṛṣṇa and could not bear the fact that his sister got married in the *Rākṣasa* style, pursued Kṛṣṇa surrounded by an entire *akṣauhiṇī*. (19-20) Rukmī, mighty armed with his bow and armor, most angrily full of resentment swore to all the kings listening: 'Let me tell you this: I truly will not return to Kuṇḍina without having killed Kṛṣṇa in battle and having retrieved Rukmiṇī.' (21) After having said this, he climbed on his chariot and told his charioteer: 'Quickly, drive the horses to the place where Kṛṣṇa is found, there must be a fight between Him and me. (22) Today I, with my sharp arrows, will break the pride of that evil-minded Cowherd who so violently abducted my sister!'

(23) Thus vaunting foolishly he, not realizing what the Lord was all capable of, thereupon with a single chariot came forward and shouted at Kṛṣṇa: 'Stand still, stop!' (24) Drawing his bow he most firmly struck Kṛṣṇa with three arrows and said: 'Wait a minute, You corrupter of the Yadu dynasty! (25) Where do You think You are going, having stolen my sister like a crow stealing the sacrificial butter? Today I will put an end to Your false pride, You foolish cheater, You devious fighter! (26) If You do not want my arrows to kill You, lay off and release the girl'. But Kṛṣṇa smiled and struck Rukmī with six arrows that broke his bow. (27) After Kṛṣṇa had fired eight arrows at his four horses, two at his charioteer and three at his flagpole, he took up another bow and struck Kṛṣṇa with five arrows. (28) Even though He was struck by all these arrows Kṛṣṇa broke his bow again, and when Rukmī picked up yet another one, Acyuta also broke that one. (29) The spiked bludgeon, the trident, the lance, the shield and sword, the pike, the javelin or whatever weapon he took up were all broken by Him, the Lord. (30) He then leaped from his chariot and ran, sword in hand and as furious as a bird in the wind, forward with the intent to kill Kṛṣṇa. (31) With His arrows Kṛṣṇa broke the sword and shield of His attacker to pieces and next, ready to kill Rukmī, took up His own sharp sword. (32) When the saintly Rukmiṇī saw that He wanted to kill her brother, she, beset with fear, fell at the feet of her husband and spoke piteously.

(33) Śrī Rukmiṇī said: 'Oh Lord of Yoga, oh Inscrutable Soul, oh God of Gods, oh Master of the Universe, oh Auspicious One, please do not kill my brother, oh Mighty-armed One.'

(34) Śrī Śuka said: 'As she, with her limbs trembling with fear, her mouth dry of sorrow, her throat choked and her golden necklace disheveled in her agitation, was holding His feet, He desisted out of compassion. (35) He tied him up with a piece of cloth and shaved him, making a mess of him with only little bits of his hair and mustache remaining. Meanwhile the amazing army of the Yadu heroes crushed their opponents the way elephants crush a lotus flower [compare 1.7]. (36) When the Yadu soldiers approached Kṛṣṇa they found Rukmī in a sorry condition, as good as dead. The almighty Supreme Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, feeling pity, thereupon released him from his ties and said to Kṛṣṇa: (37) 'Oh Kṛṣṇa, what a terribly bad shaving job You have done with his mustache and hair! Disfiguring a family member like this equals to killing him!'

(38) [To Rukmiṇī:] 'Oh saintly lady, please be in your care not angry with Us for making such a mess of your brother. For one's happiness and grief no one else can be held accountable. A human being after all has to face the consequences of his own actions.' [*]

(39) [And to Kṛṣṇa again:] 'Even though a relative because of his wrongdoing may deserve to be killed, he should not be killed by a relative but rather be banned [from the family]. Why should he who because of his evil deeds ended his own [honorable] life, be killed a second time?'

(40) [To Rukmiṇī:] 'The code of conduct for warriors, as established by the founding father [Brahmā], is that a brother must not even hesitate to kill his own brother. And that indeed is something most dreadful.'

(41) [Back to Kṛṣṇa again:] 'Blinded as they are in their infatuation with the wealth, those who are proud of a kingdom, land, riches, women, honor, power or something else [other than the soul], do therefore commit offenses.'

(42) [And to Rukmiṇī again:] 'In this attitude of you toward all living beings, of always wishing evil to foes and wishing good to friends [and family], you are just as partial as an ignorant person. (43) Because of the Lord's illusory power the people are bewildered about the Real Self [the soul]. [In *māyā*] taking the body for their self, they

speaking in terms of having a friend, an enemy or someone neutral. (44) Being bewildered one perceives the One and Only Supreme Soul of Every Inanimate and Animate Being as many, just like seeing different luminaries [in stead of one radiating fire] or considering the air [as different in case of an enclosed space, see also B.G. 18: 20-21 and 1.2: 32]. (45) The physical body having a beginning and an end is composed of the physical elements, the senses and the basic qualities of nature. In a state of ignorance it is something [that by conditioning is] imposed on the soul and produces [the experience of] the cycle of birth and death. (46) For the soul [who knows though] there is no oneness with or separation from anything material in the manifest world, oh chaste one, since matter is caused and arranged by the soul. It is like the perceiving and that what is perceived with the sun [which cannot separate from or unite with the manifest world].

(47) Being born and such are but transformations of the body and not of the soul, just as the lunar phases do not imply that the moon has died on the day of a new moon [see B.G. 2: 20]. (48) An unintelligent person undergoes his material existence the way a sleeping person, for the purpose of the unreality [of a dream], experiences himself, the objects of his senses and the results of his actions [see also 6.16: 55-56]. (49) Oh you with the pristine smile, please be therefore yourself again [as the goddess of fortune] and dispel, with the knowledge of the essence, the sadness born from ignorance that drained and confused you.'

(50) Śrī Śuka said: 'Slender-waisted Rukmiṇī thus being enlightened by the Supreme Lord Balarāma, gave up her resignation and with intelligence regained her composure. (51) Left with only his life air, expelled by his enemies and deprived of his strength and luster, he [Rukmī] had to think constantly of the way he had been misshapen. Frustrated in his personal desires he then built a residence, a city named Bhojakata ['having experienced the vow']. (52) Because he had said: 'I will not return to Kuṇḍina without having killed the evil-minded Kṛṣṇa and having brought back my sister', he in his anger resided at that very spot [where he was humiliated]. (53) The Supreme Lord, thus defeating the earthly rulers, took the daughter of Bhīṣmaka to His capital and married her according to the *vidhi*, oh protector of the Kurus. (54) To that occasion there was a great rejoicing among the citizens in each and every home of the Yadu city, oh King, where no one else but Kṛṣṇa, the leader of the Yadus, was the great love. (55) The men and women filled with joy, with shining jewels and earrings, respectfully presented wedding gifts to the celebrated couple that was exquisitely dressed. (56) The city of the Vṛṣṇis appeared beautifully

with the festive columns that were erected, the variety of flower garlands, the banners, the gems, the arches and at every doorway an arrangement of auspicious items like pots full of water, *aguru* incense and lamps. (57) It's streets were sprinkled and the entrances were beautified with plantain and betel nut stems that were placed by elephants, dripping with *mada*, belonging to the popular personalities who were invited. (58) The members of the Kuru, Sr̥njaya, Kaikeya, Vidarbha, Yadu and Kunti families enjoyed the occasion of being together in the midst of the people who excitedly ran about. (59) When they heard about the kidnapping of Rukmiṇī, which was being sung all around, the kings and their daughters were greatly impressed. (60) Oh King, all the citizens in Dvārakā were overjoyed to see Kṛṣṇa, the Master of All Opulence, joined in marriage with Rukmiṇī, the goddess of fortune.'

*: This verse does not mean that it is meant that one should not be compassionate with forms of suffering as caused by oneself, by others or by natural occurrences, like one has with parasitical diseases, floods and earthquakes. Of course this 'karma blaming', to accuse someone of his fate, often considered a Hindu weakness, is a fundamental philosophical issue, for, on the one hand, each and everyone in the adult world is responsible for his own actions and the consequences thereof, while, on the other hand, someone else or nature can also cause a lot of grief to the innocent. All three cases in fact in Vedic philosophy constitute hindrances, so-called *kleśas*, constituting a fate that needs to be overcome by yogic discipline and devotional service. In this verse evidently the adult responsibility for one's own actions is meant. Also is shown, by Kṛṣṇa's shaving act, and other acts of His forgiveness, that, when possible, even for murderous intent compassion should be exercised and not directly an eye-for-an-eye retribution.

Chapter 55

The History of Pradyumna

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Cupid [Kāmadeva], an expansion of Vāsudeva who previously got burned by the anger of Rudra, had returned to Him in order to again obtain a body [see also 3.1: 28 and 8.10: 32-34 and B.G. 10; 28]. (2) Born from the seed of Kṛṣṇa in the daughter of the king of Vidarbha [Rukmiṇī], He was thus known as Pradyumna ['the prominently mighty one', see also *vyūha*]. He was in no respect inferior to His Father. (3) Śambara ['the juggler' see 7.2: 4-5, 10.36: 36], who could assume any form he wanted, stole the child away that was not even ten days old yet. Recognizing Him as his enemy, he threw Him in the ocean and returned home. (4) Pradyumna was swallowed by a mighty fish which, together with others being trapped in a huge net, was seized by fishermen. (5) The fishermen presented it to Śambara, who sent the gift to the cooks who with a knife cut it open in the kitchen. (6) The child they found in its belly was given to Māyāvātī, who was astonished. From Nārada she heard the facts about the child's birth and how it had ended up in the belly of the fish. (7-8) She was by Śambara appointed to prepare rice and vegetables, but she in fact was Cupid's famous wife named Rati. She [after pleading with Lord Śiva and being directed to Śambara] was waiting for her burned husband to obtain a new body. Understanding that the infant was Kāmadeva, she developed love for the child. (9) He, the son of Kṛṣṇa, soon attained full youth and became very enchanting to the women who saw Him. (10) Dear King, full of love she with a bashful smile, raised eyebrows, glances and gestures of conjugal attraction approached Him, her husband, who with His long arms and eyes the size of a lotus petal, was the most beautiful one to be found in society. (11) The Lord in the form of Kṛṣṇa's own son said to her: 'Oh mother, you, in your attitude acting like a girlfriend differently, therewith overstep the [standards for the] mood of motherly affection.'

(12) Rati replied: 'You are the son of Nārāyaṇa by Śambara stolen from Your home and I am Your legitimate wife Rati, oh Cupid, my master! (13) Not yet being ten days old You were by that demon Śambara thrown into the ocean, where a fish devoured You from the belly of which we received You here, oh master! (14) Please put an end to that hard to approach and difficult to conquer enemy of Yours who knows hundreds of magic spells. This You can realize with the

help of bewildering magic and such! (15) Your mother, with her son gone, is distressed like a cow missing her calf. Overwhelmed with love for her child she is pitifully crying like an osprey.'

(16) **S**peaking thus Māyāvātī gave the great soul Pradyumna the mystic knowledge called Mahāmāyā ['the great bewildering potency'], that puts an end to all magic spells. (17) Thereupon He approached Śambara to call him to battle. He reviled him with intolerable insults and thus provoked a fight. (18) Offended by the harsh words he, with eyes red as copper, infuriated like a snake being struck by a foot, came forward holding a mace. (19) Whirling his club swiftly, he threw it at the Great Soul Pradyumna, producing a sound as sharp as a stroke of lightning. (20) The weapon was in its flight by Lord Pradyumna knocked away with His club, oh King. Gotten angry He thereupon hurled His club at the enemy. (21) The demon resorted to the Daitya magic he had learned from Maya Dānava, and released, moving through the sky, a downpour of weapons over the son of Kṛṣṇa [compare 3.19: 20]. (22) Harassed by the rain of weapons the powerful warrior, the son of Rukmiṇī, implemented the great charm that, rooting in goodness, supersedes all magic. (23) The demon then used hundreds of weapons belonging to Kuvera's guardians [Guhyakas], the heavenly singers [Gandharvas], the ogres [Piśācas], the celestial snakes [Uragas] and the man-eaters [Rākṣasas], but the son of Kṛṣṇa stroke them all down. (24) Drawing His sharp-edged sword He with one violent blow severed Śambara's head from his body, complete with helmet, earrings and his red mustache. (25) As the gods full of praise from above rained flowers upon Him, He was by His wife, who traveled the sky, through the air brought to the city [of Dvārakā]. (26) Together with His wife He, like a cloud with lightning, from the sky entered the inner spaces of the most exquisite palace, oh King, which was crowded with hundreds of women. (27-28) When they saw Him, dark as a cloud, dressed in yellow silk, with long arms, reddish eyes, a pleasing smile, His charming countenance, His nicely decorated lotus like face and His bluish-black curling locks, the women, who thought He was Kṛṣṇa, bashfully hid themselves here and there. (29) Gradually the ladies noticed slight differences in His appearance, whereupon they delighted and most surprised approached Him and [Rati,] that jewel among women. (30) When the sweet-voiced and dark-eyed Rukmiṇī saw Him, she remembered her lost son and her breasts got wet out of affection.

(31) [**S**he thought:] 'Who would this gem among men be, whose son is He, which lotus-eyed woman has carried Him in her womb, and what is more, who is this woman won by Him? (32) If the son I lost,

who was taken from the maternity room, were alive somewhere, He would be of the same age and appearance! (33) How can He have the same physical appearance, have the same gait, limbs, voice, smile and glance as the Wielder of the Śārṅga [Kṛṣṇa's bow]? (34) Considering my great affection for Him and the trembling in my left arm, it has got to be Him, He must be the child I carried in my womb!

(35) **W**hile the daughter of the king of Vidarbha thus was conjecturing, the Lord Hailed in the Scriptures arrived there together with Devakī and Ānakadundubhi. (36) Even though the Supreme Lord Janārdana knew all about the matter, He remained silent. It was Nārada who told the whole story, beginning with the kidnapping by Śambara. (37) When the women of Krishna's residence heard about that great miracle, they cheered in ecstasy to welcome Him, who had been lost for so many years, as if someone had returned from death. (38) Devakī, Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and also the women [of the palace] and Rukmiṇī, embraced the couple and rejoiced. (39) Hearing that Pradyumna, who had been lost, had returned, the residents of Dvārakā declared: 'Ah, by providence the child we thought dead has come back!'

(40) **I**t was not surprising that they, who constantly thought of the resemblance with His father, their master, in the full of their attraction, as His mothers, kept their feelings of reverence for Him private. When they felt that way when He appeared before their eyes as the spitting image of the form of the Shelter of the Goddess of Fortune, as Cupid the God of Love in person, then what would that have meant for the feelings of other women?'

Chapter 56

How the Syamantaka jewel Brought Kṛṣṇa Jāmbavatī and Satyabhāmā

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Satrājīta ['always victorious', see 9.24: 13], who had offended Lord Kṛṣṇa, did his best for Him and gave Him his daughter and the jewel Syamantaka.'

(2) The honorable king said: 'What offense committed Satrājīta against Kṛṣṇa, oh brahmin? Where did the Syamantaka come from and why gave he his daughter to the Lord?'

(3) Śrī Śuka said: 'Satrājīta was a devotee of the sun god. The godhead was very satisfied with him and gave him, his best friend, out of affection the jewel called Syamantaka. (4) He, who wore the jewel that shone as brilliant as the sun around his neck, was upon his arrival in Dvārakā, because of its effulgence not recognized, oh King. (5) The people blinded by the glare thought, when they saw him from a distance, that he was Sūrya, and reported that to the Supreme Lord who was engaged in a game of dice. (6) 'Oh Nārāyaṇa, our obeisances unto You, oh Holder of the Conch, Disc and Club, oh Dāmodara, oh Lotus-eyed One, oh Govinda, oh son of the Yadus! (7) Savitā ['the radiant one'], he who with the intense radiation of his glowing disc robs the people of their vision, has arrived to see You, oh Lord of the Universe. (8) Knowing that You at the moment are hiding among the Yadus, the leaders of the demigods in the three worlds are eagerly looking for You. And now the one unborn [Sūrya], has come to see You, oh Master!'

(9) Śrī Śuka said: 'When He with the lotus eyes heard these innocent words, He said with a smile: 'This person is not Ravideva, it is Satrājīta who glows because of his jewel.'

(10) Arriving at his opulent home Satrājīta festively executed auspicious rituals in the temple room, where he, with the help of scholars, installed the jewel. (11) Day after day that brought him eight *bhāras* [of about 9.7 kg] of gold, oh *prabhu*, and nothing inauspicious, like food scarcity, a premature death, catastrophes, snakebites, mental and physical disorders and cheaters, occurred there in the presence of

the correctly worshiped gem. (12) Once Śauri [Kṛṣṇa] on behalf of the king of the Yadus [Ugrasena] asked for the gem, but Satrājī, greedy for the wealth, considered it no offense not to hand it over.

(13) **P**rasena [Satrājī's brother] one day hung the intensely radiating jewel around his neck, mounted a horse and went hunting in the forest. (14) A lion killed Prasena and his horse and took the jewel into a cave, where he in his turn was killed by Jāmbavān ['he from the Jambu trees', the king of the bears] who wanted the jewel. (15) In the cave he gave the jewel to his offspring as a toy to play with. Satrājī meanwhile not seeing his brother, got deeply troubled. (16) He said: 'My brother who disappeared in the forest wearing the jewel around his neck, is probably killed by Kṛṣṇa.' The people, hearing this, whispered it in each other's ears. (17) When the Supreme Lord heard about this He, in order to exonerate Himself from the imputation, together with some citizens followed the path Prasena had taken. (18) In the forest they discovered that he and his horse were killed by a lion and that, further on a hillside, the lion in its turn had been killed by Rkṣa [Jāmbavān]. (19) The Supreme Lord positioned His men outside the terrifying cave of the king of the *rkṣas* [the bears], and then entered the pitch-dark place alone. (20) When He saw that that most precious of all jewels was used as a child's toy, He decided to take it away and approached the child. (21) Seeing the stranger the nurse cried in fear so that Jāmbavān, that strongest of the strong hearing it, infuriated came running. (22) Unaware whom he dealt with, he took Him for a worldly person and angrily fought against Him, the Supreme Lord, his own Master [compare 5.6: 10-11 and B.G. 16: 18]. (23) A most furious fight ensued between the two, who each tried to win with the help of stones, trees, their arms and with weapons, as if they were two hawks fighting over some meat. (24) For twenty-eight days they continued fighting day and night without interruption, with fist against fist dealing blows as hard as lightening. (25) Jāmbavān with the muscles of his huge body pummeled by the blows of Kṛṣṇa's fists, perspired all over and exhausted addressed Him in great amazement: (26) 'I know You, You are the life air, the physical and mental strength of all living beings, Lord Viṣṇu, the Primeval Personality, the All-powerful Supreme Controller. (27) You are the Eternal Creator of All Creators and Created Beings of the Universe, the Subduer of the subduers, the Lord, the Supreme Soul of all Souls [compare 3.25: 41-42]. (28) You are the One because of whose commanding glances, manifesting a slight anger, the crocodiles and whale-eaters [*timingilas*] became agitated and the ocean was directed to give way. You are the One to the glory of whom a bridge was built

and by whose arrows the heads of the Rākṣasa [Rāvana] were severed and fell to the ground [see 9: 10].'

(29-30) **O**h King, Acyuta, the lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, then, from His great compassion for His devotees, addressed the king of the bears who had understood the truth. He touched him with the hand that bestows all blessings and said with a voice as deep as the [rumbling] clouds: (31) 'Oh lord of the bears, We came here to this cave because of the jewel. I want to disprove the false accusation held against Me in association with this jewel.' (32) Thus being addressed, he [Jāmbavān] happily presented to Kṛṣṇa his maiden daughter Jāmbavatī together with the jewel, as a respectful offering.

(33) **H**is people, not seeing Śāuri coming out who had entered the cave, after waiting for twelve days, most unhappily returned to their city. (34) Devakī, Rukmiṇī devī, Vasudeva and all His friends and relatives, lamented after hearing that Kṛṣṇa had not reappeared from the cave. (35) The residents of Dvārakā full of sorrow cursed Satrājīt and then worshiped Candrabhāgā [the 'fortune of the moon'], Durgā, in order to retrieve Kṛṣṇa. (36) After having worshiped the goddess she thereupon granted them the benediction. To their great jubilation the Lord, who had achieved His purpose, then directly appeared together with His [new] wife. (37) Greatly aroused on finding out that Hrṣīkeśa had arrived with both a wife and with the jewel around His neck, they all rejoiced as if someone had risen from death. (38) Satrājīt, by the Supreme Lord summoned to the royal assembly, was in the presence of the king informed that the jewel had been recovered, which then was presented to him. (39) Most ashamed he, hanging his head, accepted the gem and went home, leaving full of remorse about his sinful behavior. (40-42) Pondering over his offense [of having kept it for himself and having accused Kṛṣṇa] he, apprehensive about a conflict with those in power, thought: 'How will I cleanse myself of the contamination and how can I satisfy Acyuta? What good should I do, so that the people will not curse me for being narrow-minded, petty, befooled and avaricious after the wealth? I will give Kṛṣṇa the [Syamantaka] jewel and also my daughter, that jewel among women. That is the way to make it up with Him and nothing else!'

(43) **T**hus intelligently having taken a decision, Satrājīt set himself to it and presented both his fair daughter and the jewel to Kṛṣṇa. (44) Satyabhāmā, who was sought by many men for her qualities, her fine character, her beauty and the magnanimity she was blessed with, married the Lord according to the customs. (45) The

Supreme Lord said: 'We do not wish to have the jewel back, oh King. You are devoted to the godhead [Sūrya], let it be yours so that We also may be the enjoyers of its fruits.'

Chapter 57

Satrājīṭ Murdered, the Jewel Stolen and Returned Again

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'When Kṛṣṇa heard [the rumor] that the sons of Pāṇḍu and queen Kuntī had burned to death [in the house of lac], He, who exactly knew what had transpired, together with Balarāma went to the Kuru kingdom for His family obligations. (2) Meeting Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Vidura, Gāndhārī and Droṇa They equally sorrowful said: 'Ah how painful this is!'

(3) [**M**eanwhile in Kṛṣṇa's absence in Dvārakā] Akrūra and [the Bhoja] Kṛtavarmā saw an opportunity and said to Śatadhanvā ['hundredbow', a bad character]: 'Why not take the jewel? (4) He [Satrājīṭ] promised us his gem of a daughter, but he ignored us and gave her to Kṛṣṇa. Why then should Satrājīṭ not follow his brother [in death, see 10.56: 13 and *]?' (5) Thus influenced by the two that most wicked man, in his sinfulness shortening his lifespan, killed out of greed Satrājīṭ while he was sleeping [compare 1.17: 39]. (6) As the women [in Satrājīṭ's residence] helplessly cried, calling for help after he had killed him like a butcher kills animals, he took the jewel and disappeared.

(7) **W**hen Satyabhāmā saw that her father had been killed, she thrown in grief lamented: 'Oh father, alas, oh father, with you being killed I am killed!' and then she fainted. (8) Putting the corpse in a large vessel of oil she went to Hastināpura to Kṛṣṇa, who [already] knew of the situation, and related sorrowfully the murder of her father. (9) The Lords hearing that, oh King, imitating the human ways both lamented with eyes full of tears: 'Oh what a tragedy fell upon us!'

(10) **T**he Supreme Lord thereupon returned to His capital together with His wife and elder brother, prepared to kill Śatadhanvā and take the jewel from him. (11) When he heard about it, he in fear took action to save his life and asked Kṛtavarmā for assistance. But he told him: (12-13) 'I cannot commit such an offense against the Lords Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. How can anyone who causes Them trouble find happiness? Kāmsa and his followers lost their wealth and lives

because they hated Them, and Jarāsandha lost after seventeen battles [even] his chariot!'

(14) **T**urned down by him, he next begged Akrūra for help. But he said likewise: 'Who, knowing the strength of the Lordships, can oppose Them? (15-17) He who maintains, creates and destroys this universe as a pastime, He whose purpose is not even known to the secondary creators [headed by Brahmā] who are bewildered by His invincible [*māyā*] potency, He who playing as a child of seven years old uprooted a mountain which He held up with a single hand like a boy holds a mushroom [see 10.25], Him, Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Lord to whose wondrous acts there is no end, I worship. I offer my obeisances to Him who, as the source of all existence, is the Supreme Soul, the immovable center.'

(18) **Ś**atadhanvā, also being rejected by him, left the precious jewel with him, mounted a horse that could cover a hundred *yojanas* and took off. (19) Kṛṣṇa and Rāma mounted the chariot with the emblem of Garuḍa and pursued the murderer of Their respected senior with the fastest horses, oh King. (20) In a park in a suburb of Mithilā Śatadhanvā's horse collapsed. He abandoned it and continued on foot in terror, with a furious Kṛṣṇa after him who also ran. (21) With him on the run the Lord, on foot, severed with His sharp-edged disc, his head from his body and then searched his upper and lower garments for the gem. (22) Not finding the stone, Kṛṣṇa approached His elder brother and said: 'Śatadhanvā was killed in vain, he did not carry the jewel.'

(23) **B**alarāma then said: 'Śatadhanvā must have left the rock with some person, therefore go [back] to the city [of Dvārakā] and search for him. (24) I myself wish to pay a visit to the king of Videha [the later Janaka, see 9.10: 11] who is most dear to Me.' Having said this, the descendant of Yadu, oh King, entered Mithilā [the capital of Videha]. (25) Seeing Him, the king of Mithilā immediately, with a mind full of love, rose to his feet and honored Him who was so worshipable with all available means, as was prescribed. (26) He, the Mighty One, honored by the affectionate great soul Janaka, lived there in Mithilā for several years. During that time He taught Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana to wield the club.

(27) **W**hen Keśava, the Almighty Lord, arrived in Dvārakā, He, to comfort His beloved [the grieving Satyabhāmā], told her about the demise of Śatadhanvā and the failure to get hold of the jewel. (28) He, the Supreme Lord, together with all His friends then saw to it that the

necessary ritual duties for the funeral of the deceased relative [Satrājī] were performed. (29) As soon as the ones responsible, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, heard that Śatadhanvā had been killed, they out of fear went into exile, somewhere outside of Dvārakā. (30) With Akrūra in exile ill omens arose for the residents of Dvārakā. They continually experienced physical and mental troubles, and had problems with other living beings and the higher powers [natural disasters included, compare 1.14; 1.17: 19 **]. (31) Some citizens, my dear, were thus lost in guesses, forgetting completely what formerly was said about Him, the refuge of the sages. How can with Him being present any calamity arise? (32) [They said:] 'When Indra withheld the rains, the king of Benares [Kāśī, see also 9.17: 4] gave his daughter Gāndinī to Śvaphalka [Akrūra's father, 9.24: 15], who visited him. Thereupon it rained in Kāśī. (33) Wherever his son Akrūra stays, who has his [father's] prowess, lord Indra will shower rains and no painful disturbances or untimely deaths will be seen.'

(34) **H**earing these words of the elders, Janārdana, convinced that this [absence of Akrūra] was not the only explanation for the omens happening [***], ordered that Akrūra should be brought back. (35-36) Greeting him with respect and honor, and pleasantly discussing topics, He, fully aware of everything that went on in his heart, smiled and said: 'We of course, oh master of charity, are already familiar with the fact that you at present possess the opulent Syamantaka jewel entrusted to you by Śatadhanvā. (37) Since Satrājī had no sons it are his daughter's sons [she and her sons] who should receive his inheritance, after having presented water, offerings and having cleared his remaining debts. (38-39) Nevertheless, the jewel should stay with you, for it is for others impossible to manage, oh trustworthy keeper of the vows. My brother however, does not fully believe Me concerning the gem. To bring peace to My relatives, please show it now to Us, oh most fortunate soul who with your altars of gold uninterrupted continue with your sacrifices.' (40) Thus won over by the conciliatory words, the son of Śvaphalka took the gem hidden in his garment and handed over the jewel that shone as brilliant as the sun. (41) After showing the Syamantaka jewel to His relatives, [and thus] doing away with the emotions [of the accusations] against Him, the Lord returned it to him. (42) Whoever recites, hears or remembers this narration full of the prowess of the Supreme Controller Viṣṇu that most auspiciously removes all distress, will attain peace and drive away his sins and bad reputation.'

*: Being pure devotees they could not actually be unhappy about this match, nor could they become jealous rivals of the Lord. Therefore they had an ulterior motive in behaving like His rivals. So there are speculations in the *paramparā* about Akrūra being cursed for his taking Kṛṣṇa away from Gokula [see 10.39] or about Kṛtavarmā being a member of Kaṁsa's family, or that the two might have been angry with the victim because he spoiled Kṛṣṇa's good name by slandering that He would have killed his brother.

** : According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, reasoning after verse 32 and 35-36, Akrūra took the Syamantaka jewel and went to reside in the city of Benares, where he became known as Dānapati, "the master of charity." There he executed elaborate fire sacrifices on golden altars with assemblies of qualified priests.

***: Also concerning this there are speculations on why there could have been this trouble despite the Lord's gracious presence. Some suggest that Kṛṣṇa would deliver the bad times because He was compromised by Akrūra who took the jewel elsewhere in rivalry with His rule. At the other hand it is not that unusual that murder in a community, to the rule of God and Kṛṣṇa, delivers that community a bad time, as one often sees taking place after major wars as pointed out in the Bhāgavatam with its description of the bad times when Kṛṣṇa after the great Kuru war Himself departed for His heavenly abode [1.14].

Chapter 58

Kṛṣṇa also Weds Kālindī, Mitravindā, Satyā, Lakṣmaṇā and Bhadrā [*]

1) Śrī Śuka said: 'One day the Supreme Personality, the Possessor of all Opulence, went to Indraprastha accompanied by Yuyudhāna [Sātyaki, His charioteer] and others, to visit the sons of Pāṇḍu who had surfaced again [after the fire in the house of lac]. (2) When they saw Him, Mukunda, the Lord of the Entire Universe arriving, the heroes all stood up at once, as if the master of their senses, their life air, had returned. (3) The heroes who embraced Acyuta found all their sins annihilated by the contact with His body, and experienced the joy of beholding His affectionately smiling face. (4) After Kṛṣṇa first had offered His obeisances at the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma [because they were older] and firmly had embraced Phālguna [or Arjuna, who was only eight days older], He next respectfully greeted the twin brothers [Nakula and Sahadeva, who were younger]. (5) Kṛṣṇa sitting on an elevated seat was slowly, step by step, shyly approached by the impeccable, newly [to the Pāṇḍavas] wed [Draupadī], to offer her obeisances. (6) Sātyaki was similarly welcomed, honored and seated by the sons of Pṛthā, as were also the others who found a seat around Him. (7) He thereupon approached Queen Kuntī [His aunt] to offer His obeisances and was by her embraced with eyes wet because of her intense affection [see also 1.8: 18-43]. Inquiring after the welfare of her and her daughter-in-law [Draupadī], she in her turn, as the sister of His father [Vasudeva], inquired in detail after His relatives. (8) With tears in her eyes and with a throat choked up by emotion she, in her love for Him who shows Himself to dispel the distress, remembering the many trials and tribulations, said: (9) 'We only fared better when You, oh Kṛṣṇa, remembering us, Your relatives, protected us by sending my brother [Akrūra, see 10.49]. (10) For You, the Well-wisher and Soul of the Universe, there is never the delusion of 'ours' and 'theirs.' Nonetheless You, situated in the heart, put an end to the sufferings of those who remember [You] continuously [see also B.G. 9: 29].'

(11) Yudhiṣṭhira said: 'I do not know what good deeds we, who have but a poor intelligence, have performed to [be allowed to] see

You, oh Supreme Controller rarely seen by [even the] masters of yoga.'

(12) **U**pon the request of the king to stay with them, the Almighty One happily was their guest during the months of the rainy season [see also 10.20], and thus He, for the eyes of the residents of Indraprastha, constituted a source of joy. (13-14) One day [**] Arjuna, the killer of powerful enemies, in armor mounted his chariot with the monkey [or Hanumān] flag, holding his Gāṇḍīva [his bow] and taking his two inexhaustible quivers of arrows, and entered together with Kṛṣṇa a large forest filled with many beasts of prey to have a good time there [see also B.G. 1]. (15) There he with his arrows pierced tigers, boars, wild buffalo, *rurus* [a kind of antelopes], *śarabhas* [a kind of deer], *gavayas* [a kind of oxen], rhinoceroses, black deer, rabbits and porcupines [see also 4.28: 26 and 5.26: 13]. (16) Servants carried the animals to the king [to Yudhiṣṭhira] to be sacrificed at a special occasion [otherwise the hunt would have been forbidden, see 9.6: 7-8]. Bibhatsa ['the frightening one', Arjuna], being fatigued, was overcome by thirst and went to the Yamunā. (17) As the two great chariot fighters took a bath and drank from the clear water, the two Kṛṣṇas [see B.G. 10: 37] spotted a maiden charming to behold walking there. (18) Sent by his Friend, Phālguna approached the exquisite woman who had fine hips and teeth, and an attractive face. He inquired: (19) 'Who are you, to whom do you belong, oh slender-waisted girl, where do you come from and what are your plans? I think you are looking for a husband. Tell me all about it, oh beauty!'

(20) **Śrī** Kālindī said: 'I am the daughter of the demigod Savitā [the sun god]. I want Viṣṇu, the most excellent granter of boons, to be my husband and am engaged in severe penances. (21) I accept no other husband but Him, the Abode of Śrī [the goddess]. May He, the Supreme Lord Mukunda, the shelter of the helpless, be satisfied with me. (22) Until I meet Acyuta, I am living in a mansion built by my father in the Yamunā waters and am thus named Kālindī [see also bhajan verse 2 and 10.15: 47-52].' (23) Gudākeśa ['thick-haired' Arjuna] related this to Vāsudeva, who already knew this. He lifted her up on His chariot and together with her drove back to king Dharma [Yudhiṣṭhira].

(24) **Kṛṣṇa** [in the past] at the request of the sons of Pṛthā, had ordered Viśvakarmā to build a most amazing colorful city for them [Indraprastha]. (25) The Supreme Lord resided there for the pleasure of His devotees. [Before the city was built] He wanted to give the Khāṇḍava forest [at Kurukṣetra] to Agni, and so He became Arjuna's

charioteer. (26) Pleased with that offer, oh King, Agni gave Arjuna a bow and a chariot with white horses, two inexhaustible quivers of arrows, and an armor impenetrable to whatever armed opposition. (27) Maya [the demon who was] delivered from the fire, presented [out of gratitude] an assembly hall to his friend [Arjuna], in which Duryodhana mistook the water he saw for a solid floor [so that he fell into it, see 10.75]. (28) After He [Kṛṣṇa] from him [from Arjuna] and his well-wishers received permission to leave, He returned to Dvārakā accompanied by Sātyaki and the rest of His entourage [see also 1: 10]. (29) He who was so very meritorious, then married Kālindī on a day when the seasons, the stars and the other luminaries were most favorable for spreading the greatest happiness among His people.

(30) **V**indya and Anuvindya, two kings from Avantī [Ujjain] subservient to Duryodhana, forbade their sister [Mitravindā] who was attracted to Kṛṣṇa, [to choose for Him] during her *svayamvara* [ceremony for selecting a husband]. (31) Mitravindā, the daughter of Rājādhivevī, His father's sister [9.24: 28-31], oh King, was by Kṛṣṇa with force abducted before the eyes of the kings [compare 10.53].

(32) **F**rom Nagnajit, the most religious ruler of Kauśalya [Ayodhyā, see 9.10: 32], there was a divine daughter named Satyā, who was also called Nāgnajitī, oh King. (33) None of the kings would marry her if he could not defeat seven uncontrollable, vicious bulls with the sharpest horns, that could not tolerate the smell of warriors. (34) When the Supreme Lord heard that she was available for the one who defeated the bulls, the Master of the Sātvatas, surrounded by a large army, went to the Kauśalya capital. (35) The lord of Kośala joyfully rose to his feet [upon His arrival] and seated Him with substantial offerings and such, and he was greeted in return. (36) As soon as the daughter of the king saw that the suitor of her choice had arrived, she expressed the wish: 'May He, the Husband of Ramā, become my husband! When I have fulfilled my vows, let the fire [of sacrifice] make my hopes come true. (37) The Goddess of Fortune, the one on the lotus [Brahmā] and the master of the mountain [Śiva] hold, together with the various rulers of the world, the dust of His lotus feet on their heads. How can He be pleased by me, that Supreme Lord, He who for His pastime assumes a body with the desire to protect the codes of dharma, the fixed rules that He Himself has instigated every time [He descended]?'

(38) **H**e [Nagnajit] said to the One worshiped further the following: 'Oh Nārāyaṇa, oh Lord of the Universe, what may I, who

am so insignificant, do for You who are filled with the happiness of the Soul?'

(39) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Oh child of the Kurus, the Supreme Lord being pleased, accepted a seat and with a smile spoke to him in a voice as deep as a [rumbling] cloud. (40) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh ruler of man, for a member of the royal order who follows his dharma, to beg for something is condemned by the learned souls. Nevertheless I beg you for your friendship. This with an eye for your daughter, for whom We offer nothing in return though.'

(41) **The King** said: 'Who else but You, oh Supreme Lordship, would in this world be a desirable groom for my daughter? You, on whose body the Goddess resides and from whose side she never leaves, are the only One who possess the qualities! (42) But in order to secure a [suitable] husband for my daughter, oh best of the Sātvatas, previously a condition has been set by us to test the prowess of the suitors of my daughter. (43) These seven wild bulls, oh hero, are untamable. A great number of princes broke their limbs being defeated by them. (44) If You manage to subdue them, oh descendant of Yadu, You have my permission as the bridegroom for my daughter, oh Husband of Śrī.'

(45) **Hearing** of this condition, the Lord tightened His clothes, divided Himself into seven and subdued the bulls as if it concerned a simple game. (46) Śauri tied them up with ropes and dragged them, broken in their pride and strength, behind Him like He was a boy playing with a wooden toy. (47) The king was astonished and pleased gave Kṛṣṇa his suitable daughter. The Supreme Lord, the Master, thereupon accepted her in accord with the Vedic injunctions. (48) The queens [of king Nagnajit] were exhilarated to attain Kṛṣṇa as the dear husband of the princess, and that led to great festivity. (49) Conch shells, horns and drums resounded together with songs and instrumental music. The twice-born souls pronounced blessings, and joyful men and women in their finest dresses adorned themselves with garlands. (50-51) The mighty king gave away ten thousand cows as a wedding gift, including three thousand excellently dressed maidens with golden ornaments around their necks, nine thousand elephants, a hundred times as many chariots with a hundred times as many horses completed by a hundred times as many men. (52) The king of Kośala placed the couple on a chariot and, with his heart melting with affection, sent them off surrounded by a large army. (53) The [rival] kings who heard about it, could not accept the frustration. In their strength just as broken by the Yadus as they were before by the bulls,

they blocked the road along which He was taking His bride. (54) They released volleys of arrows at them, but were, like vermin, driven back by Arjuna, the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva, who acted like a lion in his desire to please his Friend. (55) The son of Devakī, the Supreme Lord and Chief of the Yadus, took the dowry, arrived in Dvārakā and lived there happily with Satyā.

(56) **B**hadrā was a princess of Kaikeya. She was the daughter of Śrutakīrti, a paternal aunt of the Lord. She was by her brothers headed by Santardana [see 9.24: 38] given in marriage to Kṛṣṇa.

(57) **T**he Lord also married Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of the king of Madra. She was endowed with all good qualities and was by Kṛṣṇa single-handedly carried away at her *svayamvara* ceremony, just like the nectar of the demigods once was stolen by Garuḍa [see also 10.83: 17-39].

(58) **A**fter Kṛṣṇa had killed Bhaumāsura [***], thousands equally beautiful women who were taken captive by the demon, also became His wives.'

*: In sum Kṛṣṇa wed 16008 wives: 1: Rukmiṇī, 2 Jāmbavatī, 3 Satyabhāmā, 4 Kālindī, 5 Mitravindā, 6 Satyā (Nāgnajitī), 7 Bhadrā, 8 Lakṣmaṇā, as discussed in 10.83: 17, and the 16000 wives held captive by Bhaumāsura.

** : A date after the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, referred to later in verse 25.

***: A demon, according to the Viṣṇu-purāṇa, born as a consequence of Lord Varāha touching mother earth when He lifted her up from the ocean [see 3.13: 31].

Chapter 59

Mura and Bhauma Killed and the Prayers of Bhūmi

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'How was Bhaumāśura [the demon Naraka], who captured these women, killed by the Supreme Lord? Please tell me about this adventure of the wielder of the Śārṅga [Kṛṣṇa].'

(2-3) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Bhauma had stolen lord Indra's Varuṇa parasol, the earrings of his relative [his mother Aditi, see 8.17], as also a certain location [called Maṇi-parvata] on the mountain of the gods [Mandara hill, see 8.6: 22-23]. Lord Indra then informed Him [Lord Kṛṣṇa] about what Bhaumāśura all had done. Together with His wife [Satyabhāmā see *] seated on Garuḍa, He thereupon traveled to the city of Prāgjyotiṣa [Bhauma's capital, now Tejpur of Assam], which lay protected surrounded by mountains and weapons, fire, water and wind. The place was fortified by a [*mura-pāśa*] fence consisting of tens of thousands of tough and dreadful wires on all sides. (4) With His club He broke through the rock fortifications, with His arrows He defeated the weapon systems, with His disc He forced a way through the fire, the water and wind defenses and with His sword He likewise got through the fence. (5) Resounding His conch shell He broke the seals [of the fortress] as also the hearts of the brave warriors, and with His heavy mace Gadādhara He broke through the ramparts. (6) Hearing the vibration of the Lord's Pāñcajanya, which sounded like the thunder at the end of the universe, the five-headed demon Mura rose up who lay asleep in the water [of the moat]. (7) With his trident raised and with an effulgence as terrible as the fire of the sun most difficult to behold, he, as if he with his five mouths would swallow the three worlds, launched his attack the way the son of Tārksya [Garuḍa] would attack a snake. (8) Whirling his trident he threw it with all his strength at Garuḍa with such a tumultuous roar from his five mouths, that the earth, the sky and outer space in all directions of the egglike shell of the universe reverberated. (9) Lord Kṛṣṇa then with two arrows broke the trident flying at Garuḍa in three pieces, and next, with great force, hit his faces with more arrows. The demon furiously hurled his club at Him. (10) That club flying at Him on the battlefield was by Gadāgraja [Kṛṣṇa as the Elder Brother of Gada] broken into

thousands of pieces with His own club. But when he next with his arms raised rushed forward at Him, the unconquerable One with ease sliced off his heads with His disc. (11) Lifeless he with his heads severed fell into the water, as if Indra with his force had split off a mountain peak. His seven sons, feeling greatly distressed upon their father's death, thereupon angrily moved into action to retaliate.

(12) Incited by Bhaumāsura, Tāmra, Antarikṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu, Nabhasvān and the seventh son Aruṇa, with their weapons stepped forward on the battlefield headed by their general Pīṭha. (13) In their attack they furiously used swords, clubs, spears, lances and tridents against the Invincible One, but the Supreme Lord of Infallible Prowess with His arrows cut their complete mountain of weapons into tiny pieces. (14) Cutting off their heads, thighs, arms, legs and armor, He sent the ones who were headed by Pīṭha all to the abode of Yamarāja. Bhauma, the son of mother earth, who saw that his army and leaders succumbed to the arrows and disc of Kṛṣṇa, could not accept that and marched forward with elephants in rut that were born from the milk ocean. (15) Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa with His wife sitting on Garuḍa like a cloud with lightning sitting above the sun, he released his Śatagnī [spiked missile] at Him while at the same time all his soldiers attacked. (16) The Supreme Lord, the Elder Brother of Gada, turned their bodies as also the bodies of the horses and elephants of Bhaumāsura's army, with differently feathered sharp arrows into a collection of severed arms, thighs and necks. (17-19) Each of the sharp and shafted weapons that the warriors employed, oh hero of the Kurus, were by Kṛṣṇa with three arrows at a time cut to pieces. Garuḍa who carried Him, stroke the elephants with his two large wings and thus defeated them. Harassed by his wings, beak and talons they moved back into the city while Naraka ['hell' or Bhauma] continued with the battle. (20) Bhauma, annoyed to see his army forced in retreat because of Garuḍa, struck him with the spear that [once] withstood the thunderbolt [of Indra]. But he was not shaken more by it than an elephant being hit with a flower garland. (21) Bhauma, frustrated in his endeavors, next took up his trident to kill Acyuta, the Infallible One, but before he could even release it, the Lord with the razor-sharp edge of His *cakra* cut off the head of Naraka as he was sitting on his elephant. (22) That head, complete with its brilliant, shining decorations of earrings and a nice helmet, fell to the ground. [There were exclamations of] 'Alas, alas' and 'Bravo, bravo!', while the sages and ruling demigods showered Lord Kṛṣṇa with flower garlands.

(23) **M**other earth thereupon approached Kṛṣṇa and presented golden earrings, glowing with shining jewels, and a Vaijayantī garland of forest flowers. She gave Him the parasol of Varuṇa and the Great Gem [the peak of Mandara]. (24) Oh King, the goddess with a mind full of devotion then folded her palms, bowed down, and praised the Lord of the Universe who is worshiped by the best of the demigods. (25) Bhūmi said: 'I offer You my obeisances, oh God of Gods, oh Lord, oh holder of the conch, the disc and the club, who, to the desire of Your devotees, have assumed Your forms, oh Supreme Soul. Let there be the praise unto You. (26) I worship Him with the lotuslike depression in His belly, my reverence for the One with the garland of lotuses, my respects for Him whose glance is as cool as a lotus, my praise unto You who have feet like lotuses [as in 1.8: 22]. (27) My obeisances unto You, the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, the Original Person, the Primeval Seed and the Complete of Knowledge; unto You my salutations. (28) May there be the veneration for You, the Unborn Progenitor, the Absolute of unlimited energies, the Soul of the higher and lower, the Soul of the creation, the Supersoul! (29) Desiring to create, oh Master, You stand out as being the Unborn One [as Brahmā], for the purpose of annihilation You adopt the mode of ignorance [as Śiva], and for the sake of maintenance You are [manifested as] the goodness [as the Viṣṇu *avatāras*] of the Universe. [Yet You are] not covered [by these modes], oh Lord of Jagat [the Living Being that is the Universe]. Being Kāla [time], Pradhāna [the unmanifested state of matter, the primal ether] and the Puruṣa [the Original Person], You nevertheless exist independently thereof. (30) This self of mine [the earth], the water, the fire, the air and the ether, the sense objects, the demigods, the mind, the senses and the doer, the total material energy - in sum everything that moves around or does not move around, constitutes the bewilderment, oh Supreme Lord [when one supposes that it would exist independently of You]. Everything after all resides within You, the One Without a Second [see also *siddhānta*]! (31) This son of him [called Bhagadatta, son of Bhauma, Bhūmi's grandson] has in his fear approached the lotus feet of You who removes the distress of those who take shelter. Please protect him and place on his head Your lotus hand which eradicates all sins.'

(32) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The Supreme Lord, with these words being entreated by Bhūmi with devotion and humility, took his fear away and entered the residence of Bhauma which was equipped with all conveniences. (33) The Lord found there sixteen thousand [**] maidens of the royal order, who by Bhaumāśura by force were taken away from the kings. (34) When the women saw Him enter, the most

excellent of all men, they enchanted chose for Him, who by fate was brought to them, as the husband of their desire. (35) Absorbed in Kṛṣṇa they thought: 'May providence make that He becomes my husband.' Thus contemplating they, one after the other, all installed Him in their heart. (36) After they were properly washed and clad in spotless clothes, He sent them off in palanquins, to Dvārakā together with the enormous treasure of chariots, horses and a great number of other valuables [that was captured]. (37) Keśava also dispatched sixty-four swift white elephants with four tusks from the family of Airāvata [Indra's elephant]. (38-39) Thereupon He went to the abode of the king of the gods and gave Aditi her earrings. next He together with His beloved [Satyabhāmā] was worshiped by Indra, the head of the thirty [chief] demigods, and the great king's wife. Urged by His own wife He uprooted the [heavenly tree, the] pārijāta and placed it on Garuḍa. He defeated the demigods including Indra [who wanted to prevent that] and brought it to His city. (40) All the way from heaven being followed by bees greedy for its sweet fragrance and juice, the tree beautified the garden of Satyabhāmā's residence after being planted there. (41) [Indra] that great soul among the demigods, had bowed down, touched His feet with the tips of his crown and begged Acyuta to fulfill his desire, but now that he had achieved his purpose [viz. the Lord], he nevertheless started to quarrel with Him [about the pārijāta]. To hell [those demigods] with their wealth, what an ignorance [see also: 3.3: 5]! (42) The Supreme Lord then properly married with all those women, at the same time living in various residences with them. For that purpose the Imperishable One assumed as many forms [see 10.58: 45, 10.69: 19-45 and B.G. 9: 15; 13: 31]. (43) Happily engaged with the women eager to please Him, He who performs the most inconceivable deeds never left their unequalled and superior palaces. Even though He is perfectly satisfied within, He carried out His duties as a householder and enjoyed life like any other man [see also 1.11: 37-39]. (44) The women shared, in an ever-increasing happiness, the always fresh, loving attraction of associating with Him in smiles and glances, intimate talks and bashfulness. Thus having obtained the Husband of Ramā they this way managed to attain Him in a manner, that is not even available to Brahmā and the other gods. (45) Even though they had hundreds of maidservants, they personally served the Lord by approaching Him to offer a seat, to be of first-class worship and wash His feet, as also to serve Him with betel nut, massages and fanning, fragrances, garlands and dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing and presenting gifts.'

*: The *ācāryas* explain that Satyabhāmā would accompany Kṛṣṇa to give permission to kill Bhauma, despite the promise He once made to Bhūmi,

the earth-goddess, not to hurt her son Bhauma without her permission. She would also come along to procure the pārijāta flower tree Kṛṣṇa had promised her after He brought Rukmiṇī one such flower [see also 10.50: 54 and 3.3: 5]

** : As to the number of Kṛṣṇa's queens there is no absolute agreement. Here is written 16000. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa V.19 - 9.31 mentions 16100, while even others speak of 16001. Not counting the verse 10.90: 29, which again mentions over 16100 of them, would, reasoning from the Bhāgavatam stories only, there be 16008 queens [see also previous footnote *].

Chapter 60

Lord Kṛṣṇa Teases Queen Rukmiṇī

(1) **T**he son of Bādarāyaṇa [of Vyāsa] said: 'He, the Spiritual Master of the Universe one day comfortably being positioned on Rukmiṇī's bed, was served by her who together with her female companions was fanning Him, her Husband. (2) The Unborn Lord, the Supreme Controller who sends forth, protects and devours the universe, now had taken birth among the Yadus to play His game and defend His rule [* , see also 6.3: 19]. (3-6) That private part of the palace was brilliantly decorated with strings of pearls and resplendent with a canopy, with lamps made out of jewels and with jasmine flower garlands swarming with humming bees. The light of the spotless moon was filtered through the openings of the lattice windows, the wind carried the fragrance from the grove of pārijāta trees and thus transported the atmosphere from the garden, and the exciting scent of *aguru* incense, oh King, was escaping through the window openings. There she served her Husband, the Controller of All Worlds, who was comfortably seated on an excellent pillow on the bed which shone white as milk foam. (7) The goddess took a yak-hair fan with a jeweled handle from the hand of a maidservant and, performing worship, fanned her Master with it. (8) Standing at Kṛṣṇa's side making sounds with her jeweled ankle bells, she appeared beautifully with her rings, bangles and fan in her hand, with her garment which with its tip concealed her breasts red of the *kuṅkum*, with the glow of her necklace and with the priceless belt she wore around her hips. (9) As she pleased smiled with her locks, earrings and jewels around her neck, her bright and happy face and sweet lips, He recognized her as an appearance of the goddess of fortune who, with no other purpose in life, for the sake of His pastime corresponds with bodies befitting the forms He assumes [**]. The Lord then spoke.

(10) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Oh princess you were desired by kings, rulers of the world of beauty, strength and generosity who were abundantly endowed with great powers, influence and opulence. (11) Rejecting suitors at your disposition like Śīsupāla and others who, mad because of Cupid, were offered to you by your brother and father, I wonder why you have chosen for Us, so different from them. (12) In fear of the kings, oh lovely-browed one, and having moved to the ocean for shelter [to Dvārakā], We were of enmity with those in power

and have well-nigh relinquished the throne. (13) Oh beautiful eyebrows, women concerned with men whose behavior is uncertain, usually have to suffer. They follow a path not acceptable to normal society. (14) We, with no possessions, are dear to those people who have nothing themselves, and therefore we as a rule are not very popular among the rich who rarely pay Me any respect, oh fine-waisted lady. (15) Marriage and friendship is there between two people equal in property, birth, influence, physique and prospects and never between a superior and an inferior [in this]! (16) Oh princess of Vidarbha, you could not foresee this, you did not know when you chose for Us who miss the good qualities, We who are praised by beggars out of their mind! (17) Now, please accept for yourself a husband that is suitable, a first class noble capable of fulfilling all your wishes in this life and the next. (18) Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and other kings all hate Me, oh you with your beautiful legs, and so does your elder brother Rukmī. (19) I took you with Me, oh good lady, in order to dispel the pride and arrogance of those who are blinded by the intoxication of their power. We wanted to restrain the power of the wicked [see also B.G. 4: 7]. (20) Indifferent about a home and a body We do not really care about wives, children and wealth; free from any endeavoring We remain completely satisfied within Ourselves, just like a light doing nothing more.'

(21) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Supreme Lord had said this as the destroyer of the pride of she who, as His beloved one, thought herself inseparable, He stopped. (22) From the Master of the Lords of the Three worlds, her own Beloved, she, the goddess, had never before heard such an unpleasant thing. With fear growing in her heart she, trembling with a terrible anxiety, then began to sob [see Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 6 & 7]. (23) With her most delicate foot, which glowed red of her nails, she scratched the earth and, while she with her tears smeared the makeup of her eyes and sprinkled the red *kuṅkuma* powder on her breasts, she froze, face downward, with her speech checked by her extreme sorrow. (24) Because of her great grief, fear and anguish not thinking clearly anymore, her bangles slipped and her fan fell from her hand. With her mind disrupted she suddenly swooned. Her body fell to the ground with her hair scattered, like she was a plantain tree blown over by the wind [see *rasa*]. (25) The moment He understood what the full import of His, not by her understood, joking meant to the bond of divine love with His beloved, the Supreme Lord, merciful Kṛṣṇa, felt sorry for her. (26) He quickly got down from the bed and picked her up with His four arms. Gathering her hair, He wiped her face with His lotus hand. (27-28) Wiping her tear-filled eyes and smeared breasts, oh King, He put His

arm around her who, chaste as she was, knew no other object of desire. The Master, the Expert in Pacification, compassionately consoled her who was so pitifully confused by His clever joking. [Being motivated] for the Goal of All Pure Souls she did not deserve this. (29) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh Vaidarbhī, do not be unhappy with Me, I know you are fully dedicated to Me, My dearest. I acted in jest to hear what you would say. (30) This is how I wanted to see the face of love: with lips trembling in agitation, glances cast from the corners of reddish eyes, and beautiful eyebrows knit together. (31) To spend time joking with one's beloved is indeed, for a mundane householder, the greatest achievement in family life, oh timid one of temperament.'

(32) Śrī Śuka said: 'Vaidarbhī, oh King, thus completely pacified by the Supreme Lord, understood that His words had been playful and gave up her fear of being rejected by her Beloved. (33) Bashfully, with a charming smile looking the Supreme Lord in the face, she, oh descendant of Bharata, with affectionate glances addressed the Best of All Men. (34) Śrī Rukmiṇī said: 'Well, so be it, it is as You said, oh Lotus-eyed One. I am different from You who are the Supreme Lord. Who am I compared to the Almighty One who takes pleasure in His own glory? Who am I compared to the Controller, the Supreme Lord of the Three [principal deities]. What now would be my position as someone whose feet are held by fools because of her material qualities? (35) It is true, You, oh Urukrama ['Lord of the Greater Order'], laid Yourself down in the ocean as if You would be afraid of the modes. You always, in the pure awareness of the Supreme Soul, battle against the badness of the material senses and, with Your servants, have rejected the position of a king because it means blind ignorance [see also Śrī Śrī Ṣaḍgosvāmī-aṣṭaka verse 4 and Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 4]. (36) For sages who relish the honey of Your lotus like feet, Your path is not that apparent, while it is even impossible to comprehend for animals in a human form [materialists]. For, as uncommon as the activities of You, the Supreme Controller are, oh All-powerful One, just as unusual are the actions of those who follow You. (37) You are without possessions, for beyond You there is nothing to be found. To You even enjoyers of offerings like Brahmā and others carry offerings. Materially satisfied persons who are blinded by their status, do not know You as their death, but You are most dear to the great enjoyers [the gods], just as they are dear to You [see also 1.7: 10]. (38) You are the ultimate goal comprising all goals of human life, You are the very Self longing for whom intelligent persons discard everything. They are the souls who delight in Your association, oh Omnipotent One, and not the man and woman who in

their mutual attraction [their lust] experience pleasure and pain. (39) You are the Supreme Soul of all the Worlds who gives Himself away and about whose prowess the sages speak who gave up their staff [for wandering around, becoming Paramahamsas, see 5.1*]. You were for that reason chosen by me in rejection of those masters of heaven - the one born on the lotus [Brahmā] and the one ruling existence [Śiva]. What would my interest be in others whose aspirations are destroyed by the force of Time generated by Your eyebrows? (40) How foolish were the words You used saying that You have taken shelter in the ocean out of fear, oh Gadāgraja, oh You who by twanging Your Śārṅga drove back the kings when You abducted me, Your deserved tribute, the way a lion snatches his share away from the animals [see also *jalpa* 10.47: 12-21]. (41) The kings Anga [father of Vena, 4.13: 47], Vainya [Pṛthu, 4.23], Jāyanta [Bharata, 6.7: 11], Nāhuṣa [Yayāti, 9.19], Gaya [5.15: 6-7] and others, for want of You have abandoned their crown, their absolute sovereignty over their kingdoms, and entered the forest, oh Lotus-eyed One. Would they, being fixed on Your path, have suffered in this world [see text 13]? (42) Which woman would take shelter of another man, once she has smelled the by the saints described aroma of Your lotus feet, the feet where Lakṣmī resides and that for all people bestow liberation? Which mortal woman with the insight to ascertain what is best for her, would not take You seriously as the Abode of All Qualities, and would chose for someone who is always most afraid [because of his false ego]? (43) I have chosen for Him, Yourself, the Ultimate Master and Supreme Soul of All Worlds, as the one suitable to fulfill my desires in this life and the next [see last verse Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka]. May there for me, who wandered on different paths [or in births], be the shelter of Your feet which, when they approach their worshiper, award with liberation from all falsehood. (44) Leave the kings You mentioned [in verse 10], oh Acyuta, to the mercy of those women in whose homes they are like asses, oxen, dogs, cats and slaves, because these women never put their ears close to the core that You as the plague of Your enemies are, oh You who are sung and discussed in the scholarly assemblies of Mṛḍa ['the gracious one' or Śiva] and Viriñca ['the pure one beyond passion' or Brahmā]. (45) The woman who is not smelling the honey of Your lotus feet, is of a totally foolish notion. She worships as her partner a living corpse containing flesh, bones, blood, worms, stool, mucus, bile and air, that is covered by skin, whiskers, bodily hair, nails and head hair. (46) Oh Lotus-eyed One, let there be my love for the feet of You who take more pleasure in the True Self than in me. The very moment You, in order to expand this universe, assume a predominance of passion and glance upon Me [as *prakṛti*], You show us the greatest mercy [see also 10.53: 2]. (47) I

think Your words are not entirely untrue, oh Killer of Madhu, an unmarried girl once in a while may feel attracted [to another man], like it happened to Ambā [daughter of the king of Kāśī who was attracted to Śālva, see Mahābhārata and note 9.22: 20*]. (48) Even being married the mind of a promiscuous woman is attracted to yet another man. When one is intelligent one should not keep such an unfaithful woman, for when one stays attached to her, one will have fallen both ways [both in this and the next life, see also 9.14: 36].'

(49) **The Supreme Lord** said: 'All that you replied is correct. What I have said fooling you, oh princess, I did because I wanted to hear you speak about this, oh virtuous lady! (50) Oh fair lady, you can always count on whatever benedictions you desire from Me in order to be freed from the lust, oh gracious one, oh You who are exclusively devoted to Me. (51) Oh sinless one, I have understood your pure love and adherence to your husband in vows, for being disturbed by My words, your mind attached to Me could not be diverted. (52) They who with lust in their hearts fall for civil status and worship Me with penances and adherence to vows, are bewildered by the illusory energy of Me, the Controller of the Final Beatitude [see also B.G. 2:42-44]. (53) Oh sweetheart, unfortunate are they who having achieved Me, the Master of both Emancipation and Riches, only desire material benefits. These are even available for persons living in hell, and therefore is, for those who are obsessed with sense gratification, hell the most suitable place [see also 3.32, and 7.5: 32]. (54) Fortunately, oh mistress of the house, you constantly rendered the faithful service to Me that grants liberation from material existence. That service is most difficult for mischievous characters, in particular for women with bad intentions, who only care for their own life breath and derive pleasure from breaking off relations. (55) Oh respectful one, in my palaces I can find no wife as loving as you, you who at the time of her marriage disregarded the kings who had arrived, you who, having heard the stories about My truth, sent a brahmin carrier to Me with a confidential message. (56) When your brother, who was defeated in battle and disfigured [10.54], on the day of the marriage ceremony [of Aniruddha, her grandson, see next chapter] got killed during a gambling match, you suffered unbearable grief, but afraid to be separated from Us, you did not say a word and that is how You conquered Us. (57) When I did not show up after you sent a messenger with the most confidential bidding to obtain My person, you considered this world all empty and wanted to give up this body that would not be of anyone else's service [see 10.53: 22-25]. May you always be that way [of fortitude] and may We always rejoice in it.'

(58) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus in intimate conversations following the course of the human world, the Supreme Lord and Ruler of the Universe, took pleasure in enjoying Himself with Ramā. (59) In the residences of the other queens He, the Almighty Lord and Spiritual Master of All the Worlds, behaved similarly like a householder and carried out the duties of a family man.'

*: The Sanskrit word used here is *setu*: it means bridge, dam, boundary limit, thus in this context His guidance, religion, rule and law.

** : Spoken by Śrī Parāśara in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa there is, so Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī reminds us, a verse confirming this one:

*devatve deva-deheyam
manuṣyatve ca mānuṣī
viṣṇor dehānurūpām vai
karoty eṣātmanas tanum*

"When the Lord appears as a demigod, she [the goddess of fortune] takes the form of a demigoddess, and when He appears as a human being, she takes a humanlike form. Thus the body she assumes matches the one Lord Viṣṇu takes."

Chapter 61

Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī at Aniruddha's Wedding

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Each of the wives of Kṛṣṇa gave birth to ten sons not inferior in any respect to their Father's personal opulence. (2) Never seeing Acyuta leave their palaces, each of the princesses considered herself the dearest one. The women had no notion of His truth. (3) Fully enchanted by the Supreme Lord's face, which was as beautiful as the whorl of a lotus, His long arms, His eyes and loving glances, His witty approach and charming talks, the women with their appeal, could not conquer the mind of the Almighty One. (4) Despite the romantic signs they beamed from their arched brows, their hidden looks and coy smiles which so charmingly displayed their intentions, the sixteen thousand wives were not capable of agitating His senses with their arrows of Cupid and with other means. (5) These women, who obtained the Lord of Ramā as their partner and thus achieved what not even Lord Brahmā and the other gods can attain, first of all eagerly looked forward to enjoy His ever-fresh intimate association, and exchanged with pleasure, incessantly and with an increasing loving attraction, smiles and glances with Him [as in 10.59: 44]. (6) Even though they [as stated] had hundreds of maidservants, they personally approached Him to offer Him a seat, to be of first-class worship, wash His feet and serve Him betel nut. They gave massages, fanned Him, and served the Almighty Lord with fragrances, garlands, dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing and presenting gifts [as in 10.59: 45]. (7) Among those [16008 *] wives of Kṛṣṇa, who each had ten sons, there were, as I previously stated, eight principal queens. I will sum up their sons beginning with Pradyumna.

(8-9) **He** was by the Lord begotten in Rukmiṇī [see 10.54: 60] and was in no way inferior to Him, just as were Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa and the powerful Cārudeha, Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru and another son called Cārucandra, as also Vicāru and Cāru, the tenth son. (10-12) The ten sons of Satyabhāmā [10.56: 44] were Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān and Candrabhānu, as also Bṛhadbhānu and the eighth son Atibhānu followed by Śrībhānu and Pratibhānu [*bhānu* means luster, splendor]. Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit and Sahasrajit, Vijaya and Citraketu, Vasumān, Draviḍa and

Kratu were the sons of Jāmbavatī [10.56: 32]. These sons headed by Sāmba were the ones favored by their Father [see also 7.1: 2 & 12]. (13) Vīra, Candra and Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān, Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu and the mighty Kunti, were the sons of Nāgnajitī [or Satyā, see 10.58: 55]. (14) Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, the one called Bhadra, Śānti, Darśa, Pūrṇamāsa and Somaka, the youngest one, were the sons of Kālindī [10.58: 23]. (15) Praghoṣa, Gātravān, Simha, Bala, Prabala, and Ūrdhaga were together with Mahāśakti, Saha, Oja and Aparājita, the sons of Mādrā [see *]. (16) Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana, Unnāda, Mahāmsa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣudhi were the sons of Mitravindā [10.58: 31]. (17) The sons of Bhādra were Saṅgrāmajit, Bṛhatsena, Śūra, Praharāṇa and Arijit, Jaya, Subhadra, Vāma, Āyur and Satyaka [10.58: 56]. (18) Dīptimān, Tāmratapta and others were the sons of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rohiṇī [*]. Oh King, Pradyumna living in the city of Bhojakāṭa [Rukmī's domain] begot in Rukmavatī, the daughter of Rukmī, the greatly powerful Aniruddha [see also 4.24: 35-36]. (19) From these sons and grandsons of the sixteen thousand mothers, tens of millions descendants of Kṛṣṇa took their birth, oh King.'

(20) **T**he king said: 'How could Rukmī give his daughter in marriage to the son of his Enemy? Defeated by Kṛṣṇa in battle he waited for an opportunity to kill Him. Please, oh learned soul, explain to me how this marriage between the two enemies could be arranged. (21) Yogis [like you] are perfectly able to see the past, the present and what has not happened yet, as also things far away, things blocked by obstacles and matters beyond the senses.'

(22) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'At her *svayamvara* ceremony she [Rukmavatī] chose the, for her manifest, Cupid [Pradyumna] who took her away after He, with a single chariot, in battle had defeated the assembled kings. (23) In order to please his sister [Rukmiṇī], Rukmī granted his daughter his nephew, even though he always thought of his enmity with Kṛṣṇa who had insulted him [10.54: 35]. (24) Oh King, the young large-eyed daughter of Rukmiṇī, Cārumatī [**], married with Balī, the son of Kṛtavarmā. (25) Despite being bound in enmity to the Lord, Rukmī, gave his granddaughter named Rocanā to Aniruddha in marriage, he who was the son of his daughter. Knowing that it was against the dharma [not to side with one's enemy], he, constrained by the ropes of affection, preferred to please his sister with that marriage. (26) Oh King, on the occasion of that happy event, Rukmiṇī, Balarāma and Keśava [Kṛṣṇa], Sāmba, Pradyumna and others came to the city of Bhojakāṭa.'

(27-28) **A**fter the ceremony, some arrogant kings led by the ruler of Kaliṅga said to Rukmī: 'You should defeat Balarāma in a game of dice. He, oh King, is really not that good at it, but is nevertheless greatly fascinated by it.' Thus being addressed, Rukmī invited Balarāma to play a game of dice with him. (29) In that match Balarāma accepted a wager of first hundred, then thousand and then ten thousand [gold coins]. But it was Rukmī who won. The king of Kaliṅga thereupon loudly laughed at Balarāma, baring his teeth freely. The Carrier of the Plow could not tolerate this. (30) When Rukmī next accepted a bet of a hundred thousand coins that was won by Balarāma, Rukmī resorted to deceit and said: 'I have won!'

(31) **W**ith a mind boiling like the ocean on the day of a full moon, handsome Balarāma, whose naturally reddish eyes were burning with anger, accepted a wager of a hundred million coins. (32) Balarāma fairly also won that game, but Rukmī again resorted to deceit and said: 'It is won by me. May these witnesses confirm that!'

(33) **T**hen a voice spoke from the sky: 'It was Balarāma who fairly won the wager, what Rukmī said is a lie!'

(34) **U**rged on by the wicked kings to head for his death, the prince of Vidarbha discarding that voice, derided Saṅkarṣaṇa by saying: (35) 'You cowherds roaming in the forest are no experts in playing dice. To play dice and shoot arrows is something for kings and not for the likes of you!'

(36) **T**hus being insulted by Rukmī and laughed at by the kings present in this gathering of powerful men, He angrily raised His club and struck him dead. (37) Quickly He seized the fleeing king of Kaliṅga on his tenth step, and knocked in His rage the teeth out he had bared while laughing at Him [see also 4.5: 21]. (38) Tormented by Balarāma's club the [other] kings fled in terror, drenched in blood, with their arms, legs and skulls broken. (39) The fact that his brother-in-law, Rukmī, had been slain, oh King, was by the Lord neither welcomed nor condemned, out of fear to break the bond of affection with Rukmiṇī and Balarāma. (40) The descendants of Daśārha whose purposes under the shelter of Madhusūdana all had been fulfilled, thereupon placed the groom Aniruddha together with His bride on a chariot and led by Balarāma left Bhojakaṭa to head for Kuśasthalī [another name of Dvārakā].'

*: This one called Mādrā is the eighth principal wife of Kṛṣṇa not mentioned before; she is the daughter of the ruler of Madra, called

Bṛhatsena, and is also known as Lakṣmaṇā. From the Bhāgavatam knowing her story as told in 10.83: 17, it is clear that she belonged to the eight queens He married before. Thus there were the 16008 of them. Rohiṇī [not to confuse with Balarāma's mother who has the same name], not being considered a principal wife, seems to have been the one heading the sixteen thousand princesses. So taking Mādrā as the cause for speaking of 16001 wives in stead of 16000, we in sum have: 1 Rukmiṇī, 2 Jāmbavatī, 3 Satyabhāmā, 4 Kālindī, 5 Mitravindā, 6 Satyā (Nāgnajitī), 7 Bhadrā and 8 Mādrā (Lakṣmaṇā) and then the sixteen thousand headed by Rohiṇī who came second [see also footnote 10.59** and the list of them in 10.83].

** : Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that every queen of the Lord had one daughter.

Chapter 62

Ūṣā in Love and Aniruddha Apprehended

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'Bāṇa's daughter named Ūṣā ['dawn'], married the best of the Yadus [Aniruddha]. Because of the marriage a great and terrible battle took place between the Lord and Śaṅkara [Śiva as 'the auspicious one']. Oh great yogi, it is up to you to explain all this.'

(2) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Bāṇa ['arrow'], the eldest son of the one hundred sons born from the semen of Bali ['gift'] - the great soul who donated the earth to the Lord who had appeared in the form of Vāmana [see 8.19-22] -, was respectable, magnanimous, intelligent and truthful in his vows, and always fixed in his devotion for Lord Śiva. In the charming city known as Śoṇita ['resin'] he founded his kingdom, where the immortals served him like menial servants. They did that because Śambhu ['the beneficent one' or Śiva] in the past had been pleased by him as he, endowed with a thousand arms, had played musical instruments while Mr̥ḍa [Śiva as 'the gracious one'] was dancing. (3) He, the great lord and master of all created beings, the compassionate one offering shelter to his devotees, rewarded him with a benediction of his choice. Bāṇa then chose for him [Śiva] as the protector of his city. (4) Intoxicated by his strength, Bāṇa, one day being present at his side, said to Giriśa [Śiva as the lord of the mountain] while touching his lotus feet with a helmet as bright as the sun: (5) 'I bow down to you Mahādeva ['great god'], oh controller and spiritual master of the worlds, who, like a tree from heaven, fulfills all the wishes of the people who feel unfulfilled. (6) The one thousand arms you gave me have become but a burden to me. Except for you I cannot find an equal opponent in the three worlds. (7) With my arms itching to pulverize mountains, I proceeded to fight the elephants of all directions, oh primeval one, but terrified of me they all ran away.'

(8) **H**earing that the great lord said infuriated: 'Your flag will be broken, oh fool, when your pride is vanquished in a battle you have with someone like me.' (9) Thus being addressed, the foolish character went home full of delight, oh king, unintelligently waiting there for the demise of his heroism as was predicted by the lord of the mountain [compare 2.1: 4].

(10) **H**is virgin daughter named Ūṣā, in a dream had an amorous encounter with the son of Pradyumna, a lover she thus had found without ever having seen or heard of him before [see *]. (11) Not seeing him anymore in her dream, she - being among her girlfriends - rose up disturbed and was most embarrassed to hear herself say: 'Where are you my lover?' (12) The daughter Citralekhā ['the fine sketch artist'] of a minister of Bāṇa named Kumbhāṇḍa, thereupon as a friend of hers most curiously questioned her companion Ūṣā. (13) 'Who is it you are looking for, oh beautiful eyebrows, and what do you expect from him, for we as yet have not seen anyone winning your hand, oh princess.'

(14) **I**n my dream I saw a certain man with a dark complexion, lotus like eyes, yellow garments and mighty arms - one of the kind that stirs a woman's heart. (15) He is the one I am seeking. That lover made me drink the honey of his lips, went elsewhere and left me hankering for him, being thrown in an ocean of distress.'

(16) **C**itrলেখā said: 'I will take your distress away! If he can be found anywhere in the three worlds, I will bring him to you, that [future] husband, that thief who stole your heart. Please point him out to me.'

(17) **T**hus having spoken she accurately drew for her the demigod and the heavenly singer, the perfected soul, the venerable soul and the lowlife serpent, the demon, the magician, the supernatural being and the human being. (18-19) Of the humans she drew Vṛṣṇis like Śūrasena, Vasudeva, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, but seeing Pradyumna Ūṣā became bashful and with Aniruddha being drawn she bent down her head in embarrassment, oh great lord, and said smiling: 'That is Him, that One here!' (20) Citলেখā, the *yoginī*, with Him, Kṛṣṇa's grandson [Aniruddha], being recognized, oh King, then traveled by the higher spheres [the mystical way] to Dvārakā, the city under the protection of Kṛṣṇa. (21) Using her yogic power, she took Pradyumna's son who was sleeping on a fine bed, to Śoṇitapura and showed her girlfriend her Beloved. (22) Seeing Him, that most beautiful man, her face lit up. Together with the son of Pradyumna she then enjoyed in her private quarters that men were not allowed to see. (23-24) She worshiped Him in faithful service with priceless garments, garlands, fragrances, lamps, sitting places and such, with beverages, liquid and solid food and with words. Thus continuously keeping Him hidden in the maiden quarters He, who because of Ūṣā's greatly increasing affection was diverted in His senses, lost count of the days. (25-26) Thus enjoyed by the Yadu hero she, in breaking her

vow [of chastity], could not conceal the symptoms of her extreme happiness. They were noticed by her governesses who reported [to Bāṇa, her father]: 'Oh King, we have noticed that your daughter is of a conduct not respectable for an unmarried girl, she besmirches the family. (27) She was well guarded by us within the palace and never left, oh master. We have no idea how she, hidden from the looks of men, could have been dishonored.'

(28) **W**hen Bāṇa heard that his daughter had been defiled, he most disturbed quickly headed for the maiden quarters. Arriving there he saw the most superior Yadu. (29-30) He stood perplexed to behold that son of Cupid sitting in front of her. That exclusive beauty of all the worlds, dark-skinned in yellow clothes, with His lotus eyes, mighty arms, earrings and locks, sat there with a face lit up by His glowing ornaments and smiling glances. He was playing dice with His all-auspicious sweetheart, the red *kuṅkuma* of whose breasts was found all over the, by her manufactured, springtime jasmine garland that hung between His arms. (31) Seeing him entering surrounded by many armed guards, the Sweet Lord raised His club made of *murū* [a type of iron] and stood firm ready to strike, like death personified holding the rod of punishment. (32) Closing in from all sides to apprehend Him, He attacked them like a dominant boar cornered by a pack of dogs, so that they all with their heads, arms and legs crushed, being hurt ran away to escape from the palace. (33) But even as He was striking down the guards, the son of Bali himself furiously captured Him with the [mystical] snake ropes [of Varuṇa, see also 8.21: 28]. Ūṣā, utterly defeated and discouraged, was overwhelmed by sorrow upon seeing the arrest and cried bitter tears.'

*: Here Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura quotes the following verses from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (V.32), which explain Ūṣā's dream: 'Oh brāhmaṇa, when Ūṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa, happened to see Pārvatī playing with her husband, Lord Śambhu, Ūṣā intensely desired to experience the same feelings. At that time Goddess Gaurī [Pārvatī], who knows everyone's heart, told the sensitive young girl: 'Don't be so disturbed! You will have a chance to enjoy with your own husband.' Hearing this, Ūṣā thought to herself: 'But when? And who will my husband be?' In response, Pārvatī addressed her once more: 'The man who approaches you in your dream on the twelfth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month Vaiśākha will become your husband, oh princess.'

Chapter 63

The Fever in Conflict and Bāṇa Defeated

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Not seeing Aniruddha any longer, oh son of Bharata, His relatives passed the four months of the rainy season in sadness. (2) Hearing from Nārada the news of what He had done and that He had been captured, the Vṛṣṇis, who had Kṛṣṇa as their worshipable deity, went to Śoṇitapura. (3-4) The best of the Sātvatas, knowing Pradyumna, Yuyudhāna [Sātyaki], Gada, Sāmba and Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others, being led by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa assembled with twelve *akṣauhiṇīs* and besieged on all sides Bāṇa's city completely. (5) Seeing the city gardens, the city walls and watchtowers ravaged he, fuming with anger, came out to meet them with an army equally big. (6) Bhagavān Śiva appeared together with his son [Kārtikeya, his general] from the city on the back of Nandi, his bull, in order to fight, accompanied by the Pramathas [his different mystic attendants], at the side of Bāṇa against Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. (7) Oh King, a most tumultuous, astonishing and hair-raising fight took place of Kṛṣṇa against Śaṅkara and Pradyumna against Kārtikeya. (8) Balarāma fought against Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, Sāmba fought against Bāṇa's son and Sātyaki fought against Bāṇa himself. (9) To be a witness, the leaders of the godly souls headed by Lord Brahmā came in their celestial vehicles, as also the sages, the perfected souls and the venerable personalities, the singers and dancing girls of heaven, and the spirits. (10-11) Discharging sharp-pointed arrows from His bow, the Śārṅga, Śauri [Kṛṣṇa] drove away the Bhūtas [spirits of the dead], the Pramathas [mystic spirits], the Guhyakas [the wealth keepers of Kuvera], the Dākinīs [female imps of Kālī] the Yātudhānas [practitioners of black magic], the Vetālas [vampires], the Vināyakas [demons of education, distracters, humiliators], the Pretas [ghosts, hobgoblins], the Mātās [demoniac mothers], the Piśācas [child demons], the Kuṣmāṇḍas [meditation disturbers, diseasing demons] and the Brahma-rākṣasas [fallen brahmins as in 9.9: 25] who all followed Śaṅkara. (12) The holder of the trident [Piṇākī or Śiva] using different types of weapons against the Wielder of the Śārṅga, saw them all neutralized with befitting counter weapons. They could not daunt the Carrier of the Śārṅga. (13) He used a *brahmāstra* against a *brahmāstra*, a mountain weapon against a wind weapon, a rain weapon against a fire weapon and His *nārāyaṇāstra* [His personal weapon] against Śiva's [personal] *pāśupatāstra* [the 'beast strap']

weapon]. (14) After Śauri next had bewildered Lord Śiva by making him yawn with a yawning weapon, He attacked Bāṇa's army with His sword, club and arrows. (15) Kārtikeya, distressed by Pradyumna's arrows raining down from all sides, with blood streaming from his limbs fled from the battlefield on his peacock carrier. (16) Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa tormented by the club [of Balarāma] fell, and their armies, whose leaders were killed, fled in all directions.

(17) **B**āṇa seeing his troops torn apart, left aside Sātyaki whom he was fighting, crossed with his chariot the battlefield and most furiously attacked Kṛṣṇa. (18) Bāṇa, in a frenzy because of the fighting, fixed two arrows on each of his bows and simultaneously pulled back all five hundred of them. (19) These bows were by Bhagavān all split at the same time, and after He had hit the chariot, the horses and the charioteer, He blew His conch shell. (20) [then] Hoping to save her son's life, his [Bāṇa's] mother, named Koṭarā, positioned herself naked, with her hair loosened, in front of Kṛṣṇa. (21) When Lord Gadāgraja thereupon turned His face away not to look at the naked woman, Bāṇa, without his chariot and with his bow broken, took the opportunity to escape into the city. (22) But after Śiva's followers had been driven away, Jvara, the [personification of Śiva's hot] fever with three heads and three feet, attacked the descendant of Dāśarha like he wanted to set fire to the ten directions [*]. (23) Seeing him, Lord Nārāyaṇa thereupon released His own fever [of extreme cold], so that the two Jvaras of Māheśvara and Viṣṇu came to fight each other. (24) The one of Māheśvara, tormented by the force of Viṣṇu's fever, cried out in pain. Not finding a safe refuge anywhere Māheśvara's Jvara, thirsting for protection, thereupon with folded hands devout began to praise Hṛṣīkeśa. (25) The Jvara said: 'I bow down to You, the Supreme Lord Unlimited in His Potencies, the Soul of All Pure Consciousness, the Cause of the totality of the creation, dissolution and maintenance of the universe, down to You, the Absolute Truth of Perfect Peace to whom the Vedas indirectly refer. (26) I approach You for being the negation of this *māyā*, this material bewilderment of time, fate, karma, the individual propensities, the subtle elements, the field [that is the body], the life force [*prāṇa*], the self, the transformations [the eleven senses] and the aggregate of all of this [in the form of the subtle body called the *linga*]. That illusory reality constitutes a never ending flow [like that] of seeds and sprouts. (27) With various intentions you engage in divine missions [*līlās*] in order to maintain the pious souls, the sages, and the codes of conduct in the world and put an end to those who abandoned the path and turned to violence. This incarnation of Yours is there to remove the burden from this earth [see also B.G. 9: 29 and

4: 8]. (28) I am tormented by this most terrible fever of Your power, which is unbearably cold but, nevertheless, is burning, for indeed, as long as the embodied souls are caught in their desires and do not serve the soles of Your feet, they must suffer continually.'

(29) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Oh three-headed one, I am satisfied with you, may your fear, raised by My fever, leave you. For anyone who remembers our conversation there will be no reason to be afraid of you.'

(30) **T**hus being addressed, the fever weapon of Māheśvara bowed down to Acyuta and went away, but Bāṇa, riding his chariot, came forward with the intent to fight Janārdana. (31) Thereupon, oh King, the demon with his thousand arms carrying numerous weapons, fuming with anger, released arrows at Him who Carries the Cakra. (32) As he again and again was hurling weapons, the Supreme Lord with the razor-sharp edge of His disc cut off his arms like they were the branches of a tree. (33) While Bāṇa's arms were being severed, the great Lord Bhava [- of existence, Śiva] approached out of compassion for his devotee and spoke to the Wielder of the Disc. (34) Śrī Rudra said: 'You alone are the Absolute Truth, the Light of the Supreme hidden in the language of the Absolute [of the Veda]. They whose hearts are spotless can see You being as pure as the blue sky. (35-36) The atmosphere is Your navel, the fire Your face, the water Your semen, heaven Your head, and the directions are Your sense of hearing. The earth is Your foot, the moon Your mind and the sun Your sight. I am Your awareness of Self, the ocean is Your abdomen and Indra is Your arm. Your good self, with the plants as the hair on Your body, the clouds as the hair on Your head, with Viriñca as Your intelligence, with the Prajāpati as Your genitals and the religion as Your heart, are the Puruṣa from whom all the worlds originated. (37) You, oh unbounded glory, are present with this descent in order to defend the dharma in favor of the Complete of the Living Being [the universe], and we [demigods], enlightened and authorized by You, jointly manifest and develop the seven worlds [see *dvīpa*]. (38) You are the Original Supreme Person without a second, the Transcendental, Self-manifesting Cause without a prior cause, the Lord. Yet You, for the sake of the full manifestation of Your qualities, come back as an apparition of Your illusory potency [in different lifeforms, gods and *avatāras*]. (39) Just as the sun in its own shade [behind the clouds], hidden from sight, illumines the visible forms, You, Almighty One, similarly self-luminous, are covered by the basic qualities of nature [by false ego] and illumine the reality of the modes, as also the beings who have these qualities. (40) Those who are fully

entangled in their respect for their children, wife, a home and so on, are in their intelligence bewildered by *māyā*, and [like drowning persons first] rise to the surface [of the ocean of misery] and [then] sink [to the bottom. See B.G. 9: 21]. (41) Pitiful is the person who by the grace of God has attained this human world, but not in control of his senses fails to honor Your feet, for he is someone fooling himself. (42) The mortal being who, opposing [politically e.g.] because of the sense objects [material interests], rejects You, his True Self and dear most Guide, is eating the poison and avoiding the nectar. (43) I, Brahmā, as also the demigods and the sages, with a pure consciousness have surrendered themselves wholeheartedly to You, the Master, the dearest Self. (44) Let us worship You, the Godhead, the cause of the rise, the maintenance and the demise of the Living Being that is the Universe [*jagat*], You who, perfectly in peace equipoised, as the unique, unequalled Friend, True Self and worshipable Lord of all the worlds and all the souls, constitute the shelter to find liberation from one's material existence. (45) This person [Bāṇa] is my favorite, my dearest follower whom I awarded with fearlessness, oh Lord. Please, grant him therefore Your grace, the way You were also of mercy for the master of the Daityas [Prahāda].'

(46) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'We shall do what you told us you would like, oh great Lord, I fully agree with your conclusion. (47) This [grand]son of Virocana [**] will be spared by Me, for I granted Prahāda the benediction that his descendants would not be killed by Me [see 7.10: 21]. (48) His arms were severed by Me in order to subdue his pride, and I destroyed his huge military force because it had become a burden to the earth. (49) The Asura who left with four of his arms, will become your principal associate, he will not age and be immortal, he has nothing to fear on any account.'

(50) **T**he Asura thus attaining freedom from fear, bowed his head down to Kṛṣṇa, brought the son of Pradyumna and His wife, and placed them on a chariot. (51) Putting Him and His wife, ornamented and with fine clothes, in front, He [Kṛṣṇa] with the permission of Śiva left, being surrounded by an *akṣauhiṇī* [a military division]. (52) When He entered His capital, which was fully decorated with flags, arches of victory and with its streets and crossroads sprinkled, He was respectfully welcomed by the people of the city, His relatives and the twice-born souls, with the sounds of conch shells, side drums and kettledrums. (53) For the person who rises at dawn and remembers this victory of Kṛṣṇa in the battle with Śaṅkara, there will be no defeat.'

*: Here Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura quotes the following description of the Śiva-jvara: "The terrible Śiva-jvara had three legs, three heads, six arms and nine eyes. Showering ashes, he resembled Yamarāja at the time of universal annihilation."

** : Bāṇa was in fact a grandson of Virocana. First there was Prahlāda, then Virocana, then Bali, then Bāṇa.

Chapter 64

On Stealing from a Brahmin: King Nṛga a Chameleon

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'One day [in their youth], oh King, the Yadu boys Sāmba, Pradyumna, Cāru, Bhānu, Gada and others went to a small forest to play. (2) Playing there for a long time they, being thirsty, looked for water and discovered an amazing creature in a dry well. (3) They saw there a chameleon that was as big as a mountain, and with a mind filled with wonder they, moved by compassion, tried to lift it up. (4) With straps of leather and twisted ropes attached to it, the boys failed to lift the creature out of the well and so they reported it excitedly to Kṛṣṇa. (5) The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, the Maintainer of the Universe, taking a look saw it and picked it easily up with His left hand. (6) Being touched by the hand of Uttamaśloka, the chameleon form was immediately given up for the one of a beautiful heavenly being with a complexion of molten gold, wonderful ornaments, clothes and garlands. (7) Even though He was very well aware of what had led to this situation, Mukunda asked, so that the common man (also) could know: 'Who are you, oh fortunate soul? Considering your excellent appearance, I dare say you are an exalted demigod! (8) What action has brought you, oh good soul, in this condition you certainly did not deserve? Please tell Us, eager to know, all about yourself - that is to say, if you deem this the proper place to speak about it.'

(9) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The king thus being questioned by Kṛṣṇa, whose forms are unlimited, with his helmet as brilliant as the sun bowed down to Mādhava and addressed Him. (10) Nṛga said: 'I, the ruler of man called Nṛga [see 9.1: 11-12, 9.2: 17], am a [grand]son of Ikṣvāku, oh Master. Maybe You have heard that I am counted among the men of charity. (11) What would be unknown to You, oh Master, oh Witness of the Mind of all Beings whose vision is not impeded by time? Nevertheless I shall speak as You wish. (12) I have donated as many cows as there are grains of sand on earth, as there are stars in the sky, or as there are raindrops in a shower of rain. (13) I gave away dairy cows who were honestly acquired, who were young, sweet, of beauty, brown and fair and endowed with many other qualities, together with their calves, with gold on their horns, silver on their

hooves and adorned with fine fabrics and garlands. (14-15) I, of pious works and performing worship with fire sacrifices, was of charity and gave ornaments to truth-loving, young and talented brahmins with families in need, who were known for their austerity and vast knowledge of the Vedas, and who had good qualities and a good character. I donated cows, land, gold, houses, horses and elephants, marriageable girls with maidservants, sesame seeds, silver, bedding and clothing, jewels, furniture and chariots. (16) Unknowingly I gave a cow owned by a certain first-class *dvija* [a brahmin not accepting gifts anymore, see 7.11] away to another twice-born soul. Having wandered off, the cow had mingled with my herd. (17) As the cow was led away, she was spotted by her master who said: 'She is mine!' But he who had accepted the gift said thereupon: 'Nṛga gave this one to me!'

(18) **T**he two learned souls, arguing in defense of their own interest, said to me: 'You sir, as a giver have been a thief!' Hearing this, I was dumbstruck.

(19-20) **T**hus being embarrassed in respect of my religious duty, I begged the two men of learning: 'Please give me this one cow, and I will give you a hundred thousand of the best quality in return! Please, you both, have mercy with your servant. I did not know what I was doing. Save me from the danger of falling down into a dirty hell!'

(21) **I** do not want that at all, oh King!' the owner said and went away.

I am not interested in all those other cows', the other one said and left.

(22) **A**fter this had happened I was by the messengers of Yamarāja taken to his abode and there, oh God of Gods, oh Master of the Universe, questioned by the Lord of Death and Retribution [as follows, see also 5.26: 6, 6.1: 31 and 6.3]. (23) 'Do you first want to face the consequences of your bad deeds, oh King, or those of your good deeds? As for your unlimited deeds of charity, I see a splendid world.'

(24) **I** thus said: 'Let me first experience my bad deeds, oh Godhead.' He then said: 'Then fall!' and as I was falling, oh Master, I saw myself as a chameleon! (25) Being Your servant generous towards the brahmins and hankering for Your presence, oh Keśava, not even today the memory of You has left me [see also 5.8: 28]. (26)

Oh Almighty One, how can You now in person be visible to me, You, the Supreme Soul, upon whom the masters of yoga within their spotless hearts meditate through the eye of the scriptures? How, oh Adhokśaja, can I, whose intelligence was blinded by severe troubles, now be able to perceive You? Is that not reserved for those whose material life in this world has ended? (27-28) Oh God of Gods, Master of the Universe, Lord of the Cows and Supreme Personality! Oh Path Laid Out for Man, Master of the Senses, Grace of the Verses, oh You Infallible and Undiminishing! Please permit me to leave for the world of the gods, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Master; may, wherever I reside, my mind take to the shelter of Your feet! (29) My obeisances unto You, the Source of All Beings, the Absolute of the Truth and the Possessor of Unlimited Potencies. I offer You, Kṛṣṇa [*], the son of Vasudeva, the Lord of all forms of yoga, my respects.'

(30) Thus having spoken and having circumambulated Him, he, after touching Kṛṣṇa's feet with his crown, received permission to leave and boarded, for all humans to see, a most excellent celestial chariot. (31) Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, the God and Soul of Dharma devoted to the brahmins, addressed His personal associates and was as follows of instruction for the royalty: (32) 'If even for someone, who is of a greater potency than fire, the smallest amount of property of a brahmin that he consumes [steals or denies], is difficult to enjoy, what then to say of kings who think they are the Lord Himself? (33) The *hālāhala* poison [which was churned with Mandāra] I do not consider real poison because there was a remedy for it [namely Śiva, see 8.7]. That what belongs to a brahmin though, I call real poison [when it is misappropriated], for there is no antidote for that in the world. (34) Poison destroys the one who ingests it, and fire is extinguished with water, but the fire that burns with the kindling wood of the belongings of a brahmin, burns one's community down to the ground. (35) When one enjoys a brahmin's property without his permission, that will destroy three of one's generations [in a family line see **], but when one enjoys it with force by means of an external power [as by governmental actions or by corporate interests], ten previous and ten subsequent generations will be affected [with a contamination of one's honor, see also 9.8]. (36) Members of the royal class, do, blinded by royal opulence [see also B.G. 1: 44], not foresee their downfall into hell, when they childishly covet the legitimate property of a brahmin. (37-38) Those kings and other members of the royal family who, failing in their control, usurped the share of a brahmin, will for as many years be cooked in the hell called Kumbhīpāka [5.26: 13], as there were particles of dust touched by the teardrops of generous brahmins who, for the sake of their beloved

ones, had to cry over the means of support that were stolen from them. (39) Whether it concerned a gift of oneself or of someone else, he who deprives a brahmin of his livelihood will for sixty thousand years be born as a worm in feces. (40) May I never acquire the wealth belonging to a brahmin. They who desire such a thing are short-lived and will be defeated. They will lose their kingdom and turn into horrifying snakes. (41) Dear followers, do not be inimical towards a man of learning, not even when he has committed a sin. Whether he strikes you physically time and again or curses you, you should always honor him. (42) The way I always take care to bow down to persons of learning, all of you should be of the same respect. He who acts otherwise, qualifies for being punished by Me. (43) The property taken away from a brahmin leads to the downfall of the taker, even done unknowingly. Just like we saw it happen to the person of Nṛga with the brahmin's cow.'

(44) After thus having exhorted the residents of Dvāarakā, the Supreme Lord Mukunda, the Purifier of All Worlds, entered His palace.'

*: In the Mahābhārata (Udyoga-parva 71.4) is stated about the name of Kṛṣṇa: "The word *kṛṣ* is the attractive feature of the Lord's existence, and *ṇa* means 'spiritual pleasure.' When the verb *kṛṣ* is added to *ṇa*, it becomes *Kṛṣṇa*, which indicates the Absolute Truth."

** : According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, *tri-pūruṣa*, the Sanskrit term used here, refers to oneself, one's sons and one's grandsons.

Chapter 65

Lord Balarāma in Vṛṇḍāvana and the Stream Divided

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'O best of the Kurus, [one day] the Supreme Lord Balarāma mounted His chariot eager to see His friends, and traveled to Nanda's cowherd village. (2) Rāma was embraced by the *gopas* and *gopīs*, who indeed for a long time had missed Him. After offering His respects to His parents He was joyfully greeted with prayers: (3) 'O descendant of Daśārha, Lord of the Universe, may You and Your younger brother [Kṛṣṇa] always protect us.' Having said this they pulled Him close on their laps and embraced Him, wetting Him with the water from their eyes. (4-6) In accordance with the scriptures He headed for the elder *gopas*, following which He was welcomed by the younger ones. Next He approached the cowherds whom He, according to each his age, friendship and family relationship, greeted with smiles and taking their hands into His. After having offered Him a comfortable seat, so that He could rest a while and such, they, who had dedicated their all and everything to the service of their lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, gathered around Him and asked Him, with voices faltering because of their love, questions relating to the welfare of their loved ones [in Dvārakā]. (7) 'Oh Balarāma are all our relatives faring well? Are all Your wives and children still remembering us, oh Rāma? (8) To our great fortune sinful Kamsa was killed and our relatives were freed! Luckily, they took shelter in a fortress [Dvārakā] and managed to kill and conquer our enemies!' (9) Honored to see Balarāma in their midst, the *gopīs* asked with a smile: 'Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily? (10) Is He still thinking of His people, His [foster] father and His mother? Will He ever come to see His mother personally and does He with the mighty arms remember our enduring service? (11-12) For His sake, oh Lord, we have detached ourselves from those who are so difficult to give up: our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, oh descendant of Daśārha. Suddenly rejecting us and leaving us, He broke with the friendship, but which woman would not trust His words [that He would return]? (13) How can those smart city women, who are attracted by His eloquence, nice smiles and the lust He raises in their hearts, put faith in the words of Him who, so ungrateful, has His heart easily elsewhere and breaks off contact? (14) But why would we dilate about Him any longer, oh

gopīs? Let us talk about something else. If He wants to pass His time without us, we will do the same [and try to live without His presence. See also 10.47: 47].'

(15) **T**hus speaking together the women remembered Śauri's laughing, conversations, attractive glances, gait and loving embrace, and that made them cry. (16) Saṅkarṣaṇa, the Supreme Lord, being an expert in different kinds of conciliation, consoled them with Kṛṣṇa's confidential messages which touched their hearts. (17) Rāma resided there during the two months Madhu and Mādhava [the first two of the vernal equinox], and also at night brought [amorous] delight to the *gopīs* [see also 10.15: 8]. (18) In a grove near the Yamunā [known as Śrīrāma-ghaṭṭa] where the wind carried the fragrance of kumuda [night-blooming] lotuses and the full moon bathed the place in its light, He enjoyed it to be served in the company of the many women. (19) From the hollow of a tree the divine [intoxicating liquor] vāruṇī flowed that was brought by Varuṇa and, with its aroma, made the entire forest even more fragrant. (20) Balarāma, smelling the fragrance of that honey flow carried by the wind, sought the place where it could be found and drank from it together with the women. (21) As the singers of heaven sang His glory He, beautified by the circle of young women, enjoyed just like Indra's bull elephant with a herd of females. (22) Kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers and the sages praised Balarāma for His heroic deeds. (23) While His pastimes were sung by the women Halāyudha [Balarāma as 'armed with the plow'], inebriated, with his eyes heavy from the intoxication, wandered through the forest.

(24-25) **H**e with His flowers, with a single earring, mad with joy, carrying His Vaijayantī garland and with His smiling lotuslike face covered by beads of perspiration like it were snowflakes, then called for the Yamunā with the purpose to play in the water. But when the river thereupon ignored His drunken words and did not come, she was by Him angrily dragged with the tip of His plow: (26) 'Being called by Me, oh sinful one, you did not come. Because you, in disregard of Me, are moving about as you like, I shall bring you here with the tip of My plow in a hundred little streams!'

(27) The [goddess of the] Yamunā thus being chided, fell afraid at His feet, oh King, and spoke trembling the following words to the Yadu descendant [*]: (28) 'Rāma, Balarāma, oh mighty armed soul, what do I know about Your prowess, oh Master of the Universe who with a single portion of Yourself [of Śeṣa] upholds the earth? (29) Please, Supreme Lord, let me go, I surrender myself to You. I was

not aware of Your status as the Supreme Personality, oh Soul of the Universe taking care of the devotees!'

(30) **Balarāma**, the Supreme Lord, being entreated by the Yamunā, then released her and together with the women entered the water, like He was the king of the elephants with his wives. (31) After having played to His heart's content He came out of the water, whereupon Kānti ['the female beauty, the brightness of the moon', a name of Lakṣmī] presented Him a set of blue garments, most valuable ornaments and a splendid necklace. (32) He put on the blue clothes and hung the golden necklace around His neck. Excellently being ornamented and anointed, He looked as resplendent as the elephant of the great Lord Indra. (33) Oh King, even today the currents of the Yamunā, the way they were drawn by the unlimitedly powerful Balarāma, are considered a proof of His prowess. (34) This is how for Balarāma, with His mind enchanted by the charm and love of the women of the cow community, the nights He enjoyed in Vraja passed like a single one.'

*: The *paramparā* comments: 'According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the goddess who appeared before Lord Balarāma is an expansion of Śrīmatī Kālindī, one of Lord Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvārakā. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī calls her a "shadow" of Kālindī, and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī confirms that she is an expansion of Kālindī, not Kālindī herself. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also gives evidence from Śrī Hari-vaṁśa - in the statement *pratyuvācārṇava-vadhūm* - that Goddess Yamunā is the wife of the ocean. The Hari-vaṁśa therefore also refers to her as Sāgarāṅganā.'

Chapter 66

The False Vāsudeva Pauṇḍraka and His Son Consumed by Their Own Fire

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After Balarāma had left for Nanda's cowherd village, oh King, the ruler of Karūṣa [called Pauṇḍraka] who foolishly thought 'I am Vāsudeva', sent a messenger to Kṛṣṇa. (2) People childishly had suggested: 'You are Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord who has descended as the Master of the Universe!' and so he thought of himself as the Infallible One. (3) Like a boy of little intelligence who by kids was appointed king he, being silly, sent a messenger to Kṛṣṇa who resided in Dvārakā, to Him whose ways are inscrutable. (4) The envoy arriving in Dvārakā, relayed, in the royal assembly, to Kṛṣṇa Almighty with the Lotus Petal Eyes the message of his king: (5) 'I am the one and only Vāsudeva and no one else. I have descended to this world with the purpose of showing mercy to the living beings. You however, have to give up Your false claim on that title! (6) Oh Sātvata, give up my symbols which You carry out of ignorance. You better come to me for shelter! If You do not, then give me battle instead.'

(7) Śrī Śuka said: 'Hearing that boasting of the stupid Pauṇḍraka, the members of the assembly headed by Ugrasena laughed out loud. (8) After the screaming was over, the Supreme Lord said to the messenger: [Tell him:] 'I will hurl the symbols you so boast about, oh fool, for certain at you! (9) You will be the shelter of dogs, you ignoramus, when you lie dead with that face of yours covered by flocking herons, vultures and *vaṭas*.'

(10) Thus being addressed, the messenger conveyed that insulting reply in full detail to his master. Kṛṣṇa with His chariot rode to the vicinity of Kāśī [Vārāṇasī]. (11) As soon as the mighty warrior Pauṇḍraka noticed His preparations for battle, he appeared from the city joined by two *akṣauhiṇīs*. (12-14) He was followed by his friend the king of Kāśī who covered his back with three *akṣauhiṇīs*. Oh King, Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka complete with a conch, a disc, a sword and a club, a Śārṅga bow, a Śrīvatsa mark and other symbols, including a Kaustubha gem and the decoration of a garland of forest flowers. Wearing a pair of fine silken yellow garments and carrying Garuḍa in his banner, he wore a valuable crown and had ornamented himself with gleaming, shark-shaped earrings. (15) The sight of him

dressed up as His spitting image, like he was an actor on a stage, made the Lord laugh heartily. (16) The enemies attacked the Lord with tridents, clubs and bludgeons, pikes, blades, barbed missiles, lances, swords, axes and arrows. (17) Kṛṣṇa however, with His club, sword, disc and arrows, fiercely tormented the military force of elephants, chariots, horses and infantry of Pauṇḍraka and the king of Kāśī, like He was the fire at the end of the age tormenting the different kinds of living beings. (18) The battlefield, strewn with the chariots, horses, elephants, bipeds, mules and camels cut to pieces by His disc, shone like the horrible playground of the Lord of the Ghosts [Bhūtapati, or Śiva], who pleases the wise therewith. (19) Śāuri then said to Pauṇḍraka: 'Those weapons you mentioned by mouth of your messenger, I will now release at you. (20) I will force you to renounce My name and everything that you falsely assumed, oh fool! And today I will turn to you for shelter [as you wanted], when I do not wish to fight you.'

(21) Thus deriding him, He drove Pauṇḍraka out of his chariot with His sharp arrows and with His disc lopped off his head, just like Indra with his thunderbolt splits a mountain top. (22) So too He with His arrows severed the head of the king of Kāśī from his body, sending it flying into Kāśī-puri like the wind transporting the flower cup of a lotus. (23) Thus having killed both the envious Pauṇḍraka and his friend, the Lord entered Dvārakā where He was honored by the Siddhas [the perfected souls] who recited His nectarean stories. (24) By assuming the personal form of the Supreme Lord and [thus] constantly meditating on Him, oh King, he [Pauṇḍraka] had destroyed all his material ties and became fully immersed in Him [Kṛṣṇa conscious, also see *sārūpya*]. (25) Seeing the head with the earrings that had landed near the palace gate, the people wondered: 'Whose head would this be?' (26) Recognizing it as the head of the king, the ruler of Kāśī, his queens, his sons, his other relatives and the citizens loudly cried: 'Alas master, oh master, oh King, we are killed!' (27-28) His son named Sudakṣiṇa executed the funeral rites for his father, reflected and decided: 'In order to avenge my father I will kill my father's murderer'. And thus 'the excellence of charity', with great attention together with the priests prayed to Maheśvara [Lord Śiva]. (29) At [the holy place of] Avimukta the great lord, being satisfied, offered him the choice of a benediction. He asked the mighty demigod for the benediction of a means to slay the One who had killed his father. (30-31) [Śiva said:] 'Be together with the brahmins and the leading priest of service to the *dakṣiṇa* [southern] fire following an *abhicāra* ['hurting'] ritual. It is a ritual used against an enemy of the brahmins. That ritual fire together with the Pramathas [Śiva's

attendants, see also 10.63: 6] will fulfill your desire.' Thus being instructed he observed the vows in order to harm Kṛṣṇa. (32-33) Thereupon from the fire of the altar pit an impressive, most horrendous figure rose with a tuft of hair, beard and mustache red like molten copper, hot radiating cinders of eyes, terrible teeth and a harsh face with arched and furrowed eyebrows. With his tongue licking the corners of his mouth, he was naked waving with a blazing trident [see also 4.5: 3 and 6.9: 12]. (34) With legs as big as palm trees shaking the earth he, accompanied by ghosts, ran to Dvārakā while setting fire to all the directions. (35) Seeing the [creature risen from the] *abhicāra* fire approaching, all the residents of Dvārakā were struck with fear, just like animals facing a forest fire. (36) Most afraid, they upset ran to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who at the royal court was playing a game of dice [and said to Him]: 'Save us, oh Lord of the Three Worlds, save us from the fire burning down the city!'

(37) **H**earing the despondency of the people and seeing how upset His own men were, Śaraṇya, the Protector, laughed loudly and said: 'Do not be afraid of this, I will protect you!'

(38) **T**he Almighty Lord, everyone's Witness within and without, understood that the creature came from Maheśvara and then, in order to put an end to him, sent off the *cakra* He always carries with Him. (39) This weapon of Kṛṣṇa, the Sudarśana *cakra*, which like a million suns was blazing with an effulgence like the fire at the end of the universe, tormented with its heat both the sky, the heavens, the earth in its ten directions and the fire [of the demon; see also 9.4: 46]. (40) Frustrated by the power of the weapon of Him with the Disc in His Hand, the [creature of] fire that was created turned around, oh King. In its violence it from all sides closed in on Vārāṇasī and burned to death Sudakṣiṇa and all his priests. The man [finally] was consumed by the *abhicāra* [fire] he had created himself. (41) The *cakra* of Viṣṇu in pursuit directly thereafter entered Vārāṇasī with its gateways and watchtowers, its many raised porches, assembly halls, market places, warehouses and the buildings housing the elephants, horses, chariots and grains. (42) Having burned all of Vārāṇasī to ashes, Viṣṇu's Sudarśana disc returned to the side of Kṛṣṇa, He whose actions are effortless. (43) Any mortal being who in full attention recounts or hears this heroic pastime of the Supreme Lord Praised in the Verses, will be released from all sins.'

Chapter 67

Balarāma Slays the Ape Dvividā

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'I wish to hear more about Balarāma, the Unlimited and Immeasurable Lord whose activities are so amazing. What else did He do?'

(2) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'There was a certain ape named Dvividā ['the two-faced one'], a friend of Naraka [or Bhaumāśura, see 10.59]. He was the mighty brother of Mainda and an advisor of Sugrīva [the monkey-chief, see also 9.10: 32, *]. (3) In order to avenge his friend [who was killed by Kṛṣṇa] this ape wreaked havoc by setting fire to the cities, villages, mines and cowherd communities of the kingdom. (4) Sometimes he tore loose rocks and devastated with them all regions, especially the province of Ānarta where the Lord resided who had killed his friend. (5) Then again he stood in the middle of the ocean and, with a force of ten thousand elephants, with his arms churned the ocean water, thus flooding the coastal regions. (6) At the *āśramas* of the exalted seers he wickedly broke down the trees and fouled the sacrificial fires with urine and stool. (7) In a mountain valley he, like a wasp hiding an insect, brutally threw men and women in caves that he sealed with large boulders. (8) Thus ravaging the lands and [even] defiling women of standing, he [one day] heard very sweet singing originating from the mountain named Raivataka and went hither. (9-10) There he saw Balarāma, the Lord of the Yadus, who, most attractive in all His limbs and wearing a lotus garland, was positioned in the midst of a bevy of women. Intoxicated from drinking *vāruṇī* [see also 10.65: 19] He rolled with His eyes and was singing, while His body shone as magnificently as an elephant in rut. (11) The mischievous tree-dweller climbed on a branch and presented himself by shaking the tree and crying out frantically. (12) Seeing his impudence Baladeva's consorts laughed out loud. The women, in for some fun, at first thought little of it. (13) The ape ridiculed them with odd gestures of his eyebrows and such, and showed them, while Rāma was watching, his bare behind straight in front of them. (14-15) Balarāma, the best of all launchers, angrily threw a rock at him, but the rascal ape made fun of Him dodging it, seized the jar of liquor and further aggravated Him. Wickedly laughing he broke the jar and pulled at the ladies' clothes. Full of false pride about his power, he thus with his insults offended the Strong One. (16) Faced with the

rudeness and the ravage this terror created all around, He full of anger took up His club and plow, determined to kill the enemy. (17) So also did the mighty Dvidida. He uprooted a śāla tree with one hand, ran toward Balarāma and struck Him on the head with it. (18) But as it descended on His head, Saṅkarṣaṇa, unperturbed like a mountain, with His great strength took hold of it and struck back with His Sunanda [His club]. (19-21) Hit on his skull by the club, the ape, with the resulting downpour of blood, looked as nice as a mountain red of oxide. Ignoring the blow, he next charged in his turn, again violently uprooting and stripping another tree. But Balarāma, now really getting angry, smashed it into a hundred pieces, just as He did with yet another one that by the ape was taken up in great fury. (22) Time and again being beaten by the Supreme Lord, he, thus raging with everywhere uprooting the forest, stripped it of all its trees. (23) Frustrated about it he thereupon released a hail of stones over Baladeva, but the Wielder of the Club pulverized them all with ease. (24) With both his arms as big as palm trees the champion of the apes, clenching his fists, attacked the Son of Rohiṇī and beat Him on the chest. (25) The Great Lord of the Yadus thereupon threw aside His club and plow, and hammered him with His hands furiously on the collarbone, so that Dvidida vomited blood and came down. (26) Because of the fall he made, the mountain with all its cliffs and trees shook, oh tiger among the Kurus, just like a boat by the wind tossed about in the water. (27) 'Jaya!', 'All glories!' and 'Excellent!', the enlightened souls, the perfected ones and the great sages residing in heaven exclaimed and poured down a shower of flowers.

(28) Thus having finished Dvidida who wreaked havoc in the world, the Supreme Lord, upon entering the city, was glorified by the people singing hymns.'

*: According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the Mainda and Dvidida mentioned in this verse are empowered expansions of the same Ramāyana deities, who as residents of Lord Rāmacandra's Vaikunṭha domain fell down because of an offense against Lakṣmāṇa. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī compares the fall out of bad association with Naraka, made by Dvidida and Mainda - whom he considers eternally liberated devotees - to the fall of Jaya and Vijaya.

Chapter 68

The Marriage of Sāmba and the Kuru City Dragged Trembling of His Anger

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh King, the daughter of Duryodhana named Lakṣmaṇā was by Sāmba ['with the mother'], the son of Jāmbavatī who was always victorious in battle, abducted from her *svayamvara*. (2) The Kauravas became angry and said: 'How ill-behaved this boy is, insulting us with his by force taking the maiden against her will. (3) Arrest him who is so undisciplined. What can the Vṛṣṇis do against it? By our grace they enjoy the land that we gave them! (4) When the Vṛṣṇis find out that their son has been captured, they will come here. Then we will break their pride so that they will find peace, just as the senses do when they are firmly controlled.'

(5) **H**aving said this, Karṇa, Śāla, Bhūri, Yajñaketu [or Bhūriśravā] and Duryodhana, with the permission of the eldest Kuru [Bhīṣma], set out to fight Sāmba. (6) The moment the great warrior Sāmba saw the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra rushing at him, he took up his splendid bow and single-handedly stood his ground like a lion. (7) Determined to capture him, they who were headed by Karṇa filled with anger said: 'You there stop, stand and fight!', upon which the bowmen, getting in front of him, showered him with arrows. (8) He, the descendant of the Yadus, oh best of the Kurus, unjustly attacked by the Kurus [all against one], as the son of the Inconceivable One [Kṛṣṇa], could not accept that any more than a lion would tolerate an attack from lower animals. (9-10) Twanging his wonderful bow, the hero all by himself, in one move, pierced the six warriors of Karṇa in their chariots with as many arrows. Four arrows he employed for each team of four horses and one arrow for each its charioteer and warrior. For that feat of arms he thereupon was honored by the great bowmen. (11) But then four of them pierced his horses, one pierced his charioteer and one split his bow. Thus they drove him out of his chariot. (12) Now that the Kurus in the fight had gotten the young boy out of his chariot, they tied him up with difficulty and, with their girl, victoriously returned to their city.

(13) **H**earing about this from Nārada Muni, oh King, [the Yadus] got very angry with the Kurus [see also 10.49: 27], and prepared for

war on the command of Ugrasena. (14-15) But Balarāma, He who purifies the Age of Quarrel [Kali-yuga], calmed down the Vṛṣṇi heroes who already had put on their armor, for he did not wish a quarrel between the Vṛṣṇis and the Kurus. On His chariot that shone like the sun, going to Hastināpura surrounded by the brahmins and the elders of the family, He looked like the moon surrounded by the seven planets [then known, see also 5.22]. (16) After reaching Hastināpura, Balarāma remained outside in a park and sent Uddhava ahead to find out what Dhṛtarāṣṭra had in mind. (17) According to the rules offering his respects to the son of Ambikā [Dhṛtarāṣṭra], to Bhīṣma and Droṇa, Bāhlika and Duryodhana, he informed them that Balarāma had arrived. (18) Extremely pleased to hear that He, Balarāma, their Dearest Friend, had arrived, they all, after duly having paid Uddhava their respects, went to meet Him with auspicious offerings in their hands. (19) Meeting Balarāma they, as was proper, presented cows and water to welcome Him. They who knew about His [true] power bowed down their heads to Him. (20) Asking each other whether their relatives were hale and hearty, Balarāma next straight from His heart spoke the words: (21) 'After with undivided attention having taken notice of what Ugrasena our master, the ruler of the rulers of the earth, asks of you, you without delay should act accordingly. [He tells you:] (22) As for now I have tolerated that you in defiance of the rules, with the many of you have defeated and tied up but a single man who did respect the codes [of war], for I wish to keep the unity among my relatives... .'

(23) **H**earing the words of Baladeva that befitting His power were filled with potency, courage and strength, the Kauravas answered angrily: (24) 'Look how wondrously inescapable Time moves on. That what is a shoe now wants to step on a head that is ornamented with a crown! (25) These Vṛṣṇis who are connected to us by marital ties, share with us our beds, seats and meals. We treated them as equals and gave them their thrones. (26) Because we looked the other way, they could enjoy the yak-tail fan, the conch shell, the white sunshade, the crown, the throne and the royal bed [compare 10.60: 10-20]. (27) The Yadus no longer should be allowed to carry the divine insignia of kings. Those symbols work as much to the disadvantage of the giver [who we are] as when one gives nectar to a snake! The Yadus now assuming the command, could prosper through our grace. They have lost all shame! (28) How would even Indra dare to appropriate what was not granted by Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna or the other Kurus? It is like a sheep claiming a lion's kill!'

(29) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'Oh best of the Bharatas, the low men intoxicated by their birth, relations and the opulence that gave them their status, thus used these harsh words against Balarāma and then entered their city. (30) Faced with the bad character of the Kurus and hearing their unbecoming words, the Infallible Lord became angry and then said, while He repeatedly laughed and not bothered to present Himself nicely: (31) 'Given the big mouth these impudent losers have to their various passions, they clearly do not aim at peace. They apparently need to be pacified by walloping, like animals that one has to beat with a stick! (32-33) Oh, looking for peace with these people, I have come here, after tactfully having calmed the Yadus who boiled with anger, as also Kṛṣṇa who was mad. And those very same dull-headed people addicted to quarreling, now full of conceit, in their wickedness of not respecting Him - Me thus -, have the audacity to use harsh words! (34) And Ugrasena would not be fit to command the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, while Śakra ['the powerful one' or Indra] and other rulers follow his orders?? (35) And He [Kṛṣṇa], sitting in Sudharmā [the heavenly council-hall], thanks to Whom the pārijāta tree is enjoyed that was brought down from the immortals [see 10.59: 38-39], not even He would deserve an elevated seat??? (36) He, the Ruler of the Complete Whole, whose two feet are worshiped by the Goddess of Fortune herself, He, truly the Lord of Śrī, would not even deserve the paraphernalia of a human king?!?! (37) He of whom all the exalted rulers of the world hold the dust of His lotus like feet on their helmet, the feet that constitute the place of worship of all holy places and of whom Brahmā, Śiva and also I, next to the goddess, as portions of a portion, also constantly carry the dust with care... where would His royal throne stand????! (38) The Vṛṣṇis may enjoy whatever small piece of land granted to them by the Kurus and... We would be the so-called shoes, while the Kurus would be the head?!!!!? (39) Ah, those proud madmen intoxicated by their would-be power of rule..., which man in command can tolerate their inconsistent, dismal drivels? (40) Today I will rid the earth of the Kauravas!', and speaking thus He enraged took His plow and rose up as if to set fire to the three worlds.

(41) **W**ith the tip of His plow He infuriated pulled up the city of Hastināpura and dragged her along with the intention to throw her into the Ganges. (42-43) When the Kauravas saw how the city, about to fall in the Ganges, being dragged tumbled about like a raft, they got very agitated and, in order to save their lives, together with their families went to the Master for shelter. Led by Lakṣmaṇā and Sāmba they folded their hands: (44) 'Rāma, oh Balarāma, oh Foundation of Everything [Akhilādhāra], we, the infatuated, who poor of

understanding do not know Your Majesty, beg You to forgive us our offense. (45) You alone are the unique, original cause of the generation, continuation and reuniting [of this universe]. Oh Lord, one says that the worlds are the playthings You play with. (46) You, oh Unlimited One, playfully carry on Your head the globe of the earth, oh Thousand-headed One [see also 5.25], and when the creation ends, You, the One Without a Second, withdraw the universe into Your body, remain alone and lie down [see also 6.16: 29-64]. (47) Your anger is meant for the instruction of everyone, oh Bhagavān, Sustainer of the Mode of Goodness. It is not there out of hatred or envy, but is there for the purpose of maintaining and protecting the living being. (48) We bow down to you, oh Soul of All Beings, oh Holder of [the symbols of] All Energies, oh Inexhaustible One and Maker of the Universe, our obeisances for You whom we sought for shelter.'

(49) Śrī Śuka said: 'Lord Bala being propitiated by the surrendered souls in distress because of their trembling place of refuge, thus being satisfied relieved them of their fear by the words: 'Do not be afraid.' (50-51) As a dowry for his daughter, Duryodhana as a loving father gave away twelve hundred sixty-year-old elephants and hundred and twenty thousand horses, sixty thousand golden chariots shining like the sun, and a thousand maidservants with jeweled lockets around their necks. (52) The Supreme Lord, the chief of the Sātvatas, accepted all of that and then departed together with His son and daughter-in-law, being bid farewell by His well-wishers. (53) After entering His city and having met the relatives who carried Him, the Wielder of the Plow, in their hearts, He in the midst of the assembly of the Yadu leaders related everything that had passed between Him and the Kurus. (54) And truly, even today this city shows the signs of Balarāma's prowess. It can be seen where it is being prominently elevated to the south, down by the Ganges.'

Chapter 69

Nārada Muni's Vision of Kṛṣṇa in His Household Affairs

(1-6) Śrī Śuka said: 'Hearing that Lord Kṛṣṇa had killed Naraka [see 10.59] and that He alone had married so many women, Nārada wanted to see that with his own eyes [and thought]: 'How wonderful it is that He with a single body is married to that many women, at the same time in sixteen thousand separate residences being alone with each of them.' Thus eager to take a look the sage of the gods came to Dvārakā, the place so flowery with its parks and pleasure gardens resounding with the noise of flocks of birds and swarms of bees. Blooming blue lotuses [indīvaras], day-blooming ones [ambhojas], white esculent ones [kahlāras], moonlight-blooming lotuses [kumudas] and water lilies [utpalas] filled the lakes where the sounds were heard of swans and cranes. There were nine hundred thousand palatial mansions embellished with crystal glass, silver and great emeralds, that were splendidly furnished with gold and jewels. The city was systematically planned with many avenues, roads, intersections and squares, assembly houses and charming temples for the gods. Its paths and courtyards, shopping streets and patios were all sprinkled with water, while the sun was warded off by banners that waved from the flagpoles. (7-8) In the city there was an opulent quarter honored by all the local authorities. Tvaṣṭā [the architect Viśvakarmā], had there for the Lord [who resided there], in full exhibited his talents by making the sixteen thousand residences for Śauri's wives as beautiful as he could. Nārada entered one of the great palaces. (9-12) The building was supported by coral pillars that were excellently decorated with vaidūrya ['cat-eye' gemstone]. The walls were covered with sapphires and the spotless floors shone everywhere. It was built with canopies that by Tvaṣṭā were constructed with hangings of pearls, and had seats and beds made of ivory that were decorated with the finest jewels. There were well-dressed, adorned maidservants with lockets around their necks, and finely clad men with turbans and armor, jewels and earrings. Many gem-studded lamps dispelled with their light the darkness, and on the carved eaves, my best, the peacocks danced, crying loudly taking the *aguru* smoke they saw curling upwards from the latticed windows for a cloud. (13) Inside, the man of learning saw the Lord of the Sātvatas together with

His wife who fanned Him with a yak-tail fan with a golden handle. She in her turn was every instant supported by a thousand maidservants equal to her in personal qualities, beauty, youth and fine dress. (14) The Supreme Lord, the best defender of all dharma, noticing him, immediately rose from Śrī's couch and offered him His own seat while bowing down with joined palms. (15) Even though He was the Supreme Guru of the Living Being, He washed his feet and took that water on His head. He, as the master of all saintly souls, justly carries the transcendental name of 'the Well-wisher of the Brahmins' [Brāhmanya deva], because one by dint of the holy shrine of His feet finds full purification [see also the stories of the Ganges flowing from His feet. 5.17 & 9.9]. (16) Having been of full worship for the *devaṛṣi* as was prescribed by the scriptures, He, the Greatest Sage, the Original Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara, conversed with him in weighed words that were as sweet as nectar and asked: 'Oh Master, oh Fortunate One, what may We do for you?'

(17) Śrī Nārada said: 'It is not that surprising that You show friendship for all people, oh Almighty Ruler of All the Worlds who subdues the envious. We very well know that You, who are universally praised, out of Your own will have descended for the highest good of the continuation and the protection of the Living Being [*]. (18) Having seen Your two feet, which for Your devotees are the path of liberation upon which Lord Brahmā and the other gods of unfathomable intelligence meditate in the heart and which for those, who are fallen in the well of a material existence, are the shelter for deliverance, I ask for Your blessing to remember You so that I during my travels may constantly think of You.'

(19) Nārada, my best, thereupon entered another residence of a wife of Kṛṣṇa, with the wish to know the mystical power of illusion [*yogamāyā*] of the Master of All Masters of Yoga. (20-22) And there he saw Him also. He was playing a game of dice with His beloved and Uddhava. He stood up for him, honored him with transcendental devotion and seated him etc., asking him - as if He did not know: 'When has your good self arrived? How can those [householders] who are not so fulfilled, like Us, do what should be done for those [*sannyāsīs*] who are fully satisfied [within]? Anyway, please tell Us, oh brahmin, how We can make a success of this birth.' But Nārada who was astonished, stood up, said nothing and went to another palace. (23) And there he saw Govinda cuddling His small children. Next in another palace, he saw Him preparing for a bath. (24) In one place he saw Him offering oblations, elsewhere he saw Him worshiping the five sacrificial fires [see *mahā-yajñas*] with the

obligatory rituals, then again He was feeding brahmins, and in yet another place He was eating the remnants [of sacrifices]. (25) Somewhere He was of sunset-worship while controlling His speech with reciting the mantra [for it, see *Gāyatrī* and *japa*], and elsewhere He moved about with His sword and shield in areas of practice. (26) Here the Elder Brother of Gada rode horses, elephants and chariots, and there He was lying on His sofa being praised by bards. (27) This place He was consulting with advisers, Uddhava and others, and that place He was engaged sporting in the water surrounded by dancing girls and other women. (28) Somewhere He donated excellent, well ornamented cows to brahmins, and elsewhere He listened to the auspicious classical stories [*Purāṇas*] and epic histories [*Itihāsas*]. (29) Laughing and joking with His beloved in this mansion, He elsewhere practiced the religion [dharma], the economy [*artha*] and the [regulation of] physical lusts [*kāma*, see also *puruṣārthas*]. (30) Sitting alone in one place to meditate on the Original Person Transcendental to Material Nature, He in another place rendered menial service to the elders, serving them attentively with things they liked. (31) Planning for war with certain people here, and there again making peace, Keśava together with Balarāma elsewhere minded the welfare of the pious souls. (32) [He saw Him] arranging opulent weddings for daughters and sons in accordance with the *vidhi*, at the right time, with wives and husbands compatible to them. (33) [He saw] the people astonished to witness the grand celebrations in which the Master of the Masters of Yoga sent away from home His children and welcomed in-laws in the family. (34) With elaborate sacrifices in worship of all the gods being busy in one place, He was in another place of dharma in civil service arranging for wells, parks and monasteries and such. (35) For a hunting expedition He somewhere was mounting a horse from Sindhī, while He elsewhere, surrounded by the most valorous Yadus, was killing the animals to be offered in sacrifice [see **]. (36) In another place the Yoga master was moving about in disguise in the city and in other homes, eager to find out what the mentalities of the different people were. (37) Nārada almost laughed about that what of His *yogamāyā*, of assuming the human role, had unfolded before his eyes, and said to Hṛṣīkeśa: (38) From serving Your feet one can know Your mystical potencies, potencies which even for the great mystics are hard to conceive, oh Lord of Yoga, oh Supreme Soul. (39) Permit me to follow You in humility, oh Godhead, I will wander about the [fourteen] worlds, which are flooded with Your glory, and loudly sing about Your pastimes, which purify all the worlds.'

(40) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Oh brahmin, I am both the spokesman of the dharma and its performer. I am also the sanctioner of dharma, as I teach it to the world. Do not be bewildered acknowledging it, my son [when I set an example].'

(41) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'He [Nārada] thus saw [as no one else could see ***] Him present in one and the same form in all the palaces where He performed the spiritual principles of dharma which purify the householders. (42) After repeatedly having witnessed Kṛṣṇa's unlimited prowess in the elaborate manifestation of His *yogamāyā*, the seer filled with wonder stood amazed. (43) With [his witnessing of] the *artha*, *kāma* and dharma [civil duties of household life, see also 7.14], thus by Lord Kṛṣṇa's faithful heart thoroughly honored, he satisfied went away with Him constantly in his mind. (44) Nārāyaṇa, who for the welfare of everyone had manifested His potencies, my dear, thus following the path of human existence, enjoyed the shy affectionate glances and satisfied laughter of His sixteen thousand most excellent women. (45) Anyone, oh dear King, who chants, listens or appreciates [to read about] the unequalled activities performed by the Lord in this world, by Him who is the cause of the generation, continuation and dissolution of the universe, will become devoted to the Supreme Lord who constitutes the path of liberation.'

*: The *paramparā* adds here: 'As pointed out by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, all living beings are in fact servants of the Lord. The *ācārya* quotes the following verse from the Padma Purāṇa to elucidate:

a-kāreṇocyate viṣṇuḥ
śrīr u-kāreṇa kathyate
ma-kāras tu taylor dāsaḥ
pañca-vimśaḥ prakṛtitaḥ

"[In the mantra AUM] the letter a signifies Lord Viṣṇu, the letter u signifies the goddess Śrī, and the letter m refers to their servant, who is the twenty-fifth element." The twenty-fifth element is the *jīva*, the living being. Every living being is a servant of the Lord, and the Lord is the true friend of every living being. Thus even when the Lord chastises envious persons like Jarāsandha, such punishment amounts to real friendship, since both the Lord's chastisement and His blessing are for the benefit of the living being.

** : Even though this activity for the common people and for the brahmins is forbidden, by the *vidhi* rule of *dayā* for the sake of being compassionate with all living beings, it is in certain cases allowed to kill animals in Vedic society. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: "According to Vedic regulations, the

kṣatriyas were allowed to kill prescribed animals on certain occasions, either to maintain peace in the forests or to offer the animals in the sacrificial fire. *Kṣatriyas* are allowed to practice this killing art because they have to kill their enemies mercilessly to maintain peace in society." [see also e.g. 4: 26, 7.15, 10.1: 4, 10.56: 13 and 10.58: 13-16].

***: The *paramparā* adds to this: 'As stated in text 2 of this chapter, all the Lord's activities in the many palaces were performed by the Lord's single spiritual form (*ekena vapuṣā*), which manifested in many places at once. This vision was revealed to Nārada because of his desire to see it and the Lord's desire to show it to him. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī points out that the other residents of Dvārakā could see Kṛṣṇa only in the particular part of the city they themselves occupied, and not anywhere else, even if they would sometimes go to another precinct on some business. Thus the Lord gave a special view of His pastimes to His beloved devotee Nārada Muni.'

Chapter 70

Kṛṣṇa's Routines, Troubles and Nārada Pays Another Visit

(1) Śrī Śuka said: At the break of dawn the crowing roosters were cursed by the wives of the Sweet Lord who, with around their neck the arms of their husband [the One Yogamāyā Lord in Many], were disturbed over the [consequent] separation. (2) The birds, awakened from their sleep by the bees in the breeze of the pārijāta trees, woke up Kṛṣṇa with their noisy singing, like they were the poets at the court. (3) But Vaidarbhī [Rukmiṇī] did not like that most auspicious time of the day, because she then would have to miss the embrace of her beloved [Kṛṣṇa]. (4-5) Mādhava rose during the *brāhma-muhūrta* [the hour before sunrise], touched water and cleared His mind to meditate on the unequaled, exclusive, self-luminous Self beyond all dullness of matter. This True Self dispels, infallible as it is, by its [His] own nature, perpetually the impurity and gives the joy of existence. It is known as the Brahman that, with its [His] energies, constitutes the cause of the creation and the destruction of this universe [see also 3.29: 31 & 36-37, B.G. 7: 5 & 6 and *]. (6) After according to the *vidhi* having bathed in pure water, He, the most truthful One, first dressing in lower and upper garments, performed the entire sequence of the worship at dawn and such, and then, after offering oblations in the fire, quietly controlling His speech, chanted the Vedic mantra [the Gāyatrī, see also **]. (7-9) Faithful to His own nature, He in worship of the rising sun propitiated His own expansions. With due respect for the gods, the sages and forefathers, His elders and the souls of learning, He donated day after day many, many good-natured cows with gold on their horns, silver on their hooves and pearl necklaces around their necks, cows that were rich with milk and had given birth to one calf only. Nicely caparisoned they were presented to the learned brahmins together with linen, deerskins, sesame seeds and ornaments [see also ***]. (10) Paying His respects to the cows, the men of learning, the godly souls, the elders, the spiritual teachers and to all living beings who were but expansions of Himself, He [giving *darśan*], laid His hand on all [persons and] auspicious matters. (11) He, the very ornament of society, decorated Himself with the clothes, divine garlands, fragrant pastes and jewelry that befitted Him. (12) He cared for both the ghee [used in the sacrifices] and the mirror, and

attended to the cows, the bulls, the twice-born souls, the gods and the objects of desire. He provided gifts to the satisfaction of all societal classes living in the city and in the palace, and welcomed His ministers responding to all their needs in full. (13) After first having distributed garlands, betel nut and sandalwood paste to the learned souls, [and then] to His friends, His ministers and His wives, He next would take His own share. (14) His driver, who by then had brought His supremely wonderful chariot yoked with the horses Sugrīva and so on [see 10.53: 5], stood bowing before Him. (15) Holding the hand of the charioteer He then together with Sātyaki and Uddhava mounted the chariot, like He was the sun rising over the mountains in the east. (16) With difficulty leaving the women behind in the palace, who looked at Him with shy and loving glances, He departed, displaying a smile that seized their minds. (17) Awaited by all the Vṛṣṇis, my dear, He entered the assembly hall named Sudharmā [see also 10.50: 54] which, for those who enter, fights the six waves [of material life. See *ṣaṭ-ūrmi*]. (18) The Almighty One, the Best of the Yadus seated there high on His throne in the midst of the Yadus who were the lions among men, illuminated all the quarters with His effulgence, shining like the moon in the sky surrounded by the stars. (19) There were jesters, oh King, who served the Almighty One with various forms of amusement, professional entertainers [like magicians] and women who dancing energetically were of service. (20) They danced to the sounds of *vīṇās*, *mṛdaṅgas* and *muraja*-drums, flutes, cymbals and conches, while the bards, storytellers and panegyrists sang and offered praise. (21) Some brahmins sitting there, continually recited Vedic mantras, while others recounted stories about kings from the past famed for their piety.

(22) **O**ne day a person arrived, oh King, who was never seen there before. Announced by the doorkeepers he was given access to the Fortunate One. (23) After his reverence before Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lordship, he with joined palms submitted that [a certain number of] kings were suffering because they were being held captive by Jarāsandha. (24) During a conquest of all the directions by him, those kings had been captured who had not accepted him in complete subservience. They - about twenty thousand of them - were forcibly detained in the fortress of Girivraja. (25) The kings had sent the message: 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh immeasurable Soul, oh You who takes away the fear of the surrendered souls. We, being so different in mentality, afraid as we are in our material existence, have come to You for shelter! (26) The whole world delighting in misconduct, is bewildered about the duties out here to be of one's own worship for You according to Your [*varṇāśrama*] command. May there be the

obeisances unto You, the Ever Vigilant ['unblinking eye of Time'], who all of a sudden [at the time of one's death] cuts off that headstrong hope for longevity in this life. (27) You, the predominating authority of this universe, have descended together with Your expansion [Balarāma] in order to protect the saintly and to subdue the wicked. We fail to understand, oh Lord, how anyone transgressing Your law [like Jarāsandha] could achieve such an authority, nor how anyone else [like us, provided he takes his refuge with You], has to reap the fruit [of adversity]. (28) With the burden of this mortal frame carried by us with a constant fear, our happiness is like the conditional happiness of kings, oh Lord, which is [as ephemeral] as a dream. When we reject the happiness of the soul that is obtained by selfless service unto You, we have to suffer the greatest misery with Your bewildering material reality of *māyā* out here. (29) Therefore, oh Goodness whose two feet remove the sorrow, please release us, the surrendered souls, from the fetters of karma formed by the king of Magadha. Like the king of the animals capturing sheep, he all by himself wielding the prowess of a ten thousand mad elephants, has imprisoned us in His palace. (30) Eighteen times [facing him] You [seventeen times] raised Your *cakra* and crushed him. Only once he managed to defeat You in battle when You, confiding in Your unlimited power, were absorbed in human affairs [see 10.50: 41 & 10.52: 7]. And now he filled with pride torments us, Your subjects, oh Unconquerable One. Please rectify that!' (31) The messenger said: 'Those who are held captive by Jarāsandha thus hanker to see You in their surrender at the base of Your feet. Please bestow Your welfare on these poor souls!'

(32) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the envoy of the kings thus had spoken, the supreme *ṛṣi* [Nārada] appeared who with his yellowish mass of matted locks had an effulgence like that of the sun. (33) As soon as the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Controller of the controllers of all the worlds, saw him, He together with His followers and the members of the assembly gladdened stood up and bowing His head proved His respects. (34) After the *muni* had accepted a seat, He pleased him with worship according to the rules and spoke next the truthful, pleasing words: (35) 'It is a fact that the three worlds today are completely freed from all fear, for that is the quality of a great and fortunate soul like you, who travels the worlds. (36) Within the three worlds created by the Lord there is nothing you do not know, let us therefore hear from you what the plans of the Pāṇḍavas are.'

(37) Śrī Nārada said: 'I often witnessed [the different appearances of] Your inscrutable *māyā*, oh Almighty One, oh Bewilderer of [even]

the Creator of the Universe [see 10.14]. It does not amaze me, oh All-encompassing One, that You, being covered by Your own energies, are moving among the created beings like a fire with its light covered. (38) Who is able to properly understand the purpose of You, who by Your material energy creates and withdraws this universe, [which for its beings is] manifested to exist in relation to You [to experience the essence]. My obeisances for You whose nature is inconceivable. (39) For the individual soul in *samsāra*, who knows no liberation from the trouble that the material body brings, He lights His torch of fame through the pastimes of His *avatāras*. You, that Lord, I approach for shelter. (40) I will nonetheless tell You, oh Highest Truth who imitates the human ways, what Your devotee, the king [Yudhiṣṭhira], the son of Your father's sister, intends to do. (41) The king, the son of Pāṇḍu, desires the sovereignty and wants to perform for Your sake the greatest sacrifice called the Rājasūya. Can You please give Your blessing to this? (42) Oh Lord, that best of all sacrifices will be attended by all the enlightened and likewise souls eager to see You, as also by all the kings of victory and glory. (43) When the dregs of society find purification from just hearing about, chanting and meditating on You, the Full Manifestation of the Absolute, what may then be expected in case of those who [factually may] see and touch You? (44) The spotless reputation of You, which is expanding in all directions, is proclaimed in heaven, in the lower regions and on earth, oh Bringer of Good Fortune to All the Worlds. In the form of the water washing from Your feet which purifies the entire universe, that grace is called the [river] Mandākinī in the divine spheres, the Bhogavatī in the lower worlds, and the Ganges here on earth.'

(45) Śrī Śuka said: 'When His supporters [the Yādus] did not agree with this proposition [for a Rājasūya], because they desired the defeat [of Jarāsandha], Keśava with a smile and a charming use of words addressed His servant Uddhava. (46) The Fortunate One said: 'You, as the apple of Our eye and Our well-wishing friend, from that position know perfectly well what expression would be of use in this regard. Please tell Us what should be done, We have full faith in you and will do what you say.'

(47) With that request from his Maintainer who acted as if He, the all-knowing One, was puzzled, Uddhava humbly accepting the order on his head, gave a reply.'

*: Concerning the matter of Brahman relating to the person of Kṛṣṇa the *paramparā* adds: 'One who is favored by the Lord's internal potency can

understand the nature of the Absolute Truth [or Brahman]; this understanding is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.'

** : According to Śrīdhara Svāmī Lord Kṛṣṇa, before sunrise first offering oblations and then doing the mantra, in this would follow the disciplic succession of Kaṇva Muni [mentioned in 9.20].

*** : With the M.W. dictionary confirming to the term *badva* used here the meaning of 'a great number' Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes several Vedic scriptures to show that in the context of the Vedic ritual, a *badva* here refers to 13,084 cows, and further gives evidence that the usual practice for great saintly kings in previous ages was to give away 107 such *badva*, or groups of 13,084 cows. Thus the total number of cows given in this sacrifice, known as Mañcāra, could have amounted to 14 lakhs, or 1,400,000.

Chapter 71

The Lord Travels to Indraprastha on the Advice of Uddhava

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The gifted Uddhava hearing what thus was stated by the *devarṣi*, spoke with understanding for the stance taken by Kṛṣṇa and the royal assembly. (2) Śrī Uddhava said: 'Oh Lord, You should do what the *ṛṣi* said and assist Your cousin who wants to perform the sacrifice. You should also protect those [kings] who seek their refuge. (3) Since the Rājasūya sacrifice should be performed by someone who gained the upper hand in all directions, oh Almighty One, You to my opinion will serve both the purposes [of the sacrifice and the protection] when you triumph over the son of Jarā. (4) This way releasing the imprisoned kings, there will be a great advantage for us, as also glory for You, oh Govinda. (5) He [Jarāsandha] is a king as strong as a thousand elephants. He cannot be defeated by other men in power, save for Bhīma who is equally strong. (6) He can only be defeated chariot-to-chariot, not when he is together with a hundred *akṣauhīṅts*. Devoted as he is to the brahminical, he will also never refuse what the men of learning ask from him. (7) Bhīma visiting him wearing the dress of a brahmin, must beg for charity and without hesitation kill him in a one-to-one fight in Your presence. (8) Hiranyagarbha ['the one of the golden light' or Brahmā] and Śarva ['he who kills by the arrow', Śiva, see 7.10: 67] are but the instruments, in universal creation and annihilation, of the Supreme Lord of the Universe, of You in the form of formless Time. (9) The godly wives of the [imprisoned] kings sing in their homes about Your spotless deeds. They sing about You killing their enemy and delivering them. They sing about You, just as the *gopīs* do [missing You, see 10.31] and the lord of the elephants [Gajendra did being captured, see 8.3], just as the daughter of Janaka [Sītā] did [for Rāmacandra, see 9.10] and Your parents [prayed for Your grace being imprisoned by Kāmsa, see 10.3], just as the sages do upon having obtained Your shelter [see e.g. 9.5], as also we now do singing about You. (10) The killing of Jarāsandha, oh Kṛṣṇa, will surely bring us an immense advantage, namely the consequent excellence [of the kings], as also the sacrifice favored by You.'

(11) Śrī Śuka said: 'The words Uddhava thus spoke, in every way auspicious and infallible, oh King, were praised in response by the

devarṣi, the Yadu elders and also by Kṛṣṇa. (12) The Almighty Supreme Lord, the son of Devakī, took leave from the souls He owed respect [following the human ways]. Next He ordered His servants Dārūka, Jaitra and others to prepare for His departure. (13) He assembled His wives, sons and luggage, said goodbye to Saṅkarsaṇa [Balarāma] and the Yadu king [Ugrasena], oh killer of the enemies and then mounted His chariot brought by His driver, from which the flag of Garuḍa waved. (14) Then, surrounded by His chiefs and fierce guard, chariots, elephants, infantry and cavalry - His personal army - He moved out, with from all sides the vibration of the sounds of *mṛdaṅgas*, *bherī* horns, *gomukha* horns, kettledrums and conch shells. (15) In golden palanquins carried by strong men, Acyuta's wives along with their children followed their Husband, well guarded by soldiers with shields and swords in their hands, clad in fine clothes, ornamented, with garlands and with perfumed oils. (16) Next came the ornamented women of the household and the courtesans on human carriers, camels, bulls, buffalo, donkeys, mules, bullock carts and she-elephants, that [further] were fully loaded with grass huts, blankets, clothing and more items like that. (17) The huge army, carrying a choice of long flagpoles, banners, luxurious sunshades, yak-tail fans, weapons, jewelry, helmets and armor, appeared that day glittering and shining in the rays of the sun. With the noise of its sounds it sounded like an ocean restless with *timīṅgilas* and waves. (18) After having heard and approved His plan, the *muni* [Nārada], being honored by the Lord of the Yadus and feeling happy over his meeting with Mukunda, bowed down to Him, placed Him in his heart and then left through the sky. (19) In order to please him with His word the messenger of the kings was told the following by the Supreme Lord: 'Do not fear, oh envoy, I wish you [and your kings] all good fortune. I will see to it that the king of Mâgadha will be put to death.'

(20) **T**hus being addressed the messenger departed and informed the kings in detail. And so they, eager for their liberation, awaited the moment they would meet Śauri. (21) The Lord traveling through Ānarta [the region of Dvārakā], Sauvīra [eastern Gujarat], Marudeśa [the Rajasthan desert] and Vinaśana [the district of Kurukṣetra], on his way passed [many] hills, rivers, cities, villages, cow pastures and quarries. (22) After first crossing the river Dṛṣadvatī, Mukunda next crossed the Sarasvatī, then passed through the province of Pañcāla and Matsya, and finally reached Indraprastha. (23) Hearing that He had arrived whom one sees but rarely among human beings, the one whose enemy still had to be born [king Yudhiṣṭhira, in order to welcome Him], joyfully came out [of his city] surrounded by priests and relatives. (24) With an abundance of sounds of songs and instrumental

music, and with the vibration of hymns, he headed for Hṛṣīkeśa, as much filled with reverence as the senses are tuned to life. (25) The heart of the Pāṇḍava seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa after so long a time, melted with affection, whereupon he embraced Him, his dear most friend, over and over. (26) The ruler of man closing the body of Mukunda, the shining abode of Ramā in his arms, found all his ill-fortune destroyed and achieved the highest bliss. In his exhilaration having tears in his eyes he forgot the illusory affair of being embodied in the material world. (27) Bhīma filled with joy embraced Him, his maternal nephew, and laughed out of love with eyes brimming with tears. And also from the eyes of the twins [Nakula and Sahadeva] and of Kirītī ['he with the helmet' or Arjuna] flowed profusely the tears as they with pleasure embraced Acyuta, their dear most friend. (28) After being embraced by Arjuna and having received obeisances from the twins, He, according to the etiquette, bowed before the brahmins and the elders, and honored [the rest of] the honorable Kurus, Sṛñjayas and Kaikayas. (29) The bards, the chroniclers, the singers of heaven, the eulogists and jesters with *mṛdaṅgas*, conches, kettledrums, *vīṇās*, small drums and *gomukha* horns, all sang, danced and glorified with hymns the Lotus-eyed one, as also did the brahmins. (30) The Supreme Lord, the Crest Jewel of all Souls of Pious Renown, thus being glorified by His well-wishers around Him, entered the decorated city. (31-32) In the city of the king of the Kurus He saw, on the roads sprinkled with water that were fragrant of the *mada* [the rut-liquid] of elephants, colorful flags, gateways decorated with golden pots full of water and young men and women all clad in new apparel who wore ornaments, flower garlands and had sandalwood on their bodies. In each home lamps were lit and offerings of tribute displayed. The smoke of incense drifted through the latticed windows and banners waved from the rooftops that were adorned with golden domes with large silver bases. (33) Hearing of the arrival of Him who for the eyes of man is a reservoir to drink from, the young women, in order to witness that, went onto the king's road. Thereby they immediately abandoned their households - or their husbands in bed -, with [sometimes] in their eagerness, the knots in their hair and their dresses loosened. (34) On that road, very crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers on foot, they caught the sight of Kṛṣṇa with His wives. And while they embraced Him in their hearts, the women who [because of the commotion] had climbed onto the rooftops, scattered flowers and prepared Him a heartfelt welcome with broadly smiling glances. (35) Seeing Mukunda's wives on the road like stars around the moon, the women exclaimed: 'What have they done that the Foremost of Men, with but the small portion of His glances and playful smiles, grants their eyes the [greatest] joy?' (36) Citizens here

and there approached Him with auspicious offerings in their hands and the masters of the guilds, who had banned their sins, performed worship for Kṛṣṇa. (37) As He entered the king's palace, the members of the royal household all approached in a hurry to greet Mukunda, filled with love and with blossoming eyes. (38) The moment Prthā [queen Kuntī] saw her brother's son, Kṛṣṇa, the Controller of the Three Worlds, she with a heart full of love together with her daughter-in-law [Draupadī] rose from her couch in order to embrace Him. (39) The king brought Govinda, the Supreme God of All Gods, to His quarters but, overwhelmed by his great joy, he forgot what all had to be done to honor Him with reverence. (40) Kṛṣṇa, oh King, performed His obeisances in respect of His aunt and the elderly women, whereupon His sister [Subhadrā] and Kṛṣṇā [Draupadī] bowed down to Him. (41-42) Urged by her mother-in-law [Kuntī] Kṛṣṇā [Draupadī] honored all Kṛṣṇa's wives with clothing, flower garlands and jewelry and such: Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kālindī, Mitravindā - the descendant of Śibi, the chaste Nāgnajitī, as also the others who had come. (43) The king of dharma [Yudhiṣṭhira] comfortably accommodated Janārdana, His army, His servants, ministers and His wives, and saw to it they suffered no lack. (44-45) He stayed a couple of months, because He wanted to please the king, and went, sporting with Arjuna, surrounded by guards out riding in His chariot. Together with Arjuna He satisfied the fire-god by offering him the Khāṇḍava forest. Maya [Dānava, a demon] whom He had saved, then built a celestial assembly hall for the king [in Hastināpura].'

Chapter 72

Jarāsandha Killed by Bhīma and the Kings Freed

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'Yudhiṣṭhira one day sat in his court surrounded by the sages, the nobles, the popular personalities, the business men and his brothers. With all the *ācāryas*, the elders of the family, his blood relatives, in-laws and friends listening, he addressed Kṛṣṇa saying the following. (3) Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: 'Oh Govinda, I wish to honor Your different heroic deeds with the purifying sacrifice that is the king of all fire sacrifices named Rājasūya. Please allow us to perform that sacrifice, oh Master. (4) They who constantly, in full service meditate on and glorify Your slippers, which cause the destruction of all inauspicious things, find purification. They and not other persons, oh You whose navel is like a lotus, manage by their prayers to put an end to their material existence, or else, as far as they desire something, get the things done they want. (5) Therefore, oh God of Gods, let the people see the power of serving Your lotus feet in this world. Please, oh All-powerful One, show them both the status of the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas who are of worship, and the status of those who are not of worship. (6) In Your mind of Absolute Truth there can be no difference between 'mine and thine', for You are the Soul of All Beings who, equal in Your vision, experience the happiness within Yourself. Those who properly serve You, You, just like the desire tree, grant the desired results according to the service rendered. There is no contradiction in this [catering to desires].'

(7) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'There is nothing wrong with your plan, oh King, following it all the world will witness your auspicious fame, oh tormentor of the enemies! (8) For the sages, the forefathers, the gods and the friends, oh master of Us, as also for all living beings, [the performance of] this king of sacrifices [the literal meaning of Rājasūja] is desirable. (9) Bring the earth under control by conquering all the kings, collect all the necessities [for the ceremony], and [next] perform the great sacrifice. (10) These brothers of yours, oh King, were born as partial aspects of the demigods who rule the worlds [see family-tree], and I, who am unconquerable for those not in control with themselves, am conquered by you who are of self-control. (11) No person, not even a demigod - not to mention an earthly ruler -, can

by his strength, beauty, fame or riches in this world subdue someone who is devoted to Me.'

(12) Śrī Śuka said: 'The king, with a face blossoming like a lotus, was pleased to hear the song [the Gītā] of the Supreme Lord. Energized by the potency of Viṣṇu, he engaged his brothers in the conquest of all the directions. (13) He sent Sahadeva with the Sṛñjayas to the south, Nakula with the Matsyas in the western direction, Arjuna with the Kekayas to the north and Bhīma with the Madrakas to the east. (14) The heroes, by their personal strength subduing many kings, brought him from everywhere an abundance of riches, because for him, intent upon performing the sacrifice, the enemy still had to be born, oh King. (15) The king heard that Jarāsandha was not defeated and thought about it. The Original Person, the Lord, then enlightened him on the means Uddhava had mentioned [in 10.71: 2-10]. (16) And so Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa disguised as brahmins together went to Girivraja, my dear, where the son of Bṛhadhratha [Jarāsandha] resided. (17) Going to his residence at the hour appointed for receiving [uninvited] guests, the nobles, appearing as brahmins, begged with the religious householder of respect for the brahminical culture: (18) 'Oh King, know us as guests in need who have arrived from afar. We wish you all the best. Please grant us everything we desire. (19) What would for a patient person be intolerable, what would for an impious person be impossible, what would by a generous person not be donated, and who would exclude someone who has an equal vision towards all? (20) He is reprehensible and pitiable who, while being very well capable, fails to acquire with the temporary body the lasting fame glorified by the saints. (21) Many souls like Hariścandra, Rantideva, Uñchavṛtti Mudgala, Śibi, Bali, and the legendary pigeon with its hunter [see*], attained the eternal [Soul] by [forsaking] the impermanent.'

(22) Śrī Śuka said: 'However, from their voices, their physical stature and even the bowstring marks on their arms, he [Jarāsandha] recognized them as nobles, as members of the family he had seen before. (23) [He thought:] 'These relatives of the royal class wearing the insignia of brahmins, I should give whatever they demand, even something as difficult to forsake as my own body. (24-25) Was Bali not known as someone whose spotless glory spread wide in all directions, even though he was brought down by Lord Viṣṇu [Vāmana] who, appearing in the form of a twice-born soul, of a brahmin, wanted to take away from him Indra's opulence? Despite the advise against it [from his guru, see 8.19], the Daitya king [Bali] knowingly gave away the entire earth. (26) Of what use is it for

someone from a *kṣatriya* background, to be alive but, with his perishable body, not to endeavor in favor of the greater glory of the brahmins?' (27) With that mentality the generous soul said to Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Vṛkodara ['wolf-belly' or Bhīma]: 'Oh men of learning, I will give you whatever you want, even if you ask for my own head!'

(28) **The Supreme Lord** said: 'Please, oh high and mighty King, accept the challenge to give us battle in a one-to-one fight, if you deem that fit. We, members of the royalty, have come here with the wish to fight and do not want anything else. (29) That is Bhīma the son of Pṛthā, the other one is his brother Arjuna, and know Me to be Kṛṣṇa, their maternal cousin, your enemy [see 10.50].'

(30) **Thus** being invited, the king of Magadha laughed loudly and said contemptuously: 'In that case, I will give you battle, you fools! (31) But I will not fight with You. Cowardly You, lacking in strength in the battle, abandoned Your city Mathurā and left for a safe place in the ocean. (32) As for this one, Arjuna, he is not old enough nor very strong, he is no match for me and should not be my opponent. Bhīma is the one equal in strength to me.'

(33) **Thus** having spoken he gave Bhīma a large club and went outside the city, himself taking up another one. (34) Then opposing on the battle ground, the two heroes stroke each other with their lightning-bolt like clubs. The fight drove them to mad fury. (35) Skillfully circling each other to the left and the right, the fight appeared as beautiful as of a couple of actors on a stage. (36) The clash of their clubs swung against each other, oh King, resembled a crash of lightning or the clattering of elephant tusks. (37) Infuriated vigorously fighting like a couple of elephants, their clubs, which with the rapid force of their arms were powerfully swung against each other's shoulders, hips, feet, hands, thighs and collarbones, were in the contact smashed to pieces like they were some arka branches. (38) With their clubs thus being ruined, the two great heroes among men angrily pummeled each other with their iron-like fists. [And also] the slapping of their hands sounded like elephants crashing into each other or as harsh claps of thunder. (39) The fight of the two men striking each other who were equally trained, just as strong and of the same endurance, thus remained undecided and continued unabated, oh King [**]. (40) Kṛṣṇa who had knowledge about the birth and death of the enemy and how he by Jarā was brought to life [see 9.22: 8 and ***], then shared the power of His thought with [Bhīma,] the son of Pṛthā. (41) He whose Vision is Infallible had determined the means to kill their enemy, and demonstrated it to Bhīma by tearing apart a twig for

a sign. (42) Understanding the sign, the immensely strong Bhīma, the best of all fighters, seized his enemy by the feet and threw him to the ground. (43) Standing with his foot on top of one leg, he with both hands took hold of the other one and, just like a great elephant with a tree branch, tore him apart from the anus upward. (44) His subjects then saw him separated in two pieces, with each one leg, one thigh, one testicle, one hip, one backside, one shoulder, one arm, one eye, one eyebrow and one ear. (45) After the lord of Magadha had been killed, a great cry of lamentation rose, while Arjuna and Acyuta both congratulated Bhīma and embraced him. (46) The Unfathomable One Supreme Lord and Sustainer of All Living Beings then freed the kings who were imprisoned by the king of Magadha and crowned his son Sahadeva as the lord and master of the Magadhas.'

*: The story goes that the pigeon and his mate gave their own flesh to a hunter to prove their hospitality, and thus they were taken to heaven in a celestial airplane. When the hunter understood their situation in the mode of goodness, he also became renounced, gave up hunting and went off to perform severe austerities. Because he was freed of all sins, was he, after his body burned to death in a forest fire, elevated to heaven.

**: Some *ācāryas* include the following two verses in the text of this chapter, and Śrīla Prabhupāda has also translated them in '*Kṛṣṇa*':

*evam tayor mahā-rāja
yudhyatoḥ sapta-vimśatiḥ
dināni niragams tatra
suhṛd-van niśi tiṣṭhatoḥ*

*ekadā mātuleyam vai
prāha rājan vṛkodarah
na śakto 'ham jarāsandham
nirjetum yudhi mādharma*

"Thus, oh King, they continued to fight for twenty-seven days. At the end of each day's fighting, both lived at night as friends in Jarāsandha's palace. Then on the twenty-eighth day, oh King, Vṛkodara [Bhīma] told his maternal cousin, 'Mādhava, I cannot defeat Jarāsandha in battle.' "

***: Śrīla Prabhupāda writes "Jarāsandha was born in two different parts from two different mothers. When his father saw that the baby was useless, he threw the two parts in the forest, where they were later found by a black-hearted witch named Jarā. She managed to join the two parts of the baby

from top to bottom. Knowing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore also knew how to kill him."

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Chapter 73

Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

(1-6) Śrī Śuka said: 'The twenty thousand eight hundred [kings] who in battle were defeated [by Jarāsandha] came out of the fortress of Giridronī [the capital] being filthy and with dirty clothes. Emaciated by hunger, with dried up faces and because of their imprisonment being greatly weakened, they drank Him in with their eyes and appeared to be licking Him up with their tongues, to be smelling Him with their nostrils and embracing Him with their arms. For Him, dark grey like a rain cloud, in yellow clothing, marked by the Śrīvatsa, with His four arms, charming eyes pinkish as the whorl of a lotus, pleasant face and the gleaming makara [sea monster shaped] earrings; for Him with a lotus, a club, a conch shell and a disc in His hands, adorned with a helmet, necklace, golden bracelets, a belt and armlets and with the splendid, brilliant jewel and a forest flower garland around His neck; for Him they, whose sins were destroyed, bowed their heads down at His feet. (7) The kings with joined palms praised the Master of the Senses with their words, and by the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa the weariness of their imprisonment was dispelled.

(8) The kings said: 'We offer You our obeisances, oh God of the Gods, oh Lord of the Surrendered Souls and Remover of Distress. Oh Inexhaustible One, please, oh Kṛṣṇa, save us who take refuge in You in our despondency about this terrible material existence. (9) Oh Madhusūdāna, we do not want to blame the ruler of Magadha, oh Master, for it is by Your grace, oh Almighty One, that the kingdoms of the rulers of man [who defy You] fall down. (10) Intoxicated by his wealth and power of rule a king loses his self-restraint and does not obtain the real benefit, because he, deluded by Your *māyā*, takes his temporary assets for permanent. (11) The same way a child takes a mirage for a reservoir of water, those lacking in discrimination take the illusory affair, which is subject to transformation, for substantial. (12-13) We who in the past, in our lusting about the wealth, were blinded and quarreled with each other about ruling this earth, have very mercilessly harassed our citizens, oh Master, and have with [You in the form of] death standing before us, arrogantly disregarded You. We, oh Kṛṣṇa, have been forced to part with our opulence and were hurt in our pride by Your mercy in the form of the irresistible power of the Time moving so mysteriously. We beg You to allow us to live in

the remembrance of Your feet. (14) We henceforth no longer hanker for a kingdom which, appearing like a mirage, constantly must be served by the material body subjected to demise, which constitutes a source of disease. Nor do we, oh Almighty One, hanker for the fruits of pious work in an hereafter that is so attractive to our ears [compare B.G. 1: 32-35]. (15) Please instruct us in the means by which we may remember Your lotus feet, even though we cannot stop returning over and over to this world [see B.G. 8: 14]. (16) Again and again we offer our obeisances to Kṛṣṇa the son of Vasudeva, the Lord and Supersoul of those who know to surrender, to Govinda, the Destroyer of Distress.'

(17) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, the Giver of Shelter, thus being praised by the kings who were freed from their bondage, dear King, mercifully addressed them with kind words. (18) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh Kings, I assure you, as from now, as you wish, in you there will rise a very firm devotion to Me, the Self and Controller of All. (19) Your resolve is a fortunate one, oh rulers, for I see you truthfully speak about the impudent infatuation with opulence and power which drives mankind to madness. (20) Haihaya [or Kārtavīryārjuna 9.15: 25], Nahuṣa [9.18: 1-3], Veṇa [see 4.14], Rāvaṇa [9.10], Naraka [or Bhauma 10.59: 2-3] and others fell from their positions as gods, demons and men, because they were intoxicated by the opulence. (21) Understanding that this material body and such, have a beginning and an end, you, with [Vedic] sacrifices being connected to Me in worship, have the duty to protect your citizens in accordance with the dharma. (22) Engaged in begetting generations of progeny and encountering the facts of happiness and distress, birth and death, you should fix your minds on Me. (23) Neutral in respect of the body and everything to it and steadfast to the vows being satisfied within, you, fully focussing your minds on Me, will finally reach Me, the Absolute of the Truth [compare B.G. 4: 9; 8: 7; 9: 28; 12: 3-4].'

(24) Śrī Śuka said: 'Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and Controller of All the Worlds, this way having instructed the kings, then engaged men and women servants to give them a bath. (25) Oh descendant of Bharata, He took care that Sahadeva [Jarāsandha's son] served them with clothing, ornaments, garlands and sandalwood paste befitting them. (26) Properly bathed and well decorated they were fed with excellent food and bestowed with various pleasures worthy of kings, like betel nut etc. (27) Honored by Mukunda, the kings, freed from their distress, shone splendidly with their gleaming earrings, like they were the planets at the end of the rainy season. (28) After assigning

them chariots adorned with gold and jewels, and pulled by fine horses, He, gratifying them with pleasing words, sent them off to their kingdoms. (29) They who thus by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of all personalities, were liberated from hardship, went away, with in their minds nothing but the deeds of Him, the Lord of [the Living Being that is] the Universe. (30) With their ministers and other associates they discussed what the Supreme Personality had done, and then attentively carried out what the Lord had instructed. (31) After having Jarāsandha killed by Bhīmasena, Keśava accepted worship from Sahadeva and departed accompanied by the two sons of Pṛthā. (32) Arriving in Indraprastha they blew the conch shells that previously had made the enemies unhappy they defeated, but now brought delight to their well-wishers. (33) The residents of Indraprastha were pleased in their hearts to hear that sound. They understood that Jarāsandha was put to rest and that the king [Yudhiṣṭhira] had achieved his purpose. (34) Having offered the king their obeisances, Arjuna, Bhīma and Janārdana recounted everything they had done. (35) The king of dharma could not utter a word when he heard that. In ecstasy over Kṛṣṇa's mercy he shed tears out of love.'

Chapter 74

The Rājasūya: Kṛṣṇa Number One and Śiśupāla Killed

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'King Yudhiṣṭhira, thus hearing about the death of Jarāsandha and the display of power of the almighty Kṛṣṇa, was pleased about it and addressed Him. (2) Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: 'All the spiritual masters, inhabitants, and great rulers in the three worlds, carry the difficult to obtain command [of You] on their heads. (3) That You Yourself, the Lotus-eyed Lord, take directions from by the day living people [like us] who consider themselves controllers, is, oh All-pervading One, a great pretense [of you imitating our ways]. (4) The way it is with the movements of the sun, the power of the One without a Second, the Absolute Truth, the Supersoul, does not increase nor diminish by [His] activities [see B.G. 2: 40]. (5) Oh Mādhava, the perverted animalistic mentality of making distinctions of 'I and mine' and 'you and yours', is truly not Yours, oh Unconquerable One, nor of Your *bhaktas*.'

(6) Śrī Śuka said: 'The son of Pṛthā thus having spoken, chose with the permission of Kṛṣṇa, at a proper time for the sacrifice, the priests who were suitable, brahmins who were Vedic experts: (7-9) Dvaipāyana [Vyāsa], Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gotama, Asita, Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaṣa, Trita, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila, Parāśara, Garga, Vaiśampāyana as also Atharvā, Kaśyapa, Dhaumya, Rāma of the Bhārgavas [Pāraśurāma], Āsuri, Vītihoṭra, Madhucchandā, Vīrasena and Akṛtavraṇa. (10-11) Also others were invited like Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his sons and the highly intelligent Vidura. Kings with their royal entourages, brahmins, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*, all came there eager to attend the sacrifice, oh King. (12) The brahmins with golden plowshares then furrowed the place for worshiping the gods, and inaugurated there the king according to the injunctions. (13-15) The utensils were golden, like it had been in the past when Varuṇa was of sacrifice [compare 9.2: 27]. The rulers of the worlds headed by Indra, including Brahmā and Śiva, the perfected souls and the heavenly singers with their entourage, the scholars, the great serpents [v.i.p.s, egos], the sages, the wealth keepers and the wild men, the birds of heaven [see *khaga*], the mighty ones, the venerable souls and the

earthly kings, as also the wives of the kings who were invited, came from everywhere to the Rājasūya sacrifice which they, not surprised at all [about all the wealth], deemed quite appropriate for a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. (16) The priests who were as powerful as the gods, performed the Rājasūya sacrifice for the great king as was Vedicly prescribed, the way the demigods did it for Varuṇa. (17) On the day set for extracting the soma juice, the king properly with great attention worshiped the sacrificers and the most exalted personalities of the assembly. (18) The members of the assembly pondered over who of them should be honored first, but could not arrive at a conclusion, because there were many [members who qualified]. Then Sahadeva [the Pāṇḍava] spoke up: (19) 'Acyuta deserves the supreme position, He is the Supreme Lord, the leader of the Sātvatas. He stands for all the demigods as also for the place, the time and the paraphernalia, and such. (20-21) This universe as also the great sacrificial performances, the sacred fire, the oblations and the incantations are founded upon Him. The analytical perspective and the science of yoga are aiming at Him. He is the One and Only without a second upon whom the living being [the universe] is based, oh members of the assembly. He is the Unborn One relying on Himself only, who creates, maintains and destroys. (22) His grace brings about the various activities out here, and because of His grace the entire world endeavors for the ideals characterized by religiosity and such [the *Puruṣārthas*]. (23) Therefore the greatest honor should be given to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme One. If we do that, we will be honoring all living beings, ourselves included. (24) It should be awarded to Kṛṣṇa, the Soul of all beings who considers no one as separate from Himself, to the Peaceful One Perfectly Complete who for anyone who wishes his love to be answered constitutes the Unlimited [of an Infinite Return].'

(25) **A**fter Sahadeva, well known with Kṛṣṇa's dignity, thus had spoken, he fell silent whereupon all the souls of excellence and truth who heard this, filled with happiness said: 'This is excellent, very fine!'

(26) **H**earing the twice-born souls say this, the king, pleased to know the heart of the assembly, overwhelmed by love worshiped Hṛṣīkeśa in full. (27-28) He washed His feet and took the water that purifies the world on his head. Then he carried it joyfully to his wife, his brothers, his ministers and family. And, as he with precious yellow silken garments and jewelry honored Him, he could not look straight at Him because of the tears that filled his eyes. (29) Seeing Him honored this way all the people with joined palms exclaimed: 'Obeisances to You, all victory to You!' and saying this they bowed down to Him and showered Him with flowers.

(30) **T**he son of Damaghoṣa [Śiśupāla, see 10.53] hearing this, aroused by the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's qualities, angrily rose from his seat waving with his arms and said, indignantly addressing the Fortunate One with harsh words, the following in the middle of the assembly: (31) 'The Vedic word of truth that Time is the unavoidable controller, has by this been proven, for even the intelligence of the elders could be led astray by the words of a boy! (32) You all know best who would be the most praiseworthy one! Please, oh leaders of the assembly, pay no attention to the statements of the boy that Kṛṣṇa should be chosen to be honored. (33-34) You overlook the leaders in the assembly who are the best among the wise, who are dedicated to the Absolute Truth and are worshiped by the rulers over the planet. They are men who by spiritual understanding, austerity, Vedic knowledge and vows eradicated their impurities. How can a cowherd who is a disgrace to His family, deserve it to be worshiped? He deserves it no more than a crow deserves the sacred rice cake! (35) How can He who, engaging of His own accord, acts outside the bounds of all religious duties, devoid of *kula* [a proper upbringing] *varṇa* [vocational propriety] and *āśrama* [sense of duty according to one's age], thus missing the qualities, deserve it to be worshiped? (36) With His [Yadu-]dynasty cursed by Yayāti [see 9.18: 40-44], being ostracized by well-behaved persons [see 10.52: 9] and wantonly addicted to drinking [e.g. 10.67: 9-10], how can such a one deserve the worship? (37) Abandoning the lands [of Mathurā] graced by the brahmin sages, He with His associates took to a fortress in the sea [10.50: 49] where the brahminical order is not observed [10.57: 30] and where they as thieves cause the people a lot of trouble [e.g. 10.61].'

(38) **T**he Supreme Lord did not say a word to him who, using such and more harsh words, had spoilt all his chances. He kept silent like a lion to a jackal's cry. (39) Hearing that intolerable criticism, the members of the assembly covered their ears and walked away, while angrily cursing the king of Cedi. (40) A person who does not leave the place where the Supreme Lord or His devotee is criticized, loses his pious credit and will fall down. (41) Then the sons of Pāṇḍu, as also the Matsyas, Kaikayas and Sṛñjayas, stood up infuriated with raised weapons, prepared to kill Śiśupāla. (42) Śiśupāla, oh scion of Bharata, thereupon, undaunted, took up his sword and shield and challenged with insults the kings in the assembly who were the proponents of Kṛṣṇa. (43) That very moment, the Supreme Lord stood up and stopped His devotees. Displeased He attacked His enemy with His sharp-edged disc and severed his head from his trunk. (44) With

Śiśupāla being killed a tumultuous uproar rose from the audience. The kings siding with him feared for their lives and fled away. (45) Right before the eyes of everyone alive, from the body of Śiśupāla a light rose that entered Kṛṣṇa, like it was a meteor falling from the sky to the earth [see also 10.12: 33]. (46) Throughout three lifetimes he had been obsessed with this mentality [of enmity], and thus meditating he [now finally] attained Oneness with Him [B.G. 4: 9, see also 10.12: 33]. It is indeed so that one's attitude is the cause of one's rebirth [see B.G. 8: 6 & Jaya and Vijaya]. (47) The emperor rewarded the priests and the members of the assembly abundantly with gifts, respecting them all properly according to the scriptural injunctions, and next performed the *avabhṛtha* ceremony [of washing himself and the utensils to conclude the sacrifice]. (48) Kṛṣṇa, the Master of all Yoga Masters, saw to it that the great sacrifice of the king was concluded and stayed, on the request of His well-wishers, a couple of months more [in Indraprastha]. (49) The son of Devakī, Īśvara, then took leave from the king - who did not feel for it at all - and together with His wives and ministers went back to His city. (50) The story of the two Vaikunṭha residents who, because of a curse of the sages [the Kumāras], had to take birth repeatedly, I have related to you in great detail [see 3.16]. (51) When King Yudhiṣṭhira bathed at the *avabhṛtha* of the Rājasūya, he, in the midst of the brahmins and *kṣatriyas*, shone as brilliant as the king of the demigods. (52) All the gods, human beings and travelers of the sky [the lesser gods, the Pramathas], being honored by the king, happily returned to their domains, full of praise for Kṛṣṇa and the sacrifice. (53) [All were happy], except for the sinful Duryodhana who was the pest of the Kuru dynasty and the personification of the Age of Quarrel. To face the flourishing opulence of the Pāṇḍavas was something he could not tolerate.

(54) **H**e who recites these activities of Lord Viṣṇu, the deliverance of the kings, the [Rājasūya] sacrifice and the killing of the king of Cedi and such, is delivered from all sin.'

Chapter 75

Concluding the Rājasūya and Duryodhana Laughed at

(1-2) **T**he honorable king said: 'All the people of God, oh brahmin, who assembled at the Rājasūya sacrifice of Ajātaśatru ['he whose enemy was never born', or Yudhiṣṭhira], were delighted about the great festivity they saw: all the kings, the sages and enlightened souls, so I heard, my lord, except for Duryodhana. Please tell us what the reason was.'

(3) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'At the Rājasūya sacrifice of the great soul who is your grandfather, the family members, who were bound in divine love, were engaged in humbly serving his cause. (4-7) Bhīma was in charge of the kitchen, Duryodhana supervised the finances, Sahadeva managed the reception and Nakula procured the required items. Arjuna served the preceptors, Kṛṣṇa washed the feet, the daughter of Drupada served the food and the magnanimous Karṇa handed out the gifts. Yuyudhāna, Vikarṇa, Hārdikya, Vidura and others, like the sons of Bāhlīka headed by Bhūriśravā and Santardana, were, eager to please the king, willing to engage in the different duties during the elaborate sacrifice, oh best of the kings. (8) The priests, the prominent officials, the highly learned souls and all the best well-wishers, being well honored with pleasing words, auspicious offerings and gifts of gratitude, executed the *avabhṛtha* bathing ceremony in the river [the Yamunā], after the king of Cedi had entered the feet of the master of the Sātvatas. (9) During the *avabhṛtha* celebration the music sounded of a variety of *gomukha* horns, kettledrums, large drums, *mṛdaṅgas*, smaller drums and conch shells. (10) Female dancers danced and singers sang joyfully in groups, as the loud sound of their *vīṇās*, flutes and hand cymbals reached the heavens. (11) The kings, wearing necklaces of gold, took off together with foot soldiers, nice flags and banners of different colors, and well ornamented majestic elephants, chariots and horses. (12) The Yadus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kurus, Kekayas and Kośalas, with their armies headed by [the king,] the performer of the sacrifice, made the earth tremble. (13) The officials, the priests and the brahmins of excellence loudly vibrated Vedic mantras, while the demigods and sages, the forefathers and singers of heaven sang praises and rained down flowers. (14) Men and

women nicely adorned with sandalwood paste, garlands, jewelry and clothes, smeared and sprinkled each other, playing with various liquids. (15) The courtesans were by the men playfully smeared with oil, yogurt and perfumed water with plenty of turmeric and vermilion powder, and they smeared them in return [*]. (16) Guarded by soldiers, the queens went out to witness this firsthand, just as did the wives of the gods in their celestial chariots in the sky. By their cousins and friends being sprinkled in their turn, they offered a beautiful sight with their blossoming faces and shy smiles. (17) Squirting their brothers-in-law, their friends and so on with syringes, in their excitement, their arms, breasts, thighs and waists became visible, because their dresses got drenched and loosened and the braids of small flowers in their hair slipped. With their charming play they thus agitated those who are impure of mind. (18) The emperor mounted his chariot harnessed with the finest horses and shone, hung with gold, with his wives in all directions like he was the king of sacrifices, the Rājasūya with all its rituals, in person. (19) After the priests had guided him through the *patnī-saṁyāja* [**] and *avabhṛtha* ceremonies, they made him perform the *ācamana* of sipping water for purification and bathe in the Ganges together with Draupadī. (20) The kettledrums of the gods resounded together with those of the human beings, while the demigods, the sages, the forefathers and the humans released a downpour of flowers. (21) Thereafter humans of all occupational and spiritual orders bathed in that place where even the greatest sinner can instantly be freed from all contamination. (22) The king next put on a new set of silken garments and nicely ornamented honored the priests, the officials and the brahmins with jewelry and clothing. (23) The king, devoted to Nārāyaṇa, in diverse ways went at lengths in proving his respects to the kings, his friends, well-wishers, direct family, and more distant relatives as also to others. (24) All the men with their jewels and earrings, flowers and turbans, jackets and silken garments, as also with the most precious pearl necklaces, shone like the demigods. The women also radiated brilliantly with the beauty of their faces adorned with pairs of earrings and locks of hair, and wearing golden belts. (25-26) Oh King, the highly qualified priests, the officials, the Vedic experts, the brahmins, the *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras* and the kings who had come, and together with their followers, the planetary rulers, the spirits, the forefathers and demigods had been worshiped, then with his permission all returned to their abodes. (27) Like mortal men drinking *amṛta*, they never had enough of glorifying the great celebration of the Rājasūya sacrifice performed by the wise king, the servant of the Lord. (28) In his love for his family members, friends and relatives, king Yudhiṣṭhira then stopped them. He was in pain about being separated from Kṛṣṇa. (29) My best one, in order to

please him the Supreme Lord then stayed there. The Yadu heroes headed by Sāmba He sent off to Dvārakā. (30) The king, the son of Dharma [of Yamarāja or Dharma, the lord of the duties] by Kṛṣṇa being freed from his feverish condition [see also 10.63: 23], thus successfully managed to cross over the so difficult to overcome ocean of his great ambition.

(31) **W**hen Duryodhana one day saw the opulence in the palace, he was troubled by the greatness of the Rājasūya and of him [Yudhiṣṭhira] whose life and soul belonged to Acyuta. (32) All the different opulences of the kings of men, the kings of the demons and the kings of the gods could be seen there. With that wealth, which was provided by the cosmic architect [Maya Dānava], the daughter of king Drupada served her husbands [the Pāṇḍavas]. The Kuru prince lamented, for his heart was fixed on her. (33) The thousands of queens of the Lord of Mathurā were there also present at the time, most attractive with their waists and heavy hips moving around slowly on their feet that charmingly tinkled, wearing their pearl necklaces, reddened by the *kuṅkuma* from their breasts, and with their beautiful faces richly adorned with earrings and locks of hair. (34-35) In the assembly hall constructed by Maya it so happened that the son of Dharma, the emperor in person, in the company of his attendants, his family and also Kṛṣṇa - who was his all-seeing eye - was seated on a throne of gold, being endowed with the opulences of supreme rulership and praised by court poets, like he was Indra. (36) There, oh King, then entered Duryodhana surrounded by his brothers. Proud as a peacock wearing a crown and necklace, he with a sword in his hand was ranting angrily [at the doorkeepers]. (37) Bewildered by the magic of Maya taking the solid floor for water, he held the end of his garment high, but further on he fell into water that he mistook for a solid floor. (38) Bhīma seeing it laughed out loudly, just as the women, the kings and the rest did, my dear. Even though they were checked by the king, it carried the approval of Kṛṣṇa. (39) He [Duryodhana], burning with anger, embarrassed with his face turned down, being hurt within left for Hastināpura whereupon from the saintly souls rose a very noisy 'Alas alas!' Ajātaśatru [the king] felt a little sad, while the Supreme Lord, from whose glance the bewilderment had risen, kept silent. He was prepared to remove the burden from the earth [see also 1.15: 25-26, 10.2: 38 and 10.63: 27].

(40) **O**h King, this is what I have to tell you concerning your question about the bad-heartedness of Duryodhana during the great Rājasūya sacrifice.'

*: Present day India knows the tradition of the Holi celebrations, the festival of colors, once a year on the morning after the full moon in early March every year, where one plays this game. It celebrates the arrival of spring and the death of the demoness Holika. Holika was the sister of Hiraṇyakaśipu who, fighting Prahlāda, could not succeed in killing him [see 7.5]. She, said to be fire resistant, sitting with him in a fire could not harm him. He remained unscathed, but she burned in the fire to ashes. Thus with Holi the night before great bonfires are lit to commemorate the story. Although Holi is observed all over the north, it is celebrated with special joy and zest at Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Nandgaon, and Barsnar (the places where Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā grew up). Lord Kṛṣṇa, while growing up in Vraja, popularized the festival with His ingenious pranks. The *gopīs* of Vraja responded with equal enthusiasm, and the festivities have continued ever since. Role reversal with travesty, feminism etc. are accepted customs for the duration of the festival. Men and women of Vraja clash in a colorful display of a mock battle of the sexes. A naturally occurring orange-red dye, kesudo, is used to drench all participants.

** : The *patnī-samyāja* ritual is the ritual performed by the sponsor of the sacrifice and his wife, consisting of oblations to Soma, Tvaṣṭā, the wives of certain demigods, and Agni.

Chapter 76

The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Please, oh King, now listen how Kṛṣṇa, in His body playing the human, in yet another wonderful deed killed the lord of Saubha. (2) Śālva, as he was called, was a friend of Śiśupāla. He came to Rukmiṇī's wedding and was, together with Jarāsandha and others, by the Yadus defeated in battle [see 10.54 and also 10.50]. (3) Before all the kings listening he swore: 'Wait and see, I will, with all I can, rid the earth of the Yādavas!'

(4) **T**he foolish king this way vowed, only once a day ate a handful of dust while worshiping as his master the lord who protects the animallike [Paśupati or Śiva *]. (5) After a year had passed Āśutoṣa [Śiva, 'as the one who is quickly pleased'] offered the master of Umā, Śālva, who had approached him for shelter, the choice of a benediction. (6) He chose a vehicle terrifying to the Vṛṣṇis with which he could travel at will and that could not be destroyed by the gods, the demons, the humans, the singers of heaven, the serpents or the wild men. (7) Giriśa [Śiva as the Lord of the mountain] said 'so be it' and ordered Maya Dānava, who was there to conquer the cities of the enemies [see 7.10: 53], to build a [flying] fortress made of iron named Saubha and offer it to Śālva. (8) The vehicle filled with darkness, moved as one liked and was unassailable. When Śālva obtained it he, remembering the enmity the Vṛṣṇis had shown, went to Dvārakā with it. (9-11) Oh best of the Bharatas, Śālva besieged the city with a large army and destroyed the parks, the gardens and the towers, gateways, mansions, outer walls, outlook posts and recreational areas surrounding it. From his superior *vimāna*, torrents of weapons came down including stones and trees, thunderbolts, snakes and hailstones. A fierce whirlwind rose that covered all the directions with dust. (12) The city of Kṛṣṇa, thus terribly being tormented by Saubha, oh King, could not find peace, just as the earth could not with [its being besieged by the threefold flying fortress of] Tripura [see 7.10: 56].

(13) **T**he Great Lord Pradyumna seeing how His subjects were being harassed then said to them: 'Do not fear!', after which the great hero, who was of an untold glory, mounted His chariot. (14-15) Eminent leaders among chariot heroes like Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, Akrūra and his younger brothers, Hārdikya, Bhānuvinda as

also Gada, Śuka, Sāraṇa and other bowmen, came forward [from the city] in armor, being protected by chariotry, elephantry, cavalry and infantry. (16) Thereupon a hair-raising battle commenced between the Yadus and the followers of Śālva, that was as tumultuous as the battle between the demons and the demigods [see 8.10]. (17) The way the warm rays of the sun dissipate the darkness of the night, by the son of Rukmiṇī with His divinely empowered weapons in an instant the magical tricks were destroyed of the master of Saubha. (18-19) With twenty-five iron-tipped, in their joints perfectly smoothed arrows with golden shafts, He struck Śālva's commander-in-chief [Dyumān]. With a hundred of them He pierced Śālva, with one shaft He pierced each of his soldiers, with ten shafts He pierced each of his charioteers, and with three shafts He pierced each of his carriers [elephants, horses]. (20) When they saw that amazing, mighty feat of Pradyumna, the great personality, He was honored by all the soldiers on His side and the side of the enemy. (21) The magical illusion created by Maya, which then was seen in many forms, next seen in a single form and then again was not seen at all, constituted an inconstancy that made it impossible for his opponent to locate him. (22) Moving hither and thither like a whirling firebrand, the airship of Saubha never stayed in one place; from one moment to the next it was seen on the earth, in the sky, on a mountain top or in the water. (23) Everywhere Śālva with his soldiers appeared with his Saubha ship, the arrows were aimed by the army commanders of the Yadus. (24) Śālva lost his grip because of his enemy, for his army and fortress had to suffer from the arrows shot, that, striking like fire and the sun, were as intolerable as snake poison. (25) Even though the heroes of Vṛṣṇi, eager for a victory here and in the hereafter, were extremely pained by the floods of weapons launched by the commanders of Śālva, they did not leave their positions. (26) Śālva's companion named Dyumān, who was previously hurt by Pradyumna, then positioned himself before Him with a club of *maura* iron and struck Him with a powerful roar. (27) Pradyumna, the subduer of the enemies, received a full blow in the chest. His chariot driver, the son of Dāruka, knew what his duty was and removed Him from the battlefield.

(28) **T**he son of Kṛṣṇa quickly regained His consciousness and said to His chariot driver: 'It is not right, oh driver, for Me to be removed from the battlefield! (29) Except for Me, no one born in the house of Yadu has ever been known to have abandoned the battlefield. Now My reputation is stained because of a driver who thinks like a eunuch! (30) What should I, having fled from the battlefield, now say when I meet My fathers Rāma and Krishna? How should I excuse Myself, being questioned concerning the matter? (31) My sisters-in-

law certainly will deride Me, saying: 'Oh hero, how could Your enemies succeed in turning You into a coward in battle?'

(32) **T**he charioteer said: 'Oh Long-lived One, what I did I have done in full awareness of my prescribed duty, oh Lord. A driver should protect the master who ran into danger, just as the master should protect the driver. (33) With that in mind I removed You from the battlefield. Seeing you knocked unconscious by the enemy, I thought You were wounded!'

*: The Monier-Williams dictionary states: "According to one legend every deity acknowledged himself to be a mere *paśu* or animal when entreating Śiva to destroy the Asura Tri-pura."

Chapter 77

Śālva and the Saubha fortress Finished

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After touching water, fastening His armor and picking up His bow, He [Pradyumna] said to His charioteer: 'Take Me to the warrior Dyumān.' (2) Dyumān [in His absence] had decimated His troops, but now the son of Rukmiṇī with a smile counterattacking struck back with eight *nārāca* arrows [made of iron]. (3) With four of them He struck the four horses, with one the driver, with two the bow and flag, and with one his head. (4) Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and others killed the army of the master of Saubha. All occupants of Saubha fell into the ocean with their throats cut. (5) Thus for twenty-seven days and nights the tumultuous and fearsome fight continued between the Yadus and the followers of Śālva striking one another. (6-7) Kṛṣṇa, who was called away by [Yudhiṣṭhira,] the son of Dharma, stayed in Indraprastha [see 10.71] and noticed there, after the Rājasūya was completed and Śiśupāla had been killed, very bad omens. He took leave of the Kuru elders, the sages and Pṛthā and her sons, and headed for Dvārakā. (8) He said to Himself: 'With Me coming to this place accompanied by My honorable elder brother, the kings siding with Śiśupāla very well may be attacking My city.'

(9) When He saw king Śālva's Saubha and the destruction of all He had, Keśava arranged for the protection of the city and said to Dāruka: (10) Get My chariot, oh driver, and quickly take Me near Śālva; and take care not to be outsmarted by this lord of Saubha, he is a great magician.'

(11) Dāruka with that command taking the reins drove the chariot forward, so that, with Him arriving there, all of His own men and the soldiers of the opposing party could see [the emblem of] Garuḍa ['the younger brother of Aruṇa']. (12) Śālva, who as the chief of a practically completely destroyed army, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield, hurled his spear, which made a scary sound, at Kṛṣṇa's charioteer. (13) In its flight illumining all directions like it was a great meteor, it was by Kṛṣṇa midair swiftly cut into a hundred pieces. (14) Like being the sun with its rays in the sky, He pierced him with six arrows and struck the Saubha fortress that was moving about with torrents of them. (15) But when Śālva struck Śauri's left arm, the arm with His bow, most amazingly, the Śārṅga fell from the hand of

Śārṅgadhanvā. (16) From all the living beings witnessing it a great cry of dismay arose. The lord of Saubha roared loudly and said this to Janārdana: (17-18) 'Because You, oh fool, straight in front of our eyes stole away the bride of our brother and friend [Śiśupāla 10.53], and he unsuspecting by You within the assembly was killed [10.74], You Yourself, who are so convinced of Your invincibility, today with my sharp arrows will be sent to the land of no return, provided You have the guts to stand in front of me!'

(19) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'You, dullard, boast in vain not seeing your impending death. Heroes do not prattle, they rather demonstrate their prowess!'

(20) **H**aving spoken thus, the Supreme Lord, infuriated with a frightening power and speed, struck Śālva with His club on the collarbone, so that he reeled and had to vomit blood. (21) But when He lifted His club again, Śālva had disappeared, and a moment later a man bowing his head appeared before Kṛṣṇa who lamenting spoke the words: 'Mother Devakī has sent me! (22) Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Mighty-armed One so full of love for Your parents, Your father has been captured and led away by Śālva, like a domestic animal by a butcher being led to the slaughterhouse.'

(23) **H**earing these disturbing words, Kṛṣṇa, who had assumed the nature of a human being, said out of love disconsolate and with compassion like He was a normal man: (24) 'How could that petty Śālva abduct My father and defeat Balarāma who is never confounded or defeated by Sura or Asura? Fate indeed is powerful!'

(25) **A**fter Govinda had said this, the master of Saubha approached Kṛṣṇa like he was leading Vasudeva before Him and then said the following: (26) 'He here is the one who begot You and for whom You live in this world. I will kill him straight in front of Your eyes. Save him if You can, You ignoramus!'

(27) **T**he magician thus mocking Him, cut off the head of the 'Ānakadundubhi', took the head and climbed in the Saubha vehicle hovering in the sky. (28) In spite of His full knowledge and great powers of perception He, out of love for the ones dear to Him, for a moment remained absorbed in His normal humanity. But then it dawned on Him that Śālva had used a demoniac, magic trick designed by Maya Dānava. (29) Alerted on the battlefield, as if He awoke from a dream, He saw neither the messenger nor His father's body anywhere. Noticing His enemy sitting in his Saubha, moving about in

the sky, Acyuta prepared to kill him. (30) This is how some sages say it who do not reason correctly, oh seer among the kings. They most certainly then contradict the words they once spoke but have forgotten again [compare e.g. 10.3: 15-17; 10.11: 7; 10.12: 27; 10.31: *; 10.33: 37; 10.37: 23; 10.38: 10; 10.50: 29; 10.52: 7 and 10.60: 58]. (31) How can the lamentation, bewilderment, affection or fear that are all born from ignorance, belong to the Infinite One in whom one by contrast finds the undivided complete of wisdom, spiritual knowledge and opulence? (32) Those who, encouraged by service in self-realization at His feet, dispel the bodily concept of life that bewildered man since time immemorial, attain the eternal glory in a personal relationship with Him [*svarūpa*] - so how can there be any bewilderment then with Him, the Supreme Destination of Truthful Souls? (33) And while Śālva with great force attacked Him with torrents of weapons, Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose prowess never fails, pierced his armor, bow and crest jewel with His arrows, and smashed the Saubha vehicle of His enemy with His club. (34) Shattered into thousands of pieces by the club in Kṛṣṇa's hand, it fell into the water. Śālva thereupon abandoned it, took position and rushed forward with his club in his hands towards Acyuta. (35) As he ran toward Him carrying his club, Kṛṣṇa severed his arm with a *bhalla* cutting arrow. In order to kill Śālva, He next raised His wonderful disc weapon. Looking like a mountain beneath a rising sun, He shone with a radiation resembling the light at the end of time. (36) The Lord severed with it the head of that master of great magic, complete with earrings and crown, the way lord Indra with his thunderbolt severed Vṛtrāsura's head [see 6.12]. From his men then rose a loudly voiced 'alas, alas!'

(37) **A**fter the sinner had fallen and the Saubha fortress was destroyed by the club, kettledrums sounded in the sky, oh King, played by a host of demigods. And then... it was Dantavakra who, in order to avenge his friends, furiously ran forward.'

Chapter 78

Dantavakra Killed and Romaharṣana Slain with a Blade of Grass

(1-2) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Out of friendship for the absent Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka, who all had passed on to the next world, the wicked one [Dantavakra, see 9.24: 37] appeared who, all alone, on foot and with a club in his hand, oh great King, infuriated made the earth tremble under his feet by his great physical power. (3) Seeing him coming His way, Lord Kṛṣṇa quickly took up His club, leaped down from His chariot and stopped him in his tracks like the shore does with the sea. (4) Raising his club, the king of Karūṣa arrogantly said to Mukunda: 'What a luck, what a luck I have today to see You crossing my path. (5) You, oh Kṛṣṇa, who as our maternal cousin was of violence against my friends, want to kill me. Therefore I will kill You, oh fool, with my thunderbolt club. (6) I who care about my friends will have paid my debt to them only after having killed You, oh ignoramus, You, oh enemy in the form of a family member, who are like a disease to one's body.'

(7) **Thus** with harsh words harassing Kṛṣṇa like one does an elephant with goads, he roared like a lion and stroke Him with his club on the head. (8) Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer of the Yadus, despite being hit by the club, did not move an inch on the battlefield and struck him with His Kaumodakī [His club] heavily in the middle of his chest. (9) With his heart shattered by the club, he vomited blood and fell lifeless to the ground with his hair, arms and legs spread wide. (10) Then, oh king, before the eyes of all living beings, an amazing, very subtle light entered Lord Kṛṣṇa, just as it happened with Śiśupāla [see 10.74: 45]. (11) Thereupon Vidūratha, his brother, plunged in sorrow about his relative, stepped forward with sword and shield, breathing heavily in his desire to kill Him. (12) As he attacked Him, oh King of kings, Kṛṣṇa with the razor-sharp edge of His *cakra* sliced off his head, complete with its helmet and earrings. (13-15) After thus having killed the, for others insurmountable, Śālva and his Saubha fortress, along with Dantavakra and his younger brother Vidūratha, He was praised by gods and men, sages and the perfected souls. The heavenly singers and scientists, the great souls of excellence and the dancing girls, the forefathers and the keepers of the wealth, as also the venerable and the

mighty ones, all sang His glory, showering flowers the moment He surrounded by the most eminent Vṛṣṇis entered His decorated capital. (16) This is how the Controller of Yoga, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and Master of the Living Being, is victorious. It is to those who have an animalistic vision that He seems to suffer defeat [*].

(17) **W**hen Lord Balarāma heard about the preparations the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas made for war, He, being neutral, departed under the pretext of going to bathe in holy places. (18) After at Prabhāsa having bathed and having honored the demigods and sages, forefathers and human beings [there], He, surrounded by brahmins, went to the Sarasvatī [where she is] flowing westward to the sea. (19-20) Oh son of Bharata, He visited the broad body of water of Bindu-saras, Tritakūpa, Sudarśana, Viśāla and Brahma-tīrtha, Cakra-tīrtha, the Sarasvatī where she flows eastward and all [the holy places] along the Yamunā and the Ganges. He also went to the Naimiṣā[ranya] forest where the ṛṣis were engaged in the performance of an elaborate sacrifice [see also 1.1: 4]. (21) They who for a long time had been engaged in the sacrifice, recognized Him upon His arrival and properly greeted Him reverentially by standing up and bowing down to Him. (22) After He together with His entourage had been worshiped and had accepted a seat, He noticed that the disciple [Romaharṣana, see also 1.4: 22] of the greatest of all sages [Vyāsa] had remained seated. (23) Seeing that the *sūta* [a son of a mixed marriage of a brahmin father and *kṣatriya* mother] who had not bowed down or joined his palms, was sitting higher than the rest of the learned souls, the sweet Lord got angry: (24) 'Because he, born as a *pratiloma*, sits higher than these brahmins and also higher than Me, the Protector of the Religion, he, being so arrogant, deserves it to die. (25-26) As a disciple of the Lord among the sages [Vyāsa thus] he has fully studied the many Itihāsas, Purāṇas and Śāstras about the religion, but this has not led to good qualities. Not in control of himself, he, vainly lacking in humility and not having subdued his mind, deems himself a scholarly authority and is thus engaged like an actor. (27) It is for this purpose indeed that I have descended into this world: to put an end to those who pose as religious but factually are most sinful.'

(28) **E**ven though He was on a pilgrimage and thus had stopped with killing the impious, the Supreme Lord, after having said this, did what had become inevitable. The Lord put an end to him by means of the tip of a blade of grass that He held in His hand. (29) All the sages said 'Ohhh, ohhh', and in distress they said to Saṅkarṣaṇa deva: 'You have committed an irreligious act, oh Master. (30) We, oh Darling of the Yadus, have granted him the master's seat for the duration of the

sacrifice, as also a long life and freedom from physical worries. (31-32) Even though You, oh Master of Mystic Power, are not dictated by scriptural injunctions, You have unknowingly killed a brahmin. But if You, oh Purifier of the World, atone for Your killing of a brahmin, the common man, who is inspired by no one else, will benefit from Your example.'

(33) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'I want to be of compassion for the common people and will perform the atonement for this killing. Please tell Me what the prescribed ritual would be to be done first. (34) Oh, please say the word, and by My mystic potency I will bring about the long life, strength and sensory power you promised him.'

(35) **T**he sages said: 'Please, oh Balarāma, arrange it so that both Your potency of killing by means of that [grass] weapon and that what we have said, may remain.'

(36) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'The Vedas tell us that the child taking birth from you is truly one's own self. Therefore his son [Sūta Gosvāmī, see 1.2: 1] should be the speaker [of the Purāṇa, endowed] with a long life, strong senses and physical power [see also **]. (37) Oh best of sages, please tell Me what you want. I shall do it, and again, please, oh intelligent souls, think of what the proper atonement would be, for I have no idea.'

(38) **T**he *ṛṣis* said: 'The fearsome demon Balvala, the son of Ilvala, comes here every new moon and spoils our sacrifice. (39) The best You can do for us, oh descendant of Daśārha, is to defeat that sinner who pours pus on us, blood, feces, urine, wine and meat. (40) Subsequently, You for twelve months should do penance by serenely traveling around the land of Bhārata [India] and find purification by bathing at the holy sites.'

*: It is in these verses that the Bhāgavatam says that one has the vision of an animal if one thinks that the Lord would ever suffer defeat, as seemed to be the case with Kṛṣṇa fleeing from Jarāsandha [10.52], Kṛṣṇa acting as if he would be impressed by Śālva's tricks [10.77: 27-32], the Buddha being food-poisoned or Jesus Christ being crucified. In the end to His evanescence there is the victory, the enlightenment, the resurrection and the second birth in acceptance of the teaching.

** : To illustrate the principle enunciated here by Lord Balarāma, the *paramparā* in the person of Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes the following

Vedic verse which appears in both the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (14.9.8.4) and the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (6.4.8):

*aṅgād aṅgāt sambhavasi
hṛdayād abhijāyase
ātmā vai putra-nāmāsi
sañjīva śaradaḥ śatam*

"You have taken birth from my various limbs and have arisen from my very heart. You are my own self in the form of my son. May you live through a hundred autumns."

Chapter 79

Lord Balarāma Slays Balvala and Visits the Holy Places

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Then, on the day of the new moon, a fierce and frightening wind arose scattering dust, oh King, with the smell of pus everywhere. (2) Thereupon a rain of abominable things produced by Balvala poured down upon the sacrificial arena, after which he himself appeared carrying a trident. (3-4) The sight of that immense body looking like a heap of charcoal with a topknot and a beard of burning copper, his fearsome teeth and his face with contracted eyebrows, reminded Rāma of His club, which crushes opposing armies, and His plow, which subdues the Daityas. Both the weapons presented themselves immediately at His side. (5) With the tip of His plow Balarāma got hold of Balvala, who moved about in the sky, and with His club then angrily struck the harasser of the brahmins on the head. (6) He produced a cry of agony and fell, with his forehead cracked open, gushing blood to the ground like a red mountain struck by a thunderbolt. (7) The sages praised Rāma, awarded Him practical benedictions and ceremonially sprinkled Him with water, just like the great souls did with [Indra] the killer of Vṛtrāsura [see 6.13]. (8) They gave Rāma a Vaijayantī flower garland of unfading lotuses in which Śrī resided, and a divine set of clothes together with celestial jewelry.

(9) Next receiving permission to leave them He together with [a group of] brahmins went to the Kauśikī river where He took a bath. From there He headed for the lake from which the Sarayū flows. (10) Following the course of the Sarayū He arrived in Prayāga where He bathed to propitiate the demigods and other living beings. Thereafter He went to the hermitage of Pulaha Ṛṣi [see also 5.7: 8-9]. (11-15) After having immersed Himself in the Gomatī, the Gaṇḍakī the Śoṇa and Vipāśā river, He went to Gayā to worship His forefathers, and to the mouth of the Ganges to perform ritual ablutions. At Mount Mahendra He saw Lord Paraśurāma. After honoring Him He then bathed where the seven branches of the Godāvarī river converge with the rivers the Veṇā, the Pampā and the Bhīmarathī. Having seen Lord Skanda [Kārttikeya] Balarāma next visited Śrī-śaila, the residence of Lord Giriśa [Śiva], and saw the Master in Draviḍa-deśa [the southern provinces], the most sacred hill, the Veṅkaṭa [of Bālaḷā]. After [having visited] the cities of Kāmakoṣṇī and Kāñcī He went to the river the

Kāverī as also to the greatest of them all, the most holy Śrī-raṅga, where the Lord manifested [as Raṅganātha]. He went to the place of the Lord, the mountain Rṣabha, then to southern Mathurā [Madurai where the goddess Mīnākṣī resides] and next to Setubandha [Cape Comorin], where one is even released from the gravest sins. (16-17) There the Wielder of the Plow, Halāyudha, gave a great number of cows away to the brahmins. He went to the rivers the Kṛtamālā and the Tāmraparṇī, and to the Malaya mountain range, where He bowed down to pay respect to Āgastya Muni who, sitting there in meditation, gave Him his blessings. Leaving with his permission, He went to the southern ocean where he saw the goddess Durgā [known as Kanyā]. (18) Then reaching Phālguna and taking a bath in the sacred lake of the five Apsaras where Lord Viṣṇu manifested, He again gave away a myriad of cows. (19-21) The Supreme Lord thereupon traveled through Kerala and Trigarta, and arrived at Gokarṇa [northern Karṇataka], a place sacred because of the manifestation of Dhūrjaṭi ['he with a load of matted locks'], Śiva. Seeing the honored goddess [Pārvatī], residing on an island off the coast, Balarāma went to Śūrpāraka, where He touched the waters of the Tāpī, the Payoṣṇī and the Nirvindhya. Next He entered the Daṇḍaka forest and went to the Revā, where the city of Māhiṣmatī is found. There He touched the water of Manu-tīrtha and then returned to Prabhāsa.

(22) **F**rom the brahmins [there] He heard about the annihilation of all the kings in a battle [at Kurukṣetra] between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas. He concluded that the earth was been relieved of her burden [see also e.g. 10.50: 9]. (23) He, the beloved Son of the Yadus, then went to the fight, where He tried to stop Bhīma and Duryodhana who with their maces were fighting each other on the battlefield [see also 10.57: 26]. (24) But when Yudhiṣṭhira, the twins Nakula and Sahadeva, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna saw Him, they were silent while offering their obeisances with the burning question: 'What does He want to tell us, coming here?' (25) He saw the two with clubs in their hands skillfully moving in circles, furiously striving for the victory. He said: (26) 'Oh King, oh Great Eater, the two of you warriors are equal in prowess. One, I think, is of a greater physical power, while the other is technically better trained. (27) I do not see how from any of you, who are equally skilled, a victory or defeat can be expected. So stop this useless fight.'

(28) **I**n spite of being sensible people, the two, who fixed in their enmity kept each other's harsh words and misdeeds in mind, did not take heed of His words, oh King. (29) Balarāma decided that it was their fate and went to Dvārakā, where He was greeted by a delighted

family headed by Ugrasena. (30) When He [later on] turned back to Naimiṣāranya, the sages engaged Him, the Embodiment of All Sacrifice who had renounced all warfare, with pleasure in all the different kinds of rituals [*]. (31) The Almighty Supreme Lord bestowed upon them the perfectly pure spiritual knowledge by which they could perceive this universe as residing within Him, and also see Him as pervading the entire creation. (32) After together with His wife [Revatī, see 9.3: 29-33] having executed the concluding ritual *avabhṛtha* bath, He, well dressed, nicely adorned and surrounded by His family members and other relatives and friends, appeared as splendid as the moon in its full glory [full and surrounded by the stars].

(33) **T**here are countless other [pastimes] like this of the mighty, unlimited and unfathomable Balarāma, who through His illusory power appears as a human being. (34) Whoever regularly, at dawn and dusk, remembers the activities of the unlimited Balarāma, which are all amazing, will become dear to Lord Viṣṇu.'

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

Chapter 80

An Old Brahmin Friend Visits Kṛṣṇa

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'My lord, I would like to hear, oh master, what valorous deeds there are more of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul of Unlimited Powers. (2) How can anyone who is disgusted with running after material desires and knows the essence oh brahmin, desist from listening to the transcendental topics of the Lord Hailed in the Scriptures after repeatedly having heard them? (3) The actual power of speech is the one describing His qualities, the hands that really work are the ones that do His work, the true mind is the mind remembering Him as dwelling in both the mobile and immobile living beings, and the ear that actually hears is the ear listening to His sanctifying topics [compare 2.3: 20-24]. (4) It is about the head that bows to both of His manifestations [among the mobile and immobile beings], about the eye that sees Him only and about the limbs that regularly honor the water that washed the feet of Viṣṇu or His devotees.'

(5) **S**ūta [1.2: 1] said: "After Viṣṇurāta [Parīkṣit as being Viṣṇu-sent] had asked this question, he was addressed by the powerful sage, the son of Vyāsa whose heart was fully absorbed in Vāsudeva. (6) Śrī Śuka said: 'There was a certain friend of Kṛṣṇa [called Sudāmā, not the same one as mentioned in 10.41: 43], a brahmin well versed in the Vedas, who, peaceful of mind and in control of his senses, was detached from the sense objects. (7) As a householder he subsisted on that what came of its own accord. His wife was, just like him, poorly dressed and emaciated of hunger. (8) Distressed by the poverty she, with her face dried up and trembling legs, faithful to her husband, approached him and said: (9) 'Is it not so, oh brahmin, oh master of devotion, that the Husband of Śrī is your friend, and that that best one of the Sātvatas is filled with compassion for the brahmins and is willing to give them shelter? (10) Please approach Him, my most gracious man, for He, the Ultimate Shelter of the Saintly Souls, will then provide you with abundant wealth because you have such a hard time maintaining your family. (11) If the Lord of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas who is now present in Dvārakā, even gives Himself to a person [just] remembering His lotus feet, then what would the Spiritual Master of the Universe not do for people of worship who are not so much interested in economic success and sensual gratification?'

(12-13) **T**he brahmin, who thus repeatedly in various ways was entreated by his wife, then thought: 'The sight of Uttamaśloka is indeed the highest attainment.' He took the decision to visit Him and asked her: 'If there is anything in the house that I can bring as a gift, my good woman, please give it to me!' (14) She begged with the other brahmins for four fists of husked and parched rice, wrapped it in a piece of cloth and gave it to her husband to bring as a gift.

(15) **H**e, the best of the scholars, took it with him, and on his way to Dvārakā wondered: 'How will I ever get this audience with Kṛṣṇa?' (16-17) Together with a couple of local brahmins the scholar passed three gates and guard stations, and walked between the houses of Acyuta's faithful followers, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis. One normally could not go there and so he felt as if he had attained the bliss of the Pure Spirit. He next entered one of the opulent sixteen thousand residences of the Lord's queens [*]. (18) Acyuta, who sat on His consort's bed, saw him from a distance, immediately rose and came forward to close him gladly in His arms. (19) The Lotus-eyed One, in touch with the body of His dear friend, the wise brahmin, extremely ecstatic released affectionately some teardrops from His eyes. (20-22) Having him seated on the bed He fetched some items to honor His friend and washed his feet. The Supreme Lord of All the Worlds took the water on His head, oh King. Then the Purifier anointed him with divinely fragrant sandalwood and aloe-wood [lignaloos or aguru] paste and *kuṅkuma*. He gladly honored His friend with aromatic incense and series of lamps, and offered him bethel nut and a cow. Next He spoke a word of welcome. (23) The goddess [Rukmiṇī] was personally of service by carefully fanning with a yak's tail the dirty and poorly dressed, emaciated twice-born soul, whose veins could be seen. (24) The people in the palace thus seeing Kṛṣṇa engaged in His spotless reputation, were amazed about the intense love with which the shabby soul [the *avadhūta*] was honored: (25-26) 'What pious deeds has he performed, this unkempt, condemned and lowly mendicant deprived of all prosperity in the world? How can he with reverence be served by the Spiritual Master of the Three Worlds who is the abode of Śrī? Leaving the goddess sitting on her bed He embraced him as an older brother!'

(27) **T**aking hold of each other's hands, oh King, they discussed the charming topics of the past when they together lived in the school of their spiritual master [see 10.45: 31-32]. (28) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh brahmin, after the guru received his remuneration from you and you returned [home], oh knower of the dharma, did you marry a

suitable wife or not? (29) With your mind occupied by household affairs, you were not driven by desires and I also know that you do not take much pleasure, oh wise soul, in the pursuit of material happiness. (30) Some people perform their worldly duties without being disturbed by desires in their minds. Acting to set an example as I do, they shake off the propensities that naturally arise. (31) Do you, oh brahmin, still remember our stay in the *gurukula*? It is there that a twice-born soul learns to understand what needs to be known and he thus manages to transcend his ignorance. (32) One is born twice, my dear friend: after first being born materially one [secondly] manifests through a spiritual master, a bestower of spiritual knowledge like Myself, who teaches what the duties are for all spiritual orders [or stages of life, see *āśrama* and 7.12]. (33) Among those engaged in the *varṇāśrama* system [see also B.G. 4: 13] in this world, they [who thus are twice born] are the expert knowers of the true welfare, oh brahmin, for they cross over the ocean of material existence with the help of the words stemming from Me in the form of the spiritual master. (34) I, the Soul of All Beings, am not as satisfied by ritual worship, a new life, austerity or self-control, as I am by faithful service to the spiritual master [compare 7.14: 17]. (35-36) Oh brahmin, do you still remember what we did, while living with our spiritual master, when we once by the wife of our guru were sent away to fetch firewood? Having entered a big forest, oh twice-born soul, all out of season, a fierce harsh thundering wind arose with rain. (37) With the sun having set we, with all directions covered in darkness and with all the water around us, could neither recognize the direction nor high or low areas. (38) Constantly heavily besieged by the fierce wind and water in that flood, we did not know what way to go and in distress wandered through the forest holding each other's hands. (39) Our guru Sāndīpani knew this and at sunrise set out to search for us, his disciples. The *ācārya* then found us suffering. (40) 'Oh you children, for my sake you have to suffer heavily! In your devotion for me you have disregarded that what is most dear to all living beings: the [comfort of your] body! (41) Well, this is what true disciples have to do to pay the debt to their spiritual master: being perfectly pure in their love, they must be willing to offer the spiritual master their very self and possessions. (42) I am satisfied with you, my dear boys, oh best of the brahmins. May your desires be fulfilled and may in this world and the next your words, your mantras, never lose their attraction ['their freshness' compare 10.45: 48]. (43) Many things like this happened when we were living at the house of the guru. Only by the mercy of the spiritual master a person will find [spiritual] fulfillment and attain peace.'

(44) **T**he brahmin said: 'What more is there for me to achieve in life, oh God of Gods, oh Guru of the Universe, than to have lived together at the guru's house with You, whose every desire is fulfilled?
 (45) Oh Almighty One, Your body, constituting the fertile field of all welfare, comprises the Absolute Truth that is celebrated [in the Vedas]. Your residing with spiritual masters is nothing but an extraordinary role-play [see also e.g. 10.69: 44 and 10.77: 30]!'

*: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī quotes from the Padma Purāṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa, which says that the brahmin actually entered the palace of Rukmiṇī: '*sa tu rukmiṇy-antaḥ-pura-dvāri kṣaṇam tūṣṇīm sthitaḥ*'; 'He stood for a moment in silence at the doorway of Queen Rukmiṇī's palace.'

Chapter 81

The Brahmin Honored: Lord Kṛṣṇa the Godhead of the Brahmins

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'He, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the True Goal of the Devotees, the Lord Who Perfectly Knows the Minds of All Beings, in this manner conversing with this best soul among the brahmins, then, in His dedication to the ones of learning, laughed and spoke with a smile and a loving glance to His dear friend. (3) The Supreme Lord said: 'What gift have you brought for Me from home, oh brahmin? Even the slightest that in pure love is offered by devotees, turns into something immense for Me, whereas not even the greatest that is being presented by non-devotees pleases Me. (4) Whoever offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit and water with devotion, that offer brought from the heart by a soul of good habits I accept [same as in B.G. 9: 26].'

(5) **B**ut the twice-born soul thus being addressed, was too embarrassed with Him, the Husband of the Goddess of Fortune, bowed down his head and did not offer the few hands of rice grains, oh King. (6-7) As the direct witness in the heart of all living beings fully cognizant of the reason why he had come, He thought: 'He worshiped Me in the past and never desired opulence. But because he, My friend, in order to keep his chaste and devoted wife happy, has come to Me now, I will give him riches not attainable for [even] the immortals [see also B.G. 9: 22].' (8) With that in mind He Himself from under the garment of the twice-born soul snatched away the rice grains that were tied in a bundle, and said: 'What is this? (9) Have you brought this for Me, My dear friend? That gives Me the greatest pleasure! These rice grains satiate Me and the whole universe [that I am]!'

(10) **S**peaking thus He took a handful to eat and a second one, whereupon Śrī [Rukmiṇī devī], devoted to Him, the One Supreme, seized His hand [for the beaten grains were hard to digest]. (11) 'That, oh Soul of Each and Everyone, is enough to make a person, wishing to satisfy You, prosper in this world and the next with all opulence available.'

(12) **A**fter to his satisfaction having drunk and eaten, the brahmin spent that night in Acyuta's palace. He thought he had attained heaven. (13) The next day, dear King, as he returned home, he was honored by Him, the Self-satisfied Maintainer of the Universe, who made him happy as he walked along the path. (14) Even though he had received no wealth from Kṛṣṇa and had been too embarrassed to ask for it himself, he on his way home was filled with joy about the audience he had had with the Great One. (15) 'Ah, what a privilege it is to have witnessed the devotion of the Godhead of the Brahmins for the twice-born souls. He who carries Lakṣmī in His chest embraced the poorest wretch! (16) Who am I? A destitute sinner! And who is Kṛṣṇa? The temple of Śrī! And He, this friend of the brahmins, closed me in His arms! (17) He seated me on the bed of His consort like one of His brothers. Tired as I was, I was fanned by His queen holding a [yak-tail] hair fan. (18) Being served with sincerity with a massage for my feet and such, I was worshiped like a demigod by the God of Gods, the Godhead of the Scholars! (19) The worship of His feet is the root of all perfections and opulence that man in his emancipation may find in heaven, on earth and in the lower regions. (20) 'If this poor soul acquires opulence he, delighting in excess, will not remember Me', He must have thought in His grace, and thus did not grant me the slightest amount of wealth.'

(21-23) **T**hus lost in thought he arrived at the vicinity of his home. There he found himself placed before high rising palaces rivaling the sun, the fire and the moon. On all sides they were surrounded by wonderful courtyards and gardens swarming with hordes of cooing birds, ponds full of lilies and day and night blooming white lotuses. There were well adorned and ornamented men and women with deer-like eyes. 'What is this, whose place is this, how could this come about?' (24) This way paining his mind, he was welcomed by the men and women with a luster like the demigods, who most fortunately loudly sang to instrumental music. (25) His wife, hearing that her husband had arrived, extremely jubilant quickly appeared excitedly from the house like she was the goddess of fortune manifesting herself from her abode. (26) Seeing the husband she was so devoted to, she solemnly held her head down, embracing him within her heart with closed eyes filled with tears because of her eagerness and love. (27) He stood amazed at the sight of his wife who, shining in the midst of maidservants with golden lockets around their necks, radiated like a goddess in a *vimāna*. (28) Pleased he together with her entered his home which, with its hundreds of gem-studded pillars, resembled the palace of the great Indra. (29-32) There were ivory beds ornamented with gold [with bedding] white as foam and

couches with golden legs, yak tail fans, golden chairs with soft cushions and canopies hung with strings of pearls. Seeing the sparkling clear quartz walls inlaid with precious emeralds as also the shining jeweled lamps and the women decorated with jewels, the brahmin, now free from worries with all the excessive opulence, reasoned about the cause of his unexpected prosperity: (33) 'This prosperity here, of me always so unlucky and poverty stricken, must be the consequence of the glance that He, the Best of the Yadus who is of the Greatest Opulence, has cast on me. (34) It is no doubt my Friend, the most exalted among the Daśarhas and Enjoyer of Unlimited Wealth, who, without saying a word, like a cloud [pouring rain] has given me this opulence when He, with me in His presence, noticed that I came begging. (35) With pleasure the great Soul accepted a palmful of roasted rice that I brought. [Thus] He makes something great of the meager gift of a friend [like me] and something insignificant of the great gift He gave. (36) May there life after life, repeatedly be my love [*sauhrda*], friendship [*sakhya*], sympathy [*maitrī*] and servitude [*dāsya*] for Him, the Supremely Compassionate Reservoir of Transcendental Qualities, as also my adherence to the intimate association with His devotees. (37) The Supreme and Never Born Lord does not bestow the wonderful opulences of a kingdom and material assets upon His devotee, when he [not initiated or not twice-born, see 10.80: 32] fails in understanding. In His wisdom He sees how the rise of false pride [the arrogance, the conceit with the wealth or the *mada*] leads to the downfall of the wealthy.'

(38) **He** [Sudāmā] this way firmly being fixed in intelligence, was most devoted to Janārdana and enjoyed free from intense desire [for wealth or profit] together with his wife. Therewith he always kept in mind that he [sooner or later] would have to abandon the objects of his senses. (39) The brahmins are even the master of Him, the God of Gods, Hari, the Master and Lord of Sacrifice. There exists no higher worshipable deity than them [see also 7.11: 14, 7.14: 17-18, 10.24: 25, 10.45: 32]. (40) By thus recognizing the Unconquerable One as being conquered by His own servants [see also 9.4: 63 and 10.9: 19] he, the learned friend of the Supreme Lord, was released from his bondage to the [material] self. By the force of his meditation upon Him he soon attained His abode, the destination of the truthful souls. (41) The human being who hears about this sympathy for the brahmins of the Godhead of the Brahmins, will find love for the Supreme Lord and be freed from the bondage of [fruitive] labor [*karma*, see also 7.11: 35].'

Chapter 82

All Kings and the Inhabitants of Vṛṇḍāvana on Pilgrimage Reunite with Kṛṣṇa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa lived in Dvārakā, there was one day [*] an eclipse of the sun so complete that it seemed to be the end of the *kalpa* [a day of Brahmā]. (2) The people knowing that beforehand, oh King, came from everywhere to the field of Samanta-pañcaka [the five lakes' at Kurukṣetra] in the hope that that would work favorably. (3-6) It is the place where Lord Paraśurāma, the greatest hero among the warriors, rid the earth of its [tyrannical] rulers and with the streams of their blood created the great lakes [see 9.16: 18-19]. Even though Bhagavān Lord Paraśurāma was unaffected by karmic reactions, He, in order to set an example for the common man, was there of worship like a normal person who wishes to dispel the sin. To that occasion therefore, oh son of Bharata, a great number of people of Bhārata came there on a holy pilgrimage. Vṛṣṇis like Gada, Pradyumna and others, as also [the elders] Akrūra, Vasudeva and Āhuka [Ugrasena] who all wanted to eradicate their sins, went to that holy place. Aniruddha together with Sucandra, Śuka, Sāraṇa and the army commander Kṛtavarmā remained behind to guard [the city]. (7-8) As effulgent as Vidyādharas they in chariots resembling heavenly vehicles moved on in waves of horses, bellowing elephants and masses of foot soldiers. Resplendent with their wives, with golden necklaces, flower garlands, attire and armor, they appeared on the road as supremely divine and majestic as [demigod] sky travelers. (9) The greatly pious Yādavas bathing and fasting there, carefully saw to it that cows, garments, garlands, gold and necklaces were donated to the brahmins. (10) After once more in the lakes of Paraśurāma as prescribed having taken a bath [the next day to conclude their fast], they fed the leading brahmins with the finest food and prayed thereto: 'Let there be our devotion for Kṛṣṇa.' (11) The Vṛṣṇis thereupon with the permission of Kṛṣṇa, their exclusive deity, comfortably sat down to eat in the cool shade of the trees. (12-13) Having arrived there they saw their befriended and related kings of the Matsyas, Uśīnaras, Kauśalyas, Vidarbhas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kaikayas, Madras, Kuntīs, Ānartas and Keralas, and also met hundreds of other kings, both allies and adversaries, oh King. They as well saw their dear

friends, the *gopas* and *gopīs* headed by Nanda, who had been aching [to see them] for so long. (14) Meeting again, with their hearts and faces blooming as beautiful as lotuses because of the emotions, they embraced each other firmly and thus experienced the greatest delight with streams of tears, goose pimples and a choked-up voice. (15) The women looking at one another, with great eyes filled with tears of pure love, smiled with the greatest friendship and closed each other in their arms, pressing breasts to breasts that were smeared with *kumkum* paste. (16) Thereupon they paid their respects to the elders and received obeisances from their younger relatives. Having inquired after their well-being and having discussed the comfort of their journey, they next started to talk with each other about Kṛṣṇa.

(17) **K**untī saw her brothers and sisters with their children, her parents, her sisters-in-law and Mukunda, and gave up her sorrow while talking to them. (18) Kuntī said: 'Oh respectable brother, I feel most unfulfilled in my prayers because you, who are so very good, forgot what happened to me during my times of emergency [see also 1.8: 24]! (19) Friends, relatives, sons, brothers, and even parents, easily forget the one [among them] suffering misfortune.'

(20) **Ś**rī Vasudeva said: 'Dear sister, do not be cross with us, men are the playthings of fate. Whether someone acts of his own accord or follows the directions of others, he always falls under the control of the Lord. (21) Pestered by Kāṁsa we scattered in all directions [see 10.2: 7 and 10.4]. Only now we, by Divine Ordinance, have returned to our places, oh sister.'

(22) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'All the kings who there were honored by Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the other Yādavas, found peace in the supreme happiness of seeing Acyuta. (23-26) Bhīṣma, Droṇa, the son of Ambikā [Dhṛtarāṣṭra], Gāndhārī with her sons, as also the Pāṇḍavas and their wives, Kuntī, Sañjaya, Vidura and Kṛpa; Kuntībhoja and Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu and the king of Kāśi; Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, the kings of Maithila, Madra and Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika and others with their sons, as also, oh best of kings, many other kings resorting under Yudhiṣṭhira, were all amazed to see the personal form of Śāuri, [Kṛṣṇa] the abode of Śrī, there together with His wives. (27) After from both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa having received proper proof of respect, the kings in their turn filled with joy, enthusiastically praised the Vṛṣṇis, the personal associates of Kṛṣṇa: (28) 'Oh master of the Bhojas [Ugrasena], you have chosen a commendable birth among men in this world, for you continually see Kṛṣṇa, He who even by the yogis

is rarely seen. (29-30) His fame as praised in the Vedas, the water washing from His feet and the words of the revealed scriptures thoroughly purify this universe [see also B.G. 15: 15]. Even though her wealth had been ravaged by Time, the earth's vitality has been awakened by the touch of His lotus feet with her fulfilling all our desires like an abundance of rain. By seeing Him in person, by touching Him and walking with Him, conversing, lying down, sitting, eating, being bound through marriage with Him and having Him as a blood-relative, you [normally] following the hellish path of family life have now found Viṣṇu, liberation and heaven [in person] who constitutes the cessation [of one's searching in life. See also 5.14 and 7.14 and B.G. 11: 41-42].'

(31) Śrī Śuka said: 'When Nanda found out that the Yadus headed by Kṛṣṇa had arrived there, he went to meet Him, accompanied by the *gopas* with their belongings on their wagons. (32) In their delight excited to enjoy His presence after so long a time, the Vṛṣṇis revived, as if awakened from death, and embraced Him firmly. (33) When Vasudeva, beside himself of love, overjoyed embraced Him, he remembered the troubles created by Kaṁsa because of which he had to leave his sons behind in Gokula [see 10.3 & 10.5]. (34) Kṛṣṇa and Rāma embraced Their [foster] parents and offered Their respects, but could, with throats filled with tears of love, not utter a word, oh greatest hero of the Kurus. (35) The so very fortunate couple, Nanda and Yaśodā, in their turn raised their sons on their laps, held Them in their arms and gave up their sorrow [of having been separated from Them]. (36) Thereupon Rohiṇī and Devakī embraced the queen of Vraja and addressed her with their throats full of tears, remembering what she had done [for them] in her friendship: (37) 'What woman can forget your unceasing friendship, oh queen of Vraja? Not even obtaining the wealth of Indra suffices to repay you in this world! (38) When these Two [boys] had not yet met Their [real] parents, They, residing with the two of you as Their [foster] parents, received the education and affection, nourishment and protection. My good lady, in the custody of you, saintly souls strange to no one and as protective as eyelids to eyes, They had nothing to fear.'

(39) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopīs* seeing Kṛṣṇa, their object of desire after such a long time, the One for the sight of whom they would curse the creator of their eyelids [see 10.31: 15], all, by their eyes, took Him into their hearts to embrace Him there to their satisfaction. Thus they attained the ecstatic absorption that, even for souls constantly united [with Him in meditation], is difficult to attain. (40) The Supreme Lord approached them more privately, embraced them, informed after their

health and with a smile said the following: (41) 'Dear girlfriends, do you still remember Us, We who, intent on destroying the enemy party, for that purpose stayed away so long? (42) Maybe you think ill of Us being afraid that We have put you out of Our mind - but in fact it is the Supreme Lord who brings together and separates the living beings. (43) The way the wind brings together masses of clouds, grass, cotton and dust and scatters them again, the same way the Creator of the living beings brings together and scatters His subjects [compare 10.5: 24-25]. (44) By the love for Me, you fortunately developed on your part, you have obtained Me; it is indeed the devotion unto Me that leads the living beings to immortality [compare B.G. 9.33]. (45) Oh ladies, being present both inside and outside, I am both the beginning and the end of all created beings, the same way ether, water, earth, air and fire applies to all material things [see also e.g. 10.9: 13-14]. (46) These material entities, who thus [on the one hand] exist within the elements of creation and [on the other hand] according to their true nature pervade those elements in the form of the *ātmā* [the Soul, self and person], you should both ways consider as being present within Me, within the Imperishable, Supreme Truth [see also e.g. 1.3: 1, 3.26: 51, 10.59: 29, B.G. 9: 15 and *siddhānta*].'

(47) Śrī Śuka said: 'The *gopīs*, this way being instructed by Kṛṣṇa's teaching about the *ātmā*, eradicated the subtle covering of their soul [their false ego, see *linga*, 7.2: 47 and 4.29] by constantly meditating on Him and were thus fulfilled by Him. (48) They said: 'With that what You said, oh Lord with the Lotus navel, we wish that our minds, however being engaged in household affairs, are ever vigilant at Your lotus feet, the feet that the great yogis and highly learned philosophers keep in mind to meditate upon, for they constitute, for those who fell into the dark pit of a material existence, the only shelter of deliverance [see also 7.5: 5, 10.51: 46, 7.9: 28, 7.15: 46].'

*: According to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in his Vaiṣṇava-toṣanī commentary this event, described in retrospect, would have occurred after Balarāma's visit to Vraja (10.65) and before Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice (in 10.74) because the enmity within the Kuru family, the exile of the Pāṇḍavas and the ensuing war at Kurukṣetra arose directly after the sacrifice.

Chapter 83

Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, the spiritual master and goal of the *gopīs* who thus showed His favor, then asked Yudhiṣṭhira and the rest of His good-hearted relatives about their welfare. (2) They, who by seeing His feet were freed from their sinful reactions, felt very honored thus being questioned by the Lord of the World and gladly replied: (3) 'How can they be unhappy who ever drank the intoxicating nectar of Your lotuslike feet that is poured out by the minds and mouths of the great souls? How can they who, with the drinking cups of their ears, drank to their fill, not experience the happiness, oh Master, oh Destroyer of the forgetfulness of the embodied souls about the Creator who granted them their physical existence? (4) By the light of Your personal form we are released from the bonds of the three [states] of material consciousness [wakefulness, dreaming and sleeping]. Being totally immersed therein, we are of spiritual happiness having bowed down to You, the goal of the perfected saints [the *paramahamsas*], who by the power of Your illusion have assumed this form for the protection of the unlimited and ever fresh Vedic knowledge, which is threatened by time.'

(5) The great sage said: 'While the crest jewel of all personalities who is praised in the scriptures thus was being glorified by His people, the women of the Andhaka and Kaurava clans met to discuss with each other the stories about Govinda that are sung in the three worlds. Please listen as I describe them to you. (6-7) Śrī Draupadī said: 'Oh Vaidarbhī [Rukmiṇī], Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī and Kauśalā [Nāgnajitī]; oh Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Śaibyā [Mitravindā], Rohiṇī [see * and 10.61*] and Lakṣmaṇā [Mādrā] and other wives of Kṛṣṇa, please tell us how it came to pass that Acyuta, the Supreme Lord Himself, by the grace of His mystic power lived the way one lives in the world and got married to you?'

(8) Śrī Rukmiṇī said: 'Like a lion taking his share from a herd of goats and sheep, He, who puts the dust of His feet upon the heads of invincible fighters, took me away when the kings, with their bows ready, were about to offer me to Śiśupāla. May the feet of Him, the abode of Śrī, be my object of worship [see 10.52-54].'

(9) Śrī Satyabhāmā said: 'Being accused [by my father King Śatrājit] He, in order to clear His name, defeated the king of the bears [Jāmbavān] and brought the jewel back to my father whose heart was distressed about the death of his brother [Prasena]. Afraid [about this accusation] he offered me to the Lord, even though I was spoken for [see 10.56].'

(10) Śrī Jāmbavatī said: 'The creator of my body, not realizing that He, the Husband of Sītā, was his master and worshipable deity, fought for twenty-seven days with Him. After he recognized Him he came to his senses, took hold of His feet and presented me to Him together with the jewel. I am His maidservant [see also 10.56].'

(11) Śrī Kālindī said: 'Knowing that I was executing penances with the desire to touch His feet, He came together with His friend [Arjuna] and took my hand. I am the one cleaning His residence [10.58: 12-23].'

(12) Śrī Mitravindā said: 'During my *svayamvara* He came forward and stole me away the way the enemy of the elephants [a lion] claims his share amidst a pack of dogs. After having defeated the kings and my brothers, who insulted Him, He took me to His capital where Śrī resides. May I there, life after life, serve Him with washing His feet [10.58: 31].'

(13-14) Śrī Satyā said: 'Seven great, strong and vital bulls with the sharpest horns, which by my father were arranged to test the prowess of the kings, destroyed the pride of the heroes. But they were quickly subdued and tied up by Him, with the ease of children playing with young goats. This way with His valor paying for me, He defeated the kings on the road with an army of four divisions and took me, being protected by maidservants, with Him. May there be my servitude unto Him [10.58: 32-55].'

(15-16) Śrī Bhadrā said: 'With me in love with Him, oh Kṛṣṇā [Draupadī], my father of his own accord invited my maternal cousin Kṛṣṇa, and gave me to Him together with a retinue of female companions and a military escort of one *akṣauhiṇī*. May there for me, birth after birth wandering because of my karma, be that betterment of myself in touching His feet [10.58: 56].'

(17) Śrī Lakṣmaṇā said: 'Oh Queen, because I repeatedly heard the glorification by Nārada of Acyuta's births and activities, my heart became fixed upon Mukunda, He who, by her [the goddess Śrī]

holding the lotus, after due consideration was chosen in rejection of the [demigod] rulers of the world. (18) My father, also known as Brhatsena, oh saintly lady, knew my state of mind and out of love for his daughter arranged for means to meet this end [of marrying with Kṛṣṇa]. (19) Just as with your *svayamvara*, oh Queen, a fish was used [hung high as a target] that had to be won by Arjuna, also in my case there was such a target. Hidden from sight however, it could only be seen as a reflection in water [in a pot below]. (20) Hearing about this, from everywhere all the kings expert in the art of archery and wielding other weapons, came to my father's city together with their thousands of teachers. (21) My father honored all of them with full respect for each his strength and age. Then they, who had set their minds upon me, took up the bow and arrows to pierce [the target] in the assembly. (22) Some of them after lifting [the bow] were unable to string it and gave up, and some, having pulled the bowstring, fell down because they were hit by it. (23) Other heroes like the kings of Magadha [Jarāsandha], Cedi [Śiśupāla] and Ambaṣṭha, as also Bhīma, Duryodhana and Karṇa, managed to string the bow, but could not locate the target. (24) Arjuna managed to locate it and, aiming carefully while looking at the reflection of the fish in the water, took a shot, but the arrow did not hit the target, it just brushed it. (25-26) After the kings were defeated in their pride and had given up, the Supreme Lord playfully took up the bow and managed to string it. At the moment the sun was situated in Abhijit [in 'victory', or at noon] He fixed an arrow on it and pierced, with a single look in the water, the fish with His arrow so that it fell down. (27) Kettledrums resounded in the sky and on earth the sounds of 'jaya' were heard, while the demigods, overwhelmed by joy, released torrents of flowers. (28) Next, with a shy smile on my face and a wreath of flowers in my hair, I entered the arena with gently tinkling ankle bells on my feet, a golden necklace with brilliant jewels around my neck and a pair of fine silken, new garments held together by a belt. (29) I lifted up my face, encircled by its many locks of hair and with my cheeks effulgent because of the earrings, and looked all around at the kings. With a cool smile casting sidelong glances I slowly placed my necklace around the neck of Murāri who had captured my heart. (30) At that moment conch shells, *mṛdaṅgas*, tabors, kettledrums and war drums, and such instruments, resounded while the singers sang and male and female dancers danced. (31) The leading kings could not accept the choice I thus made for the Supreme Lord as my master, oh Draupadī. Upset and with a heart full of imprecation they became quarrelsome. (32) Faced with that situation He lifted me on the chariot with its four excellent horses. He prepared His Śārṅga, donned His armor and stood firm to offer battle with His four arms [displayed in full]. (33) Dāruka

drove the chariot that was trimmed with gold, oh Queen, while the kings looked on as if they were [startled] animals seeing the lion king. (34) Like village dogs with a lion the kings went after Him. Some of them then tried to block His way by raising their bows against Him. (35) Because of the floods of arrows shot from the Śārṅga some of them fell with their arms, legs and necks severed, while others gave it up and fled. (36) Like the sun god reaching his abode [or the western horizon] the Lord of the Yadus then entered Dvārakā, His city glorified in heaven and on earth, which was profusely decorated with wonderful archways and banners on flagpoles blocking the sunlight. (37) My father honored his friends, immediate relations and other family members with the most valuable clothing and jewelry, with beds, seats and with other furniture. (38) In his devotion he presented the Lord of the Complete [Pūrṇasya] the most valuable weapons, as also maidservants endowed with all riches, infantry, elephantry, chariotry and cavalry. (39) By abruptly breaking off our material bonds and doing penances, we have all become the maidservants of His household, of Him, the One Satisfied Within Himself.'

(40) **T**he other queens said [as expressed by Rohiṇī]: 'After He in battle had killed the demon Bhauma and his followers, He discovered that we, the daughters of the kings the demon defeated during his conquest of the earth, had been imprisoned by him. Because we constantly had remembered His lotus feet as the source of liberation from a material existence He, the One All of whose Wishes are Fulfilled, married us after our release. (41-42) Oh saintly lady, we do not desire rulership over the earth, a heavenly kingdom, unlimited pleasures or mystic power. Nor do we strive for the supreme divinity, to achieve immortality or the abode of Hari. We [just] want to carry on our heads the dust of the divine feet of the Wielder of the Club that is enriched with the fragrance of the *kuṅkuma* from the bosom of Śrī [see also 10.47: 60, ** and the Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka verse 4]. (43) We desire the same as what the Pulinda women [the *gopīs*] desire, as what the grass and the plants and the grazing cows and *gopas* of Vraja desire: to be touched by the feet of the Supreme Soul.'

*: The one called Rohiṇī here is not Rohiṇī, the mother of Balarāma, but the one queen representing the sixteen thousand queens whom Kṛṣṇa wed next to His eight principal queens.

** : The *paramparā* points out that the Śrī referred to here is the supreme goddess of fortune as identified by the '*Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*':

*devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā
rādhikā para-devatā*

*sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva
kāntiḥ sammohinī parā*

"The transcendental goddess Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the direct counterpart of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. She is endowed with the power to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead. She is the primeval internal potency of the Lord."

Chapter 84

Vasudeva of Sacrifice to the Sages at Kurukṣetra Explaining the Path of Success

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When Pṛthā, the daughter of the king of Subala [Gāndhārī], Draupadī, Subhadrā and the wives of the kings, as also His *gopīs*, heard of the loving attachment [of the wives] to Kṛṣṇa, Lord Hari, the Soul of All, they were all greatly amazed with tears filling their eyes. (2-5) As the women thus were conversing with the women and the men with the men, sages arrived at the place eager to see Kṛṣṇa and Rāma: Dvaipāyana, Nārada, Cyavana, Devala and Asita; Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Bharadvāja and Gautama; Lord Paraśurāma and his disciples, Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya and Kaśyapa; Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya and Bṛhaspati; Dvita, Trita, Ekata and the sons of Brahmā [the four Kumāras] as also Āṅgirā, Agastya, Yājñavalkya, sages like Vāmadeva and others. (6) Seeing them, the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, the kings and others who sat down, immediately stood up to bow down to the souls who are honored throughout the universe. (7) They all, including Balarāma and Acyuta, honored them befittingly with words of welcome, sitting places, water to wash their feet and water to drink, flower garlands, incense and sandalwood paste. (8) With the sages sitting down comfortably the Supreme Lord, who in His embodiment defends the dharma, addressed the with rapt attention listening assembly of great souls. (9) The Supreme Lord said: 'We who achieved this birth have now all obtained its fruit: the audience of the masters of yoga which even by the demigods is rarely won. (10) How is it possible that human beings, who are not very renounced and see God in the form of the temple deity, now may enjoy your company and may touch you, ask you questions, bow down, and be of worship at your feet and such? (11) By just seeing you, the saints, one is instantly purified, while that is not so with the holy places consisting of water or with the deities made of clay and stone, which only after a long time make that happen [1.13: 10]. (12) Neither the fire, the sun, the moon nor the firmament, neither the earth, the water, the ether, the breath, the speech nor the mind, take away, when they are worshiped, the sins of someone entangled in material opposites. But they are wiped away by just a

few moments of service to men of [brahminical] learning. (13) With the idea of himself, as being the body which can be so smelly with its three elements [of mucus, bile and air], with the notion of a wife and all of that as being his property, with the view of clay as being something worshipable, with the thought of water as being a place of pilgrimage, he [the common man going for appearances] is not of [respect for] men of wisdom. As such he is [not much better than] a cow or an ass.'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'Hearing this being said by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord of Unlimited Wisdom, the scholars were silent, confounded by the words that were hard to digest. (15) The sages pondered for some time over the Lord and the subordinate position [He had assumed], and concluded that what He had said was meant to enlighten the people. Thus they addressed Him, the Spiritual Master of the Universe, with a smile on their faces. (16) The honorable sages said: 'Just see how we, the best knowers of the truth and chief creators of the universe, are bewildered by the power of the material illusion created by the activities of the Supreme Lord, who so amazingly covert in His operations pretends to be the one controlled. (17) Effortlessly He creates, all by Himself, the variety of this universe and maintains and destroys it without getting entangled Himself. He is in His actions just like the earth element with the many names and forms of its transformations. What an actor [imitator] the Almighty One is in His activities [see also 8.6: 10]! (18) Your good Self, the Original Personality of the Soul, nonetheless at times assume the mode of goodness in order to protect Your people and to chastise the wicked; thus You maintain the eternal Vedic path of the *varṇāśrama* divisions [of status/vocational orientations] by means of Your pastimes [see also *sanātana* dharma]. (19) The Spirit of the Absolute [as known by the Vedas] is Your pure heart, wherein the manifest, the unmanifest and the timeless transcendental position is realized by means of austerities, study and turning inward in concentrated meditation [see also B.G. 7: 5]. (20) Oh Absolute Truth, You show Your respect for the community of the brahmins because one, through those perfect representatives, can understand the revealed scriptures. Consequently You are the leader of all souls of respect for the brahminical culture. (21) Today we achieve the fulfillment of our birth, education, austerities and vision, for it is the goal of the saintly souls to find association with You, the Ultimate of all Welfare. (22) We offer [You,] Kṛṣṇa our obeisances, You, the Supreme Lord whose wisdom is always fresh, the Supersoul who covers His greatness with His *yogamāyā*. (23) None of these kings who enjoy Your company, nor the Vṛṣṇis, know You, hiding behind the curtain of *māyā*, as the Supreme Soul, the Time and

the Lord [B.G. 6: 26]. (24-25) The way a sleeping person envisions an alternate reality with the names and forms he pictures in his mind, and therewith has no knowledge of a separate reality beyond it, one with You, similarly having names and forms, has no clue, because of the discontinuity of one's memory created by the activity of the senses which bewilder one's consciousness with Your *māyā* [compare B.G. 4: 5 and 4.29: 1, 10.1: 41 and 7.7: 25]. (26) Today You granted us the vision of Your feet forming the source of the Ganges which washes away an abundance of sins. When one [with them] well installed in the heart has ripened in one's yoga practice and fully has matured in devotional service, the material mentality covering the individual souls is destroyed and Your destination is attained - so please, show Your devotees Your mercy.'

(27) Śrī Śuka said: 'The sages having said this took leave of Daśārha [Kṛṣṇa], Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira, oh sage among kings, and prepared to return to their hermitages. (28) Seeing this the greatly renown Vasudeva [the father of Kṛṣṇa] approached them bowing down, and took hold of their feet while expressing the following, carefully chosen words. (29) Śrī Vasudeva said: 'My obeisances to you who [represent] all the gods [*]. Oh seers, please listen, tell us this: how can we be freed from our karma by doing work?'

(30) Śrī Nārada said: 'Oh scholars, this question asked by Vasudeva in his eagerness to learn about his ultimate benefit, is not that surprising at all considering the fact that he thinks of Kṛṣṇa as being a child [of his, his son]. (31) When people are close in this world, it is easily a cause of disregard, just as it is e.g. with someone living at the Ganges who leaves to seek purification elsewhere. (32-33) The quality of [the Lord] His awareness is never disturbed by time-dependent matters like the creation, destruction and so on of this universe, not by its own activity nor by another agency [see B.G. 4: 14 and 10: 30]. The consciousness of Him, the One Controller without a Second, is not affected by hindrances, material actions and their consequences, and the basic qualities of nature with their flow of changes [*kleśa*, karma and *guṇa*]. Others [though] may consider Him as being covered by His own expansions of *prāṇa* and other elements of nature, just like the sun is hidden by clouds, snow or eclipses.'

(34) Then, before all the kings, as also before Acyuta and Rāma listening, oh King, the sages addressed Vasudeva saying: (35) 'It has been ascertained as being correct that karma is counteracted by this [type of] work: to honor with faith and with festive sacrifices Viṣṇu, the Lord of All Sacrifices. (36) Scholars demonstrated from the

viewpoint of the Śāstras that this religiousness of being connected [in yoga] is the easiest way to pacify the mind; it brings joy to the heart. (37) For the twice-born soul at home to go for the Personality of Godhead by performing sacrifices faithfully with spotlessly [justly] acquired possessions, constitutes the path that brings success [**]. (38) An intelligent person should renounce the desire for wealth by means of sacrifices and charity. He should give up the desire for a wife and kids by engaging in temple affairs. With the help of [the *cakra* order of] Time [the Time that is also the destroyer of all worlds, see also 9.5 and B.G. 3: 16] he should forget the desire for a world for himself, oh Vasudeva. All sages renounced their [three types of] desires for [the wealth, the family and his own command of] a household life and went into the forest for doing penances [see also B.G. 2: 13]. (39) Prabhu, a twice-born soul is born with three debts: a debt to the gods, a debt to the sages and a debt to the forefathers. Not liquidating them by [respectively] sacrifice, studying the scriptures and by begetting children [or by pupils and brainchildren like books, see ***] he, upon leaving the body, will fall down [back into the material world]. (40) But you [Vasudeva] are presently free from two of the debts, the debt to the sages and the debt to the forefathers, oh magnanimous soul. Be now free from your debt to the gods and renounce your homestead. (41) Oh Vasudeva, [in a previous life] your good self must have been of much worship with devotion for the Supreme Lord of the Universe, for He assumed the role of your son [see also 10.3: 32-45 and 11.5: 41].'

(42) Śrī Śuka said: 'Vasudeva having heard the words they spoke, chose for the sages as his priests and propitiated them by bowing his head. (43) The ṛṣis being asked, oh King, then engaged the pious soul in fire sacrifices that strictly to the principles with excellent arrangements were performed at the holy field [of Kurukṣetra]. (44-45) When he was about to be initiated the Vṛṣṇis came joyfully to the sacrificial pavilion, bathed and well-dressed, wearing garlands and being elaborately ornamented. They came together with their queens who, carrying the items of worship in their hands, were clad in the finest clothes, wore golden lockets around their necks and who were smeared with sandalwood paste, oh King. (46) Clay tom-toms and tabors, kettle drums and drums, conch shells and other musical instruments sounded, male and female dancers danced, and bards and panegyrist sweet voiced sang together with the female singers of heaven and their husbands. (47) According to the rules by the priests being sprinkled with sacred water [for his initiation], Vasudeva, with his eyes decorated with collyrium and with his body anointed, together with his eighteen wives [see 9.24: 21-23 & 45] looked like

the moon king surrounded by the stars. (48) With them, all finely decorated, wearing silk *sārīs* and bangles, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, he, being initiated and clad in deerskin, shone brilliantly. (49) Oh great King, his officials and priests radiated, with their jewels and garments of silk, as if they were standing in the sacrificial arena of the killer of Vṛtra [Indra, see 6.11]. (50) At that time the two Lords Rāma and Kṛṣṇa also stepped forward. With each of Them being accompanied by His own wives, sons and family members as expansions of Their glory, They shone just as splendidly. (51) Vasudeva exercised, in accordance with the rules, respect for the Lord of Rituals, Mantras and Paraphernalia, by performing [both the types of] fire sacrifices, and such, that are differently characterized as 'original' [or primary, different prototypes as described in the *śruti*] and 'changed' [or secondary, offerings following adapted procedures, see *4]. (52) Next he as prescribed compensated at the designated time the priests, who were already richly decorated, with gifts of gratitude that made them look even more beautiful, as also with marriageable girls, cows and land of great value. (53) After the great sages had executed the ritual with oblations by the sponsor and his wife [*patnī-saṁyāja*], as also the concluding ritual [*avabhr̥thya*], the brahmins, with [Vasudeva] the chief of the *yajña* in front, bathed in the lake of Lord Paraśurāma [9.16: 18-19]. (54) Having bathed, he together with the women gave their jewelry and clothing away to the bards and next, in his finest apparel, honored all the classes of people, and even the dogs, with food. (55-56) His relatives, their wives and children, the leaders of the Vidarbhas, Kośalas, Kurus, Kāśīs, Kekayas and Sṛñjayas, the officials, the priests, the different types of enlightened souls, the ordinary humans, the paranormal souls [the 'ghostly'], the forefathers and the venerable personalities, he gave opulent gifts. Then they took leave from Kṛṣṇa, the Abode of Śrī, and departed, full of praise for the sacrifice that was performed. (57-58) The immediate family members Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brother [Vidura], Pṛthā and her sons [Arjuna, Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira], Bhīṣma, Droṇa, the twins [Nakula and Sahadeva], Nārada, Bhagavān Vyāsadeva and others, embraced their friends and relatives, the Yadus, and then, with hearts melting of affection upon the separation, with difficulty returned to their respective places, as also did the rest of the guests. (59) Nanda out of affection for his relatives stayed together with the cowherds [a little longer]. They were by Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and the rest honored with extra opulent worship. (60) Vasudeva, who with ease had crossed over the ocean of his great ambition [see also 10.3: 11-12], felt most satisfied. Surrounded by his well-wishers he took Nanda's hand and spoke to him.

(61) Śrī Vasudeva said: 'The by God forged bond of men called affection is, I think, even for heroes and yogis difficult to give up. (62) Even though the friendship you offered so very saintly has not been reciprocated by us being so forgetful of what you did, it will never cease, for it is beyond compare. (63) Formerly [sitting in Kāṁsa's prison] we could not act on your behalf, and now, well-to-do, oh brother, we even with you standing in front of us fail to see you, because our eyes are blinded being intoxicated by our opulence. (64) May someone who is after the real benefit of life never find the fortune of kings, oh you so full of respect, for with his vision thus being clouded he is blind to even the needs of his own family and friends [compare 10.10: 8].'

(65) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus with tears filling his eyes remembering what he [Nanda] all had done in his friendship, Ānakadundubhi, with his heart softened by the intimacy, had to weep. (66) Out of love for his friend who showed his affection and for Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, Nanda then said: 'I will go later, I will go tomorrow', but stayed three months longer with the Yadus who honored him. (67-68) Being satisfied with desirables, like the most valuable ornaments, finest linen and various priceless pieces of furniture, he accepted the gifts offered by Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava and others. Seen off by the Yadus, he departed together with the inhabitants of Vraja and his family. (69) As they went to Mathurā, Nanda, the *gopas* and the *gopīs* could not put Govinda's lotus feet out of their minds and consequently looked back [many a time]. (70) With their relatives having departed, the Vṛṣṇis, who had Kṛṣṇa as their deity, saw that the rainy season was about to begin and therefore turned back to Dvārakā. (71) To the people [at home] they gave an account of the great festivity and of what had taken place in relation to the lord of the Yadus [Vasudeva] and all the well-wishers they had seen during the pilgrimage [see 10.82].'

*: This statement, so reminds the *paramparā*, is confirmed in the authoritative śruti-mantras, that declare 'yāvatīr vai devatās tāḥ sarvā veda-vidi brāhmaṇe vasanti': "Whatever demigods exist, all reside in a brāhmaṇa who knows the Veda."

** : The *paramparā* adds: 'Both Śrīdhara Svāmī and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī here agree that the ritual karma of Vedic sacrifices is particularly meant for attached householders. Those who are already renounced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, like Vasudeva himself, need only cultivate their faith in the Lord's devotees, His Deity form, His name, the remnants of His food and His teachings, as given in Bhagavad Gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.'

***: The word *putra* used here usually refers to a child, but also means doll or any other artificial thing to care for like a home, or works of art, a book or another byproduct as Prabhupāda and his pupils called it as e.g. in 3.28: 38 and 11.20: 27-28. It literally means 'preserving from the hell called Put', the place where the childless ones reside.

*4: The *paramparā* explains: 'The Brāhmaṇa portion of the Vedic *śruti* specifies the complete step-by-step procedure of only a few prototype sacrifices, such as the Jyotiṣṭoma and Darśa-pūrṇamāsa. These are called the *prākṛta*, or original, *yajñas*; the details of other *yajñas* must be extrapolated from the patterns of these *prākṛta* injunctions according to the strict rules of the Mīmāṃsā-śāstra. Since other *yajñas* are thus known by derivation from the prototype sacrifices, they are called *vaikṛta*, or "changed".'

Chapter 85

Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'One day, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Acyuta, the two sons of Vasudeva, visited Their father who, after They had honored his feet, welcomed Them affectionately and spoke to Them. (2) Having heard the words of the sages referring to the superhuman qualities of his two sons, he became convinced of Their heroic deeds. Addressing Them by name he said: (3) 'Kṛṣṇa, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh greatest yogi, oh eternal Saṅkarṣaṇa, I know that the two of You are the direct [representatives] of the original nature [or *pradhāna*] and the supreme principle [the *Puruṣa* or person] of this universe. (4) You are directly the Supreme Lord, the masters of the original substance and the person. Whatever comes into existence, whenever, or for whatever reason, originates from You, is created by You and exists within You, is there for Your sake and belongs to You. (5) Oh Lord of the Beyond, this variegated universe You created from Yourself, is entered by You, oh Unborn One, and also maintained by You, the Supersoul [the *Paramātmā*], as the life principle of vitality [*prāṇa*] and individuality [*jīva*]. (6) Of both [the animate, and inanimate] entities, which differing from each other all belong to the Supreme and are thus dependent, You are the One constituting the creative potency, active within the life air and the other basic forces of the universe [see also 2.5: 32-33]. (7) The glow, brilliance, luminosity and the particular existence of the moon, the fire, the sun, the stars and lightning [B.G. 15: 12], the permanence of the mountains, and the fragrance and sustaining power of the earth, are all You in fact. (8) The quenching and the vitalizing capacity of water, as also the water itself and its taste, are You, oh Lord. Oh Controller, on the basis of Your air [the oxygen...] there is the body heat, the mental and physical vigor, the endeavor and the movement [see also B.G. 11: 39]. (9) You are the directions and the spaces they describe, the omnipresent ether and the elemental sound belonging thereto. You are the [primeval] sound constituting the syllable AUM and its differentiation in particular forms [of language, see also B.G. 7: 8]. (10) You are the power of sense perception, You are their gods [see also 3.12: 26] and of them You are the mercy [granting these sensations]. You are of the intelligence the power to decide and of the living being the power to

remember things correctly [B.G. 7: 10 & 15: 15]. (11) You, the primeval Cause of all Causes [the non-manifest original substance *pradhāna*], are the source of [the false ego associated with] the physical elements [*tamas*], the passions of the senses [*rajas*] and the stream of consciousness of the creative gods [*sattva*, see also B.G. 14]. (12) Among the entities subject to destruction in this world, You are the imperishable being, just as the substance of something is observed [and not lost] with its transformations. (13) The modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, and their functions, are in this [imperishable] way regulated within You, the Supreme Absolute Truth, by Your internal potency [the *yogamāyā* of Your pastimes]. (14) On that account there is in You [Yourself] no question of these modifications. Whenever they are conditioned by You [and in You] as products of creation, they have You inside of them, You who otherwise are not material [eternally free, *nitya-mukta*, see also B.G. 2: 12, 9: 4-5 & 8: 19]. (15) In this world they are ignorant who, impelled by their karma, [eternally bound, *nitya-bandha*] move around in the cycle of rebirth; they fail therewith to understand the transcendental destination that is the Soul of the Complete. (16) I was as fortunate to acquire with this life this difficult to attain, most suitable form of human existence, but because of Your deluding energy [*māyā*] I have spent my entire life in confusion about what one's own purpose in life would be. (17) With You, who in this world ties everyone together with the ropes of affection, there is, with the body and the progeny and other relations, the 'this I am' and 'these are mine' associated with it [see also e.g. 2.9: 2, 4.28: 17, 4.29: 5, 5.5: 8 and 6.16: 41]. (18) The two of You are not our sons but evidently the Lords of *pradhāna* and *Puruṣa* who descended to remove the burden of rulers from the earth, as You have said [10.50: 7-10]. (19) I therefore today seek the shelter of Your lotus feet which, from the surrendered, from the distressed souls, take away the fear of being entangled [in the material world], oh Friend, and that is all. Enough, I have enough of the hankering for sense enjoyment that binds me to the mortal frame and makes me think of You, the Supreme One, as being my child. (20) In the maternity room You indeed said [see 10.3: 44] that You were the Unborn Soul who, age after age having taking birth with us, thus operates to defend Your dharma and therewith just like a cloud [changing form] assume and give up various bodies [see B.G. 4: 8]. Oh, who can understand the mystic potency and powerful expansions of You, the all-pervading, most glorified Lord?

(21) Śrī Śuka said: 'Having heard these statements of His father, the Supreme Lord, the best of the Sātvatas, with humility bowed down and then in a gentle voice replied, broadly smiling. (22) The Supreme

Lord said: 'I consider these meaningful words of yours appropriate, oh father, since by referring to Us, your Sons, you have expressed the complete of reality. (23) I, you, He, My brother, and these residents of Dvārakā, must, together with everything moving and not moving, all be considered the same way [as expansions of Me], oh best of the Yadus [B.G. 9: 5 & 15 and the *siddhānta*]. (24) The Supreme Soul, being indeed one, self-luminous, eternal and distinct, by means of the basic qualities, from Himself has created the material entities belonging to those modes. Being free from the modes He is thus seen as many. (25) It is as with the ether, the air, the fire, the water and the earth, that, being single elements, depending their locations, in their manifest and un-manifest, small and large products, appear as many [see also B.G. 13: 31].'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'Vasudeva thus having been addressed by the Supreme Lord, oh King, was liberated from his thinking in opposites and became silent, being satisfied within. (27-28) Then at that place, oh best of the Kurus, Devakī, the worshipable goddess of all who to her utter amazement had heard of [the retrieval of] the son of Their guru [10.45], asked Kṛṣṇa and Rāma loudly and clear to bring back her own sons who were murdered by Kāṁsa. With that in mind looking back, she spoke sad and distraught with tears in her eyes. (29) Śrī Devakī said: 'Rāma, oh Rāma, oh Immeasurable Soul; oh Kṛṣṇa, Master of the Yoga Masters, I know that the two of You are the Original Personalities, the Lords of the Creators of the Universe [see also *catur-vyūha*]. (30) Having taken birth from me, You have now descended because of the kings who, living in defiance of the scriptures and with their good qualities destroyed by the time [of Kali-yuga], became a burden to the earth. (31) Oh Soul of All That Be, today I have come to seek shelter with You, who, by a partial expansion [the modes] of an expansion [the material energy] of an expansion [Nārāyaṇa] of Yours, gives rise to the generation, prospering and dissolution of the universe [see also 2.5]. (32-33) One says that Your guru ordered You to retrieve his son who had died a long time ago. You brought him from the place of the forefathers to Your spiritual master as a gift of gratitude to the teacher. Please, oh You two Masters of the Yoga Masters, fulfill the same way my desire. I would like to see my sons brought back who were killed by Kāṁsa [see 10.4].'

(34) The ṛṣi [Śuka] said: 'Thus entreated by Their mother, oh descendant of Bharata, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa entered the nether world of Sutala, utilizing Their internal potency [see 5.24: 18]. (35) The Daitya king [Bali], who saw Them entering, stood immediately up to bow

down to Them together with his entourage. He was overwhelmed with joy of seeing Them, the Supreme Soul and Self of the Universe, who were his favorite divinity of worship. (36) Bringing Them royal seats, They were happy to sit down there. He washed the feet of the two Great Souls and together with his followers took the water [upon their heads] that purifies [everyone], up to Brahmā. (37) He worshiped Them by presenting all the wealth of himself and his family: the most valuable riches, garments, ornaments, fragrant pastes, bethel nut, lamps, nectarean food and so on [*]. (38) He who had conquered Indra [see 8.15], over and over took hold of the Supreme Lord's feet. With a heart melting of love, with tears of happiness in his eyes and with his hair standing on end, oh King, he spoke with a choked up voice. (39) Bali said: 'My obeisances to Ananta, the Greatest Being, and Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the Supersoul, the Disseminator and Creator of analytical knowledge [*sāṅkhya*, see 3.25-32] and [the science of bhakti-]yoga. (40) To see You is indeed something rarely achieved by the living beings. But [if You endeavor to reach us] of Your own accord, it lies even within the reach of people like us, whose natures are of passion and ignorance [see B.G. 3: 21-23]. (41-43) The sons of Diti and Dāna, the singers of heaven, the perfected souls, the scientists, the venerable persons, the wealth keepers, the wild, the carnivorous and the paranormal ones, the mystics, the politicians, we and others like them, are constantly fixed in a grudge against the physical presence of You, the direct embodiment of the revealed scriptures who are of pure goodness. Some are obstinate with hatred and some are of devotion with a certain lust [an ulterior motive], while the enlightened souls, predominated by the mode of goodness, are not so attracted [compare: the *ātmārāma*-verse 1.7: 10]. (44) Oh Master of Yoga Masters, when not even expert yogis know Your bewildering power of yoga, which for the greater part is characterized by terms like this [*svarūpa* and *viśeṣa*, on inborn and outer differences based, game of identity], what then to expect of us? (45) Have therefore mercy with me and lead me out of the blind well of a householder's life towards the other shelter of Your lotus feet sought by selfless souls. Thus I may wander everywhere alone, or else under the protection of those [saints, devotees, Vaiṣṇavas, desire trees] who are willing to help everyone in the world, the souls at whose feet one finds peace and obtains what one needs in life [the '*vṛtti*']. (46) Please direct us, oh Controller of the ones [self-]controlled, make us sinless, oh Master, turn us into a person who executes with faith and is thus freed from [scriptural, ritual] fixations.'

(47) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Once, during the first Manu, Marīci fathered six sons born from Ūrnā. They were demigods who laughed

when they saw that the loving one ['*kam*', or Brahmā in this case] wanted to copulate with his daughter [called Vāk, see 3.12: 28-35, compare 3.20: 23]. (48-49) Because of that offense they immediately entered a womb to be born to Hiranyakaśipu. They were then by Yogamāyā transferred to be born from the womb of Devakī, oh King. They were murdered by Kāmsa. She laments over them as being her own sons. These same sons are living here near you [see also ** and 10.2*]. (50) We would like to take them from here in order to dispel their mother's sadness. When thereafter the curse is lifted, they, being freed from the misery, will come back to their own [heavenly] world. (51) By My grace these six - Smara [Kīrtimān, see 10.1: 57], Udgītha, Pariṣvaṅga, Pataṅga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghṛṇī - will return to the destination of the saintly souls.'

(52) **T**hus having spoken, They, both being honored by Bali, took the sons back to Dvārakā and presented them to their mother. (53) When she saw the boys, the breasts of the goddess flowed because of her affection for her sons. She placed them on her lap and embraced them, over and over smelling their heads. (54) Bewildered by the illusory energy of Viṣṇu because of which the creation comes into being, she lovingly allowed her sons to drink from her breasts, which were wet as they touched them. (55-56) Having drunk her nectarean milk, which had remained from the milk the Wielder of the Club had drank [before Vasudeva carried Him to Gokula], they, because of [thus] coming in touch with the body of Nārāyaṇa, regained the awareness of their original selves. Bowing down to Govinda, Devakī, their father and Balarāma, they, for everyone to see, went to [heaven,] the abode where the gods reside. (57) Seeing this return and departure of the dead [her sons], divine Devakī thought in great amazement about the magic that was arranged by Kṛṣṇa, oh King. (58) Oh descendant of Bharata, there are of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul unlimited in His valor, countless heroic acts like this.'

(59) **Ś**rī Sūta said [at Naimiṣāranya, 1.1: 4]: "Whoever devoutly hears or recounts the way this pastime of Murāri, whose glories are unlimited, is described by Vyāsa's respected son, will, by thus fixing his mind on the Supreme Lord, go to His all-auspicious heavenly abode, for this true delight for His devotees' ears fully annihilates the sins of the living being."

*: The *paramparā* adds here that there are nine standard processes of devotional service as Prahlāda points out in 7.5: 23-24, and that the last, *ātma-samarpanam*, the handing over of one's wealth as modeled by Bali Mahārāja for the sake of the *ātma-nivedanam* of self-communication with

the Lord, is the culmination at which every endeavor should aim. If one tries to impress the Lord with wealth, power, intelligence and so on, but fails to humbly understand oneself as being His servant, one's so-called devotion is only a presumptuous show. The *paramparā* thus warns here against the false religion of pompous ceremony without regard for the yogic retreat as of Dakṣa in 4.2 [See also B.G. 2: 42-43].

** : The *paramparā* explains with the *ācāryas* Śrīdhara Svāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī that, after taking Marīci's six sons from Hiraṇyakaśipu, Lord Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā first made them pass through one more life as children of another great demon, Kālanemi [the previous incarnation of Kāṁsa, see 10.1: 68], and then she finally transferred them to the womb of Devakī. For the full story see footnote 10.1***.

Chapter 86

Arjuna Kidnaps Subhadrā, and Kṛṣṇa Instructs Bahulaśva and Śrutadeva

(1) **T**he honorable king [Parīkṣit] said: 'Oh brahmin, we would like to know how she who is my grandmother, the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma [Subhadrā, see 9.24: 53-55], got married to Arjuna.'

(2-3) Śrī Śuka said: 'Arjuna, the great lord, while on a pilgrimage wandering the earth, reaching Prabhāsa heard that Balarāma intended to give His maternal cousin away to Duryodhana and to no one else. Desirous of her, he therefore went to Dvārakā disguised as a renunciate with a *tridaṇḍa* [*]. (4) Determined to fulfill his purpose, he resided there during the months of the rainy season and was [according to the custom] all the time honored by Balarāma and the citizens without them being aware who he was. (5) One day being invited as a guest he was brought to the house of Balarāma, who faithfully presented him a meal which he then ate. (6) With his eyes wide open of happiness, he saw the wonderful girl there who enchanted heroes. Smitten he fixed his mind on her. (7) Seeing him who stole each woman's heart, she desired him also. She fixed her heart and eyes upon him and full of desire bashfully smiling cast sidelong glances. (8) Thinking of nothing but her, Arjuna awaited the right opportunity. With his heart trembling of the strongest desire, he could find no peace. (9) When she during an important religious festival rode away from the fortress in a chariot, the mighty warrior seized the opportunity to abduct the girl who had stolen his heart. That occurred with the consent of her parents [see 10.1: 56] and Kṛṣṇa. (10) Standing on the chariot he, like the king of the animals claiming his share, raised his bow and drove back the heroes and guards who tried to stop him while her relatives were angrily shouting. (11) Balarāma, upon hearing about it, was as perturbed as the ocean during a full moon. Lord Kṛṣṇa and His family had to grasp Him respectfully by His feet in order to pacify Him. (12) With pleasure He then sent presents of great value, elephants, horses and male and female servants, as a wedding gift for the groom and bride.'

(13) Śrī Śuka continued: 'There was among Kṛṣṇa's brahmins one named Śrutadeva. He was one of the best, being exclusively devoted

to Kṛṣṇa, and was known for the fullness of his realization - his serenity, learning and freedom from sense gratification. (14) As a householder dwelling in Mithilā in the kingdom of Videha, he performed his duties without being concerned about what he received for his sustenance. (15) Day by day doing his tasks as required, he was satisfied with just that - and nothing more, of what he by providence acquired as his share for his sober maintenance. (16) The ruler of that kingdom, stemming from the line of King Mithilā, [Janaka] was known by the name of Bahulāśva. He was just as selfless as he was my dear King. They were both equally dear to Acyuta. (17) Pleased with the two of them, the Supreme Lord mounted His chariot brought by Dāruka. Together with a group of sages the Master went to Videha. (18) He was accompanied by Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, I myself [Śuka], Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Cyavana and others. (19) Everywhere He came, the citizens and villagers approached, carrying *arghya* [offerings of water] to welcome Him, like He was the risen sun surrounded by the planets. (20) In Ānarta [where Dvārakā is], Dhanva [the desert region], Kuru-jāṅgala [Thaneswar and Kurukṣetra], Kaṅka, Matsya [Jaipur and Aloyar], Pañcāla [the Ganges region], Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya [north-east Punjab], Kośala [from Kāśī to the Himalayas], Arṇa [east of Mithilā] and in many other kingdoms, the men and women drank, with their eyes, the gentle smiles and affectionate glances of His lotus face, oh King. (21) By [thus] bestowing upon them the fearlessness of the spiritual vision, the Spiritual Master of the Three Worlds put an end to the blindness of their eyes. This way gradually reaching Videha, He heard His glories being sung by the God-conscious souls and the commoners, the glories eradicating all misfortune and purifying every corner of the universe. (22) The moment the villagers and citizens heard that Acyuta had arrived, oh King, they joyfully came forward to greet Him with offerings in their hands. (23) Seeing Him who is Praised in the Verses, they, with their faces and hearts blossoming of love and with joined palms held to their heads, bowed down to Him and the sages, whom they till then only knew from hearsay. (24) Both the king of Mithilā and Śrutadeva prostrated at His feet, with each of them in his mind the thought that the Spiritual Master of the Universe especially for him had arrived to be of mercy. (25) Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva then, both with their palms joined, at the same time invited the Descendant of Daśārha and the brahmins to be their guests. (26) The Supreme Lord wanted to please them both, and accepted their offer by entering each his house [simultaneously] without them seeing this [*vaibhava-prakāśa* miracle]. (27-29) The descendent of Janaka [Bahulāśva] who, later that day, saw them fatigued coming from a distance to his house,

mindfully brought fine seats outside for them, so that they could sit comfortably. Overjoyed at heart with intense devotion and eyes clouded with tears, he bowed down to wash the feet, the water of which is capable of purifying the entire world. Together with his family he took it on his head and honored the Lords [and sages] with sandalwood paste, garlands, clothing, jewelry, incense, lamps, *arghya*, cows and bulls. (30) After they had eaten their fill, he, while happily massaging the feet of Viṣṇu on his lap, in order to please them, slowly said the following in a gentle voice.

(31) Śrī Bahulāśva said: 'You, oh Almighty One, the Self-illuminated Witness and Soul of All Created Beings, have now become visible to us, those who are remembering Your lotus feet. (32) To be true to the statement You have made that: 'No one, not even Ananta, Śrī or the Unborn Brahmā is as dear to Me as the unalloyed devotee', You have manifested before our eyes [see also 7.7: 51-52, 10.9: 20-21, 10.47: 58-63]. (33) What person who knows this would abandon Your lotus feet, when You give Yourself to peaceful sages free from possessiveness? (34) Descending in the Yadu dynasty for the sake of those caught in the cycle of birth and death [*samsāra*], You have, in order to put an end to it, disseminated Your fame removing the sins of the three worlds. (35) All glories to You, oh Kṛṣṇa, oh Supreme Lord of an unlimited intelligence, oh Nara-Nārāyaṇa who are perfectly peaceful in Your austerity. (36) Please, oh Omnipresent One, dwell together with the brahmins for a few days in our home and sanctify this dynasty of Nimi with the dust of Your feet.'

(37) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being invited by the king, the Supreme Lord and Maintainer of the Entire World stayed there and thus made the men and women of Mithilā happy. (38) Śrutadeva, who just like Bahulāśva received Kṛṣṇa in his house, bowed down to the sages and [then] in great delight danced with waving clothes. (39) He made them sit on mats of darbha grass that were brought, he greeted them with words of welcome, and then together with his wife washed their feet with pleasure. (40) Overjoyed of having all his desires fulfilled, he most piously sprinkled himself, his house and his family with the water. (41) With offerings of fruits, aromatic root [*uśtra*], pure nectarean sweet water, fragrant clay, tulsī leaves, kuśa grass and lotus flowers, he honored them with all items of worship at his disposition, as also with food conducive to the mood of goodness [see B.G. 17: 8]. (42) He wondered: 'How could it happen that I who fell down in the blind well of family life, may enjoy this association with Kṛṣṇa and these godly people in whom He resides? It is the dust of their feet that constitutes the dignity of all the holy places.' (43) Having shown his

hospitality, Śrutadeva, with them comfortably being seated, sat close together with his wife, relatives and children, and addressed them while massaging [the Lord] His feet.

(44) Śrutadeva said: 'It is not just today that we see the Supreme Personality present before us. We in fact enjoy His presence ever since He created this universe with His energies and [as an *avatāra*] entered it in His [transcendental] state. (45) He enters this world and appears there the way a sleeping person, alone with his mind, creates a separate world in his imagination. (46) You appear in the heart of those persons who, with a pure [by meditation peaceful] mind, time and again hear and speak about You, glorify You, worship You and converse about You. (47) In spite of being situated in the heart You are far removed from minds agitated by material affairs. One [indeed] cannot get hold of You by one's own [material] powers, but You support those souls who know to appreciate Your qualities [see also B.G. 7: 25]. (48) May there be my obeisances unto You, who are the Supersoul for the knowers of the Supreme Spirit, unto You, who [in the form of Time **] brings death to the conditioned soul, unto You, the One who assumes the forms of effect as also the forms of cause, unto You whose vision is not covered by Your deluding potency but who are covered to our vision. (49) Please, oh You as that Supersoul, command us Your servants. What, oh Lord, should we do? Oh, having this form of Your good Self visible before our eyes is what puts an end to the troubles of humanity!'

(50) Śrī Śuka said: 'Having heard what he thus said to Him, the Supreme Lord, the destroyer of the distress of the surrendered souls, addressed him with a broad smile while taking his hand in His own. (51) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh brahmin, you should know that these sages came along for the purpose of blessing you. Wandering with Me, they purify all the worlds with the dust of their feet. (52) The deities, pilgrimage sites and sacred rivers being visited, being touched and being worshiped, purify gradually, but the same thing is attained [at once] by the glance of those [sages] who are most worshipable [see also 4.30: 37, 7.9: 44, 10.9: 21, 10.84: 11]. (53) A brahmin is by birth the best of all living beings, and even more so, when he, as a portion of Me, is endowed with austerity, learning and contentment! (54) [Even] this four-armed form is not as dear to Me as a brahmin. A man of [brahminical] learning comprises all the Vedas, the way I comprise all the gods [see also 10.84: 12]. (55) Those whose intelligence is spoiled and fail to understand it thus, lack in respect and are envious. While they do consider the visible form of an idol worthy of worship, they are of neglect towards their guru, the [brahminical] scholar, who

in fact is Me, their very Self. (56) A learned man of respect for Me, keeps the moving and nonmoving part of this universe, as also the elementary categories basic to it, in mind as being forms of Me [see also B.G. 5: 18]. (57) Therefore, oh brahmin, just worship these brahmin seers with the same faith as you have in Me. You will thus directly be of worship for Me, and not in any other way as with [e.g. offering] vast riches [and such].'

(58) Śrī Śūka said: 'He [Śrutadeva] as also the king of Mithilā, who thus received instruction from the Lord, by their single-minded devotion unto Kṛṣṇa and His company of most exalted brahmins, attained the transcendental destination. (59) The Supreme Lord, who is of devotion for His own devotees, stayed with the two devotees, taught the path of the truthful soul [***], oh King, and returned to Dvārakā.'

*: The *tridaṇḍa* is a staff carried by *Vaiṣṇava sannayāsīs* symbolizing the threefold austerity of thought, speech and action. In this threefold the renunciate is vowed to serve Viṣṇu. The staff consists of three sticks wrapped in saffron cloth with a small extra piece wrapped in at the top.

** : Time is the Lord's impersonal feature. The *paramparā* says: 'It is understood from the Vedic science of epistemology, the 'Nyāya-Śāstra', that knowledge of an object (*prameya*) depends on a valid means of knowing (*pramāṇa*)' (pp 10.86: 54). Thus would knowing Kṛṣṇa in the form of Time as-He-is (I am the Time, the light of the sun and the moon, as He says to be in the Gītā) - by means of so-called equation clocks managed validly to His nature, knowing the Sun, as with a sundial, and calendars managed validly to His order, the moon, like with its phases - constitute the proper brahminical conduct. With weeks settled to the moon and clocks settled to the sun, standard time with its mean time deadness, zone time arbitrary false oneness and summertime instability, then would constitute the time of ignorance in denial of Kṛṣṇa, the father of Time, even though Kṛṣṇa does affirm the worship of Time with the pragmatism and thus karmic dictate of standard time, to which He still calls that demigod (...) worship less attractive and wrong [see also *cakra*, *kāla* and 1.2: 26, B.G. 9: 23, 10: 21, 30 & 33, 7: 8 and the Bhāgavatam time quotes].

***: Prabhupāda adds here: "The instruction we receive from this incident is that King Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva the *brāhmaṇa* were accepted by the Lord on the same level because both were pure devotees. This is the real qualification for being recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Chapter 87

The Underlying Mystery: Prayers of the Personified Vedas

(1) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'Oh brahmin, the Absolute Truth [*brahma*] cannot be described in words [*] and has no material qualities. How can the revealed scriptures [the *śruti*, the Vedas] dealing with the basic qualities of nature, directly refer to that what is elevated above cause [the subtle] and effect [the gross]?'

(2) Śrī Śuka said: 'The intelligence, senses, mind and the life force of the living beings were by their Lord and Master evolved for the sake of [dealing with, being satisfied with] elementary matter, for the sake of getting a life and for the sake of the [emancipation of the] soul and its ultimate liberation. (3) The predecessors [like the Kumāras] of our predecessors [like Nārada] were fixed on this same underlying mystery [*upaniṣad*] concerning the Absolute Truth. Whoever with faith holds on to it, will be free from material attachment and attain peace and happiness [see also 8.24: 38]. (4) I will here relate to you now an account concerning Lord Nārāyaṇa. It is about a conversation between Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and Nārada Muni.

(5) One day, when the Supreme Lord's beloved Nārada was traveling the worlds, he went for a visit to the *āśrama* of the Eternal Seer, Nārāyaṇa. (6) From the beginning of Brahmā's day, He [Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi] has, just for the welfare in this and the next life of human beings, maintaining the dharma, in Bhārata-varṣa been engaged in penances, spiritual knowledge and peacefulness [see *kalpa*]. (7) Having arrived there he [Nārada] bowed down to Him who sat there surrounded by sages from Kalāpa - the village where He resided - and asked this very same question, oh best of the Kurus. (8) As the seers were listening, the Supreme Lord related the following ancient discussion about the Absolute Truth that took place between the inhabitants of Janaloka [the world of the celibate saints]. (9) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh son of the self-born Lord [Brahmā], long ago in Janaloka a sacrificial ceremony took place held by the [*ūrdhva-retah*] celibate sages there who had found their life in Brahmā. (10) You [Nārada] had left for Śvetadvīpa to see the Lord [Aniruddha]. Thereupon a lively discussion ensued [between the sages of Janaloka]

about Him [Viṣṇu in the function of Aniruddha] in whom the Vedas lie down to rest [after the dissolution of the material world] that gave rise to the question you are now again asking Me. (11) Even though they were equally qualified as for their penance and study of the *śruti*, as also equal minded towards friends, foes and neutrals, they appointed one of them as their speaker while the rest eagerly listened.'

(12-13) Śrī Sanandana said: 'When He [Mahā-Viṣṇu], after having created this universe, withdrew for the sake of its dissolution and was lying asleep, the Vedas in person awakened the Supreme One with descriptions of His characteristics, the way a sleeping king by his court poets is awakened when they as his servants approach him at dawn with [recitations of] his heroic deeds. (14) The Vedas said: 'All glories, oh all glories to You! Please, Unconquerable One, defeat the eternal illusion which assumed the form of the natural modes and constitutes the [human] weakness. Because You, who in Your original status are complete with all opulences, at times engaging with Your spiritual and material energies awaken the powers of the mobile and immobile embodied beings [awake them to consciousness], You can by us, the Vedas, be supported [**]. (15) The world we perceive is by the seers regarded as a product of something greater [of *brahman*], as something which no more than clay [as a resource] undergoes any change itself when it is transformed in forms that dissolve again. For that reason the seers dedicated their minds, words and actions to You. Where else could the footsteps of men be placed than on the ground they are walking [see also 6.16: 22, 11.24: 18 and B.G. 7: 20-25]? (16) Your people of enlightenment, oh Master of All the Three Worlds, therefore dive deep into the nectarean ocean of the narrations [about You, the *kathā*], which eradicate the impurity and put an end to their troubles. It is therefore not that surprising that they who by the power of their own minds dispelled the [unwanted] qualities of the [identification with one's] temporality, oh Supreme One, experience the uninterrupted happiness of Your abode in their worship. (17) They who, like a bellows, are just displacing some air as they breathe [see B.G. 18: 61], are full of vitality [only] when they are Your faithful followers, [for] You, who are elevated above cause and effect, constitute the underlying reality from whose mercy the universal egg of the material complete, the separate existence [the ego] and the other aspects of creation were produced [see 3.26: 51-53]. Adapted to the particular forms of the living being, You then appear here as the Ultimate Form among the different gross and subtle physical coverings [the *kośas* and B.G. 18: 54]. (18) Among those living according to the standards of the seers, they who are engrossed in their vision worship the abdomen [the lower centers], while the Ārunis [the

superior yogis] first of all fix their attention on the *prāṇic* knot of the subtle energies [see *cakra*] of the heart. From there, oh Unlimited One, they move [their attention] upward to the head, which is Your abode and then they go to the highest destination from which they, having reached it, never again fall down in the mouth of death [see also B.G. 8: 16]. (19) Entering in a certain manner the, by You differently created, species of life as their motivation, You become visible depending the higher or lower form of Your own created beings, just as fire manifests itself [depending the form ignited]. You thus existing among them as the 'real' among the 'unreal', are understood as being one unchanging, pure, central refuge, by those who, free from material entanglements, have spotless minds [see also B.G. 2: 12]. (20) The person, residing within the bodies he owes to his karma, is, as an expansion of You who are the possessor of all energies, as is stated [by the Vedas], in fact not of the external [the gross body, the *deha*], nor of the internal [the subtle body, the *linga*], but is [by these bodies] enveloped. When scholars of the scriptures have developed faith in ascertaining the status of the living entity as being of that manifestation [as an expansion or part and parcel of Yours, a person], they worship Your feet as the source of liberation and the field in which all offerings are sown. (21) By diving deep into the vast nectar ocean of the adventures of the forms You assumed to propagate the hard to grasp principle of the soul, the few souls who found relief from the fatigue [of a material life] do not even wish to be liberated from this world, oh Lord. This is so because they, after abandoning their homes, found association with the community of the swans [the transcendental people] at Your lotus feet [see e.g. 4.24: 58, 4.30: 33, 5.12: 16, 5.13: 21, 7.6: 17-18, 7.14: 3-4]. (22) This body useful for serving You, acts as one's self, one's friend and beloved. They however, who alas fail to delight in You, rather find the degradation of the physical frame [in successive births], in spite of You as their very Self being favorably disposed, helpful and affectionate. As a matter of fact they, failing to find their way with their great existential fears, cling to material desires and are [thus] self destructive ['soul killing'] in their worship of the unreal [see also B.G. 16: 19]. (23) That what by the sages, with their breathing, mind and senses being brought under control in steadfast yoga, is worshiped in the heart, is also attained by those who remember You in enmity [see also 3.2: 24 and 10.74: 46]. We [the *śrutis*] will likewise attain You and, being equally considered by You, equally relish the nectar of the lotus feet enjoyed by the women [the *gopīs*, Your wives] whose minds are attracted to Your arms firm as mighty snake bodies. (24) Ah, who out here, who but recently was born and soon will die, has an inkling of the One Who Came First, from whom the [leading]

seer [Brahmā] arose who was followed by the two groups of demigods [controlling the senses and the principles. See B.G. 7: 26]? When He lies down to withdraw, at that time nothing remains of the gross and the subtle, nor of that what comprises them both [the bodies], while also the flow of Time and the Śāstras are no longer there [B.G. 9: 7]. (25) They who, teaching with authority, declare that life springs from dead matter, that that what is eternal would end [see B.G. 2: 16], that the soul would not be one [see 10.14: 9] and that doing business would constitute reality [see B.G. 17: 28]; they who state that the living being thus would have been produced from the three modes [see B.G. 14: 19 and 13: 28], are fixed on a dualistic notion born from ignorance. Such a thing cannot exist in Your transcendence, in You, who are the Essence of Full Perception [see also 5.6: 9-11]. (26) The threefoldness and its forms up to the human beings, appears as something real to the mind, but is in You seen as something untrue [as temporal]. The entirety of this world with its forms is by the knowers of the Self not rejected as being different from the Self [though]. Because the forms [and also persons] created by Him are transformations not different from Him, like forms of gold all being gold, they consider this creation, which was entered by Him, as being Him in person [see also 6.16: 22]. (27) They who worship You as the shelter of all created beings, simply put their feet on the head of Death and look away from him. With Your words You tie up even the scholars [among the non-devotees], the way one ties up animals. Those [among them] who consider themselves Your friends [thus] arrive at purification, but not so they who turned away from You. (28) You are the self-effulgent causeless One [free from the senses] who maintains the power of the sensory functions of all creatures. The demigods, together with the unborn Lord Brahmā, take part in paying You tribute and partake of the offerings carried, just as the local rulers in a kingdom, together with the sovereign who rules the entire country, are of respect [for You] and enjoy their share. That is how they who are the appointed leaders perform their duties in fear of You. (29) The species of life, which manifest themselves as stationary and moving, are by Your material energy motivated for action. But that can happen only when You, the One aloof, oh Eternally Liberated One, cast Your glance briefly ['awaiting'] upon it [by assuming Your forms] for having Your pastimes in the material world. To [You] the Supreme [Personality of Godhead], no one can be a stranger or a friend, just as the ether can have no perceptible qualities. In that sense You are like the void of space. (30) If the countless embodiments of the living beings would be eternal, the omnipresent [Time] as a consequence would not be such a sovereign rule, oh Unchanging One. But it is not otherwise. Because the substance cannot be independent from that

from which it was generated [- *pradhāna*, the primeval ether -] [You] the regulator [who are the Time, B.G. 10: 30] must be known as being equally present everywhere [as the 'fourth dimension']. When one supposes that one knows [You materially], one is mistaken in the falsehood of an opinion [on the local order, see 6.5: 19]. (31) Material nature [*prakṛti*] and the person [*puruṣa*] do not find their existence at a particular point in time. Not originating as such, [from one or the other] it is from the combination of these two [primordial elements] that living bodies find their existence in You, just as bubbles find their existence as a combination of water and air. And just as rivers merge into the ocean and all flavors [of flower nectar] merge into the honey, these living beings with all their different names and qualities [in de end] merge [again] in [You,] the Supreme [see also B.G. 9: 7]. (32) Those who are wise understand the extend to which Your *māyā* bewilders human beings, and frequently render traditional service unto You, the source of liberation. How could there, for the souls who faithfully follow You, be any kind of fear about a material existence, a fear that by the three rimmed [wheel of Time - of past, present and future] - by Your furrowing eyebrows - repeatedly is raised in those who do not take shelter of You [see also B.G. 4: 10, 7: 14 & 14: 26]? (33) The mind, being conquered by the senses and the breath, is like a horse not under control [B.G. 2: 60 and 5.11: 10]. Those who in this world strive for regulation but have abandoned the feet of the guru, find, being most unsteady with the various methods of control, full of distress hundreds of obstacles on their way, oh Unborn One. They are like merchants [sailing] on the ocean who failed to employ a helmsman [see 10.51: 60 & B.G. 4: 34]. (34) What do servants, children, a body, a wife, money, a house, land, vitality and vehicles mean to human beings for whom You became their very Self, the Embodiment of All Pleasure? And what at all would to those, who fail to appreciate the truth [of You] and carry on with their indulgence in sexual matters, bring [real] happiness in this world subject to destruction that, on itself, is lacking meaning [see also B.G. 13: 8-12]? (35) The seers free from false pride who, with the greatest piety, on this earth direct themselves at the places of pilgrimage and the sites of His pastimes, have installed Your feet in their heart and destroy all sins with the water that washed their feet. They who but once turned their mind towards You, the Supreme Soul of Eternal Happiness, will never again devote themselves to the homely affair [of a family life] that steals away a person's essential qualities. (36) If someone says: 'From the real [of God] the real [of the universe] has manifested', that can certainly be doubted and refuted [*4]. The combination is inconsistent, for it is true in a number of cases, while it is an illusion not being so in other cases. For the sake of worldly purposes, rows of

people with a dark vision like to consider it alternatively and bewilder, with different meanings and implications of Your numerous words of wisdom, those who are not using their minds with the ritual praises. (37) Because this universe did not exist in the beginning and after its annihilation neither will exist, can be concluded that what in-between appears within You, the sole object of love, is a useless show [or a false representation]. We understand this universe thus as an [illusory, bewildering] combination of different categories of the [real] primal substance [see text 26], while the less intelligent souls prone to falsehood, take for real what the mind makes of it [see B.G. 6: 8]. (38) For reason of [the insurmountable presence of] material nature, he [the living entity] reconciles himself to that undeveloped state and, taking to her qualities [the *guṇas*], accordingly assumes forms. Bound to those forms he is deprived of spiritual qualities and runs into [the facts of birth and] death. You Yourself, on the other hand, leave her [the material energy] aside like a snake shedding its skin and are, in Your eightfold greatness [see *siddhis*] glorified as the One Unlimited in His Glories who is endowed with all spiritual qualities. (39) When those who restrain themselves do not uproot the desires in their hearts, they, in their impurity, cannot reach You who have entered their heart. They are like someone who has forgotten the jewel he hung around his neck. Yoga practitioners who are satisfied with an animalistic life will be unhappy in both [worlds here and hereafter]: [here with] death they cannot escape [and hereafter with] You whose kingdom they cannot reach [see also B.G. 6: 41-42]. (40) Someone who understands You, is not concerned about the favorable or unfavorable, good or bad associated with the body he has assumed, neither does he care about what others say. Oh You of All qualities, day after day he fills his ears with the song heard in every age through the disciplic succession. For that reason the children of Manu [the human beings, see 3.22: 34-39 and 5.13: 25] consider You the ultimate goal of liberation. (41) Neither the masters of heaven nor even You, can reach the end of Your glories, oh Unlimited One, oh You within whom the many universes by the drive of Time, each in their own shell, are blown about in the sky like particles of dust. The *śrutis* bearing fruit by [*neti neti*] eliminating that what is not the Absolute Truth, find in You their ultimate conclusion [see *siddhānta*].'

(42) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'Having heard this instruction about the True Self, the sons of Brahmā understood their final destination and worshiped thereupon, perfectly satisfied, the sage Sanandana. (43) This is how in the past the nectar of the underlying mystery of all the Vedas and Purāṇas [the Upaniṣad philosophy] was distilled by the great souls [the classical sages] who appeared in this world to roam in

higher spheres. (44) Oh heir of Brahmā [Nārada], wander the earth as you wish, meditating with faith on this instruction about the Soul that turns the desires of man into ashes.'

(45) Śrī Śuka said: 'The self-possessed ṛṣi, thus receiving the command of the sage, accepted it faithfully, oh King. Now completely being of success he, whose vow was as firm as a *kṣatriya*'s, after due consideration said the following. (46) Śrī Nārada said: 'My obeisances to Him, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa of a spotless renown, who manifests His attractive expansions for the liberation of all living beings [1.3: 28].'

(47) Thus having spoken, Nārada bowed down to the Original Ṛṣi [Nārāyaṇa] and to the great souls who were His pupils. Then he went from there to the hermitage of my physical father, Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. (48) He was honored by the great devotee [Vyāsa] who offered him a seat, whereupon Nārada sat down and described to him what he had heard from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. (49) Thus I answered your question, oh King, on how the mind can be engaged in the Absolute Truth [- the reality] without material qualities that cannot be expressed in words. (50) He who watches over this universe in the beginning, the middle and the end, He who is the Controller of the unmanifested matter [*pradhāna*] and the individual soul [*jīva*], He who sent forth this universe, entered it along with the individual seer and producing bodies [with him] regulates them, He because of whom one surrendering abandons the material energy one embraces the way a sleeper abandons his body, is the Supreme Lord upon whom one incessantly should meditate to be free from fear [see B.G. 16: 11-12, 1.9: 39 and the bhajan Sarvasva Tomāra Carana].'

*: Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī elaborately analyzes this problem, of describing the inexpressible Truth in definable terms, by means of the traditional discipline of Sanskrit poetics that states that words have three kinds of expressive capacities, called *śabda-vṛttis*. These are the different ways a word refers to its meaning, distinguished as *mukhya-vṛtti* - literal meaning (divided in *rudhi*, conventional use and *yoga*, derived use as in etymology), *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* - metaphorical meaning, and the closely related *gauna-vṛtti*, a similar meaning; exemplified by: the word lion has the three expressive forms of: it is a lion - literal, he is a lion - metaphorical and he is like a lion - similar use. So in fact the question is how the Absolute would be covered taken literal, in metaphor and in simile.

** : According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the twenty-seven verses of the prayers of the personified Vedas (Texts 14 - 41) represent the opinions of each of the twenty-eight major *śrutis*. These chief Upaniṣads and other *śrutis* are concerned with the various approaches of the Absolute Truth. See the purports p.p. 10.87 of this chapter of the *paramparā* for specific quotes.

*** : The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.13) proclaims:

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān
taṁ pīṭha-gaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣāṁ*

“Among all the eternal, conscious beings, there is one who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot.”

*4: The *paramparā* writes here: "According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the Upaniṣads teach that this created world is real but temporary."

Chapter 88

Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

(1) **T**he king [Parīkṣit] said: 'The demigods, demons and human beings who worship the austere Lord Śiva, are usually rich and enjoy their senses, contrary to those who honor Lakṣmī and her Husband, Lord Hari. (2) We are in great doubt about this and would like to understand this matter of the contradictory destinations of the worshipers of the two Lords, who are of such opposite characters.'

(3) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Śiva, who is always united with his *śakti*, covers the basic qualities of nature with the three characteristics of his emotion [his *sattva*], his authority [his *rajas*] and his darkness [his *tamas*]. He thus constitutes the [embodiment of the] threefold principle of [false] ego. (4) From them the sixteen transformations [*lingas*] have manifested [of the mind, the ten senses and the five elements]. Someone who turns to [the Śiva manifestation ruling over] any of them, will enjoy all kinds of [corresponding] material wealth [see under Śiva]. (5) Lord Hari however, the Original Person, is transcendental to material nature and absolutely untouched by the modes. He is the [inner] witness seeing everything. By worshiping Him one is freed from [the influence of] the *guṇas*. (6) This is what your grandfather the king [Yudīṣṭhira] asked Acyuta when he, after completing his horse sacrifices, heard from Him about the dharma. (7) The Supreme Lord, his Master, who for the sake of the ultimate benefit of all men had descended into the Yadu family, then was pleased to speak to him as he eagerly listened. (8) The Supreme Lord said: 'From the one I favor I gradually take away the wealth. Wanting he will suffer one distress after the other and be abandoned by his friends and relatives [see also 7.15: 15, 9.21: 12, 10.81: 14 & 20, 10.87: 40, B.G. 9: 22]. (9) When he, failing in his attempts to endeavor for money, gets frustrated and becomes friends with My devotees, I will show him My mercy. (10) Intelligent with the wisdom, understanding that the subtle, pure, eternal spirit of the Supreme Infinite Brahman constitutes one's true self, one is freed from *samsāra*. (11) Leaving Me aside because I am most difficult to worship, people worship others, who are quickly satisfied. From them receiving royal opulence, they become arrogant and proud, and next, surprisingly, become negligent and insulting towards those whom they owe the benedictions [see also B.G. 2: 42-44; 4: 12; 7: 20-25; 17: 22, 18: 28].'

(12) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others, are capable of pronouncing curses and granting favors. Brahmā and Śiva are quick with their condemnations and blessings, my dear King, but the Infallible One [Lord Viṣṇu] is not. (13) In this connection the following ancient story is told as an example about Giriśa [Śiva], who ran into danger because he offered the demon Vṛkāsura the choice of a benediction. (14) The demon, called Vṛka, was a son of Śakuni [see 9.24: 5]. He once met Nārada on the road and wickedly asked him whom of the three Lords would be most quickly pleased. (15) He said: 'For quick success you better worship Śiva. He is as quickly satisfied with your qualities, as he is angered by your faults. (16) Satisfied about Ten-head [Rāvaṇa] and Bāṇa, who like minstrels sang his glories, he ran into great trouble when he gave them unequalled power.'

(17) **Thus** being informed, the Asura worshiped him [Lord Śiva] at Kedāra [in the Himalayas], by offering oblations of flesh from his own limbs into the fire that is Śiva's mouth. (18-19) Out of frustration not to obtain the sight of the Lord, he, at the seventh day, with his hair wetted in the waters of that holy place, was about to cut off his head with a hatchet. But at that moment Śiva supremely merciful rose from the fire, looking like Agni. He stopped him by seizing his arms, just like we would do. By that touch his body was restored to its original complete state. (20) He told him: 'Enough, enough, dear man, please listen. Choose a benediction from me, I will bestow whatever boon you desire. Ah, tormenting your body so greatly is useless, for I am [already] pleased by persons who with some water approach me for shelter [see also B.G. 17: 5-6]!'

(21) **The** sinner then asked the god for a boon that terrified all living beings: 'May everyone die upon whose head I place my hand!'

(22) **Oh** son of Bharata, when Rudra heard this, he disgruntled vibrated *om* in consent and granted the request with a forced smile, like he was giving milk to a snake [see also 10.16: 37]. (23) To put the favor to a test, the demon then tried to put his hand on the head of Lord Śambu, Śiva, who thus became afraid of what he had caused himself. (24) Trembling with fear being pursued by him, he from the north [of his residence] fled in all directions, to the limits of the earth and the sky. (25-26) Not knowing what to do against it, the chief demigods remained silent. He [Śiva] thereupon went to Vaikuṅṭha, the place of light beyond all darkness, where Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Goal, is personally present. That place constitutes the destination from where renunciates do not return who stopped with the violence

[against other creatures] and found peace [see also Śvetadvīpa]. (27-28) The Supreme Lord, the Eradicator of Distress, who from a distance saw the danger, by the power of His *yogamāyā* turned Himself into a young brahmin student and came before him. Complete with a belt, deerskin, rod and prayer beads, He had an effulgence that glowed like fire. He respectfully greeted him humbly with *kuśa* grass in His hands. (29) The Supreme Lord said: 'Dear son of Śakuni, you seem to be tired. Why have you come from so far? Please rest a while, should we not attend to all the desires of this personal body? (30) If We may hear about it, oh mighty one, please tell Us what you have in mind. One usually accomplishes one's purposes with the help of others, is it not?'

(31) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being questioned by the Supreme Lord with words that rained like nectar, all his fatigue vanished. He told Him what he had done. (32) The Supreme Lord [then] said [to Vṛka]: 'If that is the case, We cannot put faith in Śiva's statements, for he has been cursed by Dakṣa to become diabolical as the king of the ghosts and devils [see 4.2: 9-16]. (33) If you, oh King of the Dānavas, put faith in him as the 'spiritual master of the universe', then see right now what happens when you place your hand on your own head! (34) If Śambhu's words thus or otherwise prove to be false, oh best of the Dānavas, then please kill him who has been fooling you, so that he never lies again.'

(35) He was thus as bewildered by the so very clever, excellent words of the Supreme Lord, that he no longer thought and foolishly placed his hand on his own head. (36) Like being hit by lightning his head was instantly shattered. He fell down, whereupon from the sky the sounds could be heard of 'Victory!', 'Hail!' and 'Well done!' (37) Now that, with the death of the sinful Asura Vṛka, Śiva was freed from the danger, the celestial sages, the ancestors and the singers of heaven released a rain of flowers. (38-39) Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality, then addressed the delivered Giriśa: 'Ah, dear Mahādeva, see how this sinner was killed by his own sinfulness! What happiness, oh master, can there be for a living being of offense towards the elevated saints, not to mention being of offense with the Lord of the Universe, the Guru of the Living Being [see also 1.18: 42, 7.4: 20 and B.G. 16: 23]? (40) Whoever hears or speaks about this rescue of Lord Śiva by the Lord of the Supersoul, the Inconceivable Personal Manifestation of the Ocean of All Energies, will be freed from his enemies as also from the repetition of birth and death.'

Chapter 89

Viṣṇu the Best of the Gods and the Kṛṣṇas Retrieve a Brahmin's Sons

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Among sages performing a sacrifice at the bank of the Sarasvatī, oh King, a controversy arose as to whom of the three [Lords] who are there from the beginning, would be the greatest. (2) Desirous to know this they sent the son of Brahmā called Bhṛgu to find this out, oh King. He went to the court of Brahmā. (3) To test his goodness, he did not bow down to him nor did he utter a prayer. That kindled the great Lord's passion, who then got angry. (4) In spite of the anger towards his son that was rising in his heart, the self-born one managed to control himself, just as fire is extinguished by its own [evolutionary] product [water, see also 3.12: 6-10]. (5) Next he went to Mount Kailāsa, where Śiva, glad to see him, rose to his feet in order to embrace his brother. (6-7) But when Bhṛgu denied this and said: 'You are a transgressor of the path', he became angry and ready to kill rose, with eyes shooting fire, his trident against him. The goddess [Pārvatī] fell at his feet and pacified him verbally. Bhṛgu subsequently went to Vaikuṅṭha where Lord Janārdana resides. (8-9) The Supreme Lord, the Destination of the Devotees, was lying with His head on the lap of the goddess of fortune. He kicked Him in the chest whereupon He together with Lakṣmī rose up. He came down from the bed, bowed His head down to the sage and said: 'Be welcome, oh brahmin, take this seat, please forgive Us, oh master, for a moment We did not notice you had arrived! (10-11) Please purify Me, My world and the rulers of all worlds devoted to Me, with the water washing from the feet of your good self that creates the sacredness of the sites of pilgrimage. Today, My lord, I have become the exclusive shelter of the goddess of fortune, because with your foot having freed My chest from all sin, she will consent to reside there.'

(12) Śrī Śuka said: 'Bhṛgu, delighted and pleased by the solemn words the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha thus spoke, fell silent, with tears in his eyes being overwhelmed by devotion. (13) Oh King, Bhṛgu returned to the sacrifice of the sages defending the Veda, and described in full what he personally had experienced. (14-17) Hearing this the sages fell in amazement, because putting faith in Lord Viṣṇu as the greatest One bringing peace and fearlessness, they were freed from their

doubts. The direct proof of His dharma, spiritual knowledge, detachment, realization [of *tat*], eight mystic powers [*siddhis*] and fame, drives away the impurities of the mind. He is called the Supreme Destination for all selfless souls and saintly sages who, with minds that are equipoised and peaceful, have forsaken the violence [of ruling by passion]. His favorite embodiment is the mode of goodness and the brahmins are His worshipable deities, they who are peaceful persons of keen intellect who revere Him without ulterior motives [see 1.2: 7; 3.25: 37 and 10.81]. (18) In accord with the *guṇas* there are three types of conditioned beings who find their existence by His material energy: the wild ones [of *tamas*, the Rākṣasas], the unenlightened ones [of *rajas*, the Asuras] and the godly ones [of *sattva*, the Suras]. Among these three beings, those in the mode of goodness [the Suras] are the souls leading the way [see B.G. 14: 6 & 14: 14].'

(19) Śrī Śuka said: 'The scholars [being assembled] at the Sarasvatī in order to dispel the doubt of the common people, thus [with this conclusion] served the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality [of Pure Goodness] and attained His destination.' "

(20) Śrī Sūta [at Naimiṣāraṇya] said: "This is how this nectar with the fragrance of a lotus flowed from the mouth of the son of the sage [Vyāsa]. That nectar, dealing with the Supreme Personality, shatters the fear of a material existence and makes the traveler on the [worldly] road constantly drink the fine verses through the holes of his ears, and makes him forget the fatigue of his wanderings. (21) Śuka said: 'Once, in Dvārakā, it happened that the child born from the wife of a brahmin died the very moment it, as one says, touched the ground, oh descendant of Bharata. (22) The brahmin took the corpse to the gate of the king [Ugrasena] and then, presenting it, in misery lamenting with an agitated mind said the following: (23) 'Because this unqualified, avaricious *kṣatriya* addicted to sense gratification, with a deceitful mind and hostile to the brahmins, failed in his duties, my son had to die. (24) Citizens in service of a wicked ruler of man who, out of control with his senses, delights in violence, will always suffer poverty and be unhappy.'

(25) And so it came to pass a second and a third time that the wise brahmin the same way left [a dead child] at the gate and sang the same song [of lamentation]. (26-27) Arjuna, who one day was in the vicinity because of Keśava, happened to hear about it when the brahmin lost a ninth child. He said: 'Oh brahmin, is there not someone out here who can wield the bow at your home? Truly these members

of the ruling class behave like brahmins attending a sacrifice! (28) There where brahmins have to lament the loss of wives, children and wealth, those dressed up as kings are but actors living for their own material interest. (29) Oh great lord, I will protect the offspring of the two of you who are so miserable in this matter. And if I fail to fulfill my promise, I will enter the fire to put an end to my sins [compare B.G. 2: 34].'

(30-31) **T**he brahmin said: 'Neither Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna the greatest archer, nor Aniruddha the incomparable chariot fighter, could save them [my sons]. Then why do you so naively try to do that what could not be done by the [*catur-vyūha*] Lords of the Universe? We therefore cannot believe it.'

(32) **Śrī** Arjuna said: 'I am neither Saṅkarṣaṇa, oh brahmin, nor Kṛṣṇa, nor even a descendant. I am the one called Arjuna whose bow is the Gāṇḍīva! (33) Do not underestimate my prowess that satisfied the three-eyed one [Lord Śiva], oh brahmin. I will defeat Death in battle and bring your children back, oh master!'

(34) **O**h tormentor of the enemies [king Parīkṣit], the scholar thus being convinced by Arjuna went home, satisfied about what he had heard about the prowess of the son of Pṛthā. (35) When his wife was about to deliver again, the most elevated brahmin said distraught to Arjuna: 'Save, please save my child from death!'

(36) **H**e touched pure water, offered his obeisances to the mighty Lord [Śiva], remembered [the mantras for] his weapons and strung the bowstring of his Gāṇḍīva. (37) Upwards, downwards and sideways he, with arrows being charged with the mantras, created a cage of arrows and thus fenced in the house of delivery. (38) The child that next took birth from the brahmin's wife, cried for some time but then suddenly disappeared into the sky complete with its body. (39) The brahmin thereupon in the presence of Kṛṣṇa derided Arjuna by saying: 'Just see what a fool I am, I who trusted the boasting of an eunuch! (40) When neither Arjuna, Aniruddha, Balarāma nor Keśava could save them, who else would be capable to offer protection in a situation like this? (41) Damn that Arjuna with his false words, damn the bow of that braggart who so dumb and delusional thought he could return the ones taken by fate!'

(42) **W**hile the wise brahmin thus was cursing him, Arjuna resorted to a mystic incantation and went straight to the heavenly city of Saṁyamanī where the great Yamarāja lives. (43-44) Not finding the

brahmin's child there he, with his weapons ready, went from there to the cities of Indra, Agni, Nirṛti [the god of death subordinate to Yamarāja], Soma [the moon god], Vāyu and Varuṇa. Next he searched all the other regions, from the subterranean world up to the highest position in heaven. Failing to obtain from them the son of the twice-born soul, he was ready to enter the fire as he had promised, but then was opposed by Kṛṣṇa who stopped him. (45) [He said:] 'I will show you the sons of the brahmin, please do not despise yourself! Men [as critical with us] like this, are going to bring the spotless fame of the two of us.'

(46) After this statement, the Supreme Lord, the Divine Controller, mounted his chariot together with Arjuna and set off in the western direction. (47) Passing over the seven continents with their seven seas and seven mountain ranges, He crossed the [*lokāloka*] border, which separated the worlds from outer space, and entered the vast darkness [see also 5.1: 31-33]. (48-49) There in the darkness the horses Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka [see also 10.53*] lost their way, oh best of the Bharatas. Seeing their plight, the Supreme Lord, the Great Master of All Yoga Masters, sent His personal *cakra*, shining like a thousand suns, ahead of the chariot. (50) The Sudarśana disc, which with its extremely intensive effulgence was speeding ahead as fast as the mind, cut itself through the immense dense and fearsome darkness of the manifestation, like an arrow from Lord Rāmacandra's bow shot at an army. (51) Arjuna followed the path of the *cakra* beyond that darkness and beheld the all-pervasive, endlessly expanding, transcendental light [the *brahma-jyoti*], that hurt his eyes so much that he closed them [see also 10.28: 14-15]. (52) From there they entered a body of water that by a mighty wind was moved about into a splendor of huge waves. In the water was situated a wondrous abode, that supremely radiated with columns shining brightly with thousands of inlaid gems. (53) The huge serpent Ananta resided there. Amazing with His thousands of heads which radiated with the gems upon the hoods and His twice as many frightening eyes, He with His dark blue necks and tongues resembled the white mountain [Kailāsa]. (54-56) On that serpent he saw the almighty, highest authority of the Personality Supreme to all Personalities of Godhead, sitting comfortably, looking like a dense raincloud, with beautiful yellow garments, a pleasing attractive face and broad eyes. His thousands of scattered locks bathed in the brilliance of His earrings and the clusters of large jewels in His crown. Being framed by a garland of forest flowers, He with His eight handsome long arms, Kaustubha jewel and Śrīvatsa mark, was, as the Chief of the Rulers of the Universe, served by His personal associates headed by Nanda and

Sunanda, as also by His *cakra* and His other weapons that manifested their personal forms, [the consorts of] His energies for prosperity, beauty, fame and material creation [resp. Puṣṭi, Śrī, Kīrti and Ajā], and the complete of His mystic powers [*siddhis*]. (57) Acyuta paid homage to Himself in His Unlimited Form, as did also Arjuna who was amazed by the sight [of Mahā-Viṣṇu]. The Almighty Lord and Master of the Rulers of the Universe, then with a smile and an invigorating voice addressed the two of them who had joined their palms. (58) 'I brought the sons of the brahmin over here with the desire to see the two of you, who descended as My expansions to protect the dharma. Please quickly return to My presence after you have killed those of darkness who burden the earth [see 2.2: 24-27 and 2.6: 26]. (59) Even though all the desires of the two of you have been fulfilled, oh best of all persons, you should be engaged in upholding the dharma for the sake of the common man, just as the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa did.'

(60-61) **T**he two Kṛṣṇas [see also B.G. 10: 37] thus being instructed by the Supreme Lord of the Highest Abode, said 'om' while bowing down to the Almighty One. They took the sons of the twice-born soul with them and returned elated to their abode [Dvārakā], the same way they had come. There they handed the sons, who had the same bodies and the same age [as they had when they were lost], over to the brahmin. (62) Having seen the abode of Viṣṇu, Arjuna was most surprised. He concluded that whatever powers human beings have, it are all manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. (63) He [Kṛṣṇa] performed many heroic acts like this in the world, enjoyed the normal sensual pleasures [see also 1.11: 35-39] and was of worship with the most important sacrifices [e.g. in 10.24 and 10.74 & 75]. (64) Just like Indra at the right time pours his rain, the Supreme Lord in exercising His Supremacy, rained down all that was desired upon His subjects, beginning with His brahmins. (65) By killing all the kings who opposed the dharma and therein having engaged Arjuna and others, He has paved the way for the son of Dharma [Yudhiṣṭhira] to carry out the principles of religion [see also 1.14 & 15].'

Chapter 90

The Queens Play and Speak and Lord Kṛṣṇa's Glories Summarized

(1-7) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Master of the goddess of fortune resided happily in Dvārakā. His city, opulent in every respect, was populated by the most prominent Vṛṣṇis and their excellently, in new apparel dressed women, who in the beauty of their youth shone like lightening when they on the rooftops were playing with balls and other toys. Its roads were always crowded with well ornamented and honored elephants dripping with *mada*, with foot soldiers and horses and chariots shining with gold. The city was richly endowed with gardens and parks with rows of flowering trees, where from all sides the sounds of the bees and the birds were heard that frequented them. He [Kṛṣṇa] enjoyed there with His sixteen thousand wives for whom He, as their one and only love, had expanded Himself in their richly furnished residences in as many different forms [see also 10.69: 41]. There were crystal clear ponds filled with the cooing of flocks of birds and the aroma of the pollen of night and day blooming lotuses and water lilies. The Great Appearance sported there by diving into the water of the streams, whereby His body, being embraced by the women, was smeared with the *kuṅkuma* of their breasts. (8-9) Being glorified by the singers of heaven who played two-sided drums, kettledrums and tabors, as also by male and female reciters playing *vīṇās*, His laughing wives squirted Him wet with syringes. Squirting them wet in His turn, He sported like the lord of the treasure keepers [Kuvera] with his nymphs. (10) With their clothes wet revealing their thighs and breasts, they looked resplendently as they, with the flowers of their large braids scattered all over the place and with blooming faces beaming wide smiles, tried to seize His syringe and under the spell of Cupid embraced their Spouse. (11) Like He was the king of the elephants surrounded by she-elephants, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the being sprayed by and spraying of the women, while the *kuṅkuma* from their breasts stuck to His garland and the arrangement of His wealth of hair was disheveled from being absorbed in the game. (12) Done playing Kṛṣṇa gave the male and female performers, who earned their livelihood by singing and playing music, the ornaments and garments of Himself and His wives. (13) Kṛṣṇa thus sporting, stole away the hearts of the wives with His movements, talks, glances and smiles,

with His jokes, exchanges of love and embraces. (14) Having focussed their minds exclusively on Mukunda they, being entranced, spoke like they were mad. Now listen to me as I relate to you the words they spoke thinking about the Lotus-eyed One.

(15) **T**he queens said [see also 10.47: 12-21, 10.83: 8-40]: 'Oh kurari, you are lamenting! Deprived of sleep you cannot rest, while the Controller tonight is sleeping somewhere in the world at an unknown place. Can it be that your heart, just like ours, oh friend, was deeply pierced by His smiling and the munificent, playful glance of His lotus eyes? (16) Oh cakravākī, having closed your eyes for the night, you nevertheless are crying pitifully for your unseen friend. Or do you perhaps, after having attained the servitude, just like us desire to carry in your braided hair the garland that was honored by Acyuta's feet? (17) Oh dear, dear ocean, you are always making such a noise, never getting any sleep. Are you suffering from sleeplessness? Or were, maybe, your personal qualities stolen by Mukunda, so that you also ended up in this hard to cure [diseased] condition? (18) Oh moon, are you, in the grip of the fell disease of consumption, so emaciated that you cannot dispel the darkness with your rays? Or are you maybe dumbstruck, oh dearest, because you, just like us, cannot remember what Mukunda all said? (19) Oh wind from the Malaya mountains, what have we done that displeased you, so that our hearts are led by Cupid [Kāmadeva], hearts that are already torn apart by Govinda's sidelong glances? (20) Oh honorable cloud, you surely are a friend most dear to the Chief of the Yādavas with the Śrīvatsa on His chest. We are, in our meditation on pure love, just as bound to Him as your good self is. Your most eager heart is just as distraught as ours. We, just like you, remember Him over and over. And that results in torrents of rain with you, just as it time and again makes us shed streams of tears. It can be so hurtful to associate with Him! (21) Oh sweet-throated cuckoo, please tell me what I should do to please you, who vibrate His so very dear sounds, in this voice that is capable of reviving the dead. (22) Oh mountain with your broad-minded intelligence, you do not move or speak. Are you preoccupied with great matters, or do you maybe, just like us, desire to hold on your breasts the feet of the darling son of Vasudeva? (23) Oh [rivers,] wives of the ocean, your lakes have alas lost their wealth of lotuses that shriveled away now that they dried up, just like us, who became very thin because of not obtaining the loving glance of our beloved husband, the Lord of Madhu, who so often stole our hearts [see also 10.47: 41 and 10.48: 11]? (24) Oh swan, be welcome and sit down, please drink some milk and tell us the news, oh dear one, for we know you to be a messenger of Śauri. Is the Unconquerable One all well?

Does He, who is so fickle in His friendship, still remember that He talked to us a long time ago? Why should we [run after Him to] be of worship, oh servant of the campaka? Tell Him who raises the desire, to visit us without the goddess of fortune. Why should that woman have the exclusive right of devotion?'

(25) Śrī Śuka said: 'Speaking and acting with such ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa, the Master of Yoga masters, the wives of Lord Mādhava attained the ultimate goal. (26) He, who in numerous songs is glorified in numerous ways, attracts with force the mind of any woman who but heard about Him. And how much more attractive would He then be to those who directly see Him? (27) How can we ever describe the austerities of the women who, with the idea of having as their husband the Spiritual Master of the Universe, with pure love served His feet perfectly with massages and so on? (28) Thus proceeding according to the dharma as defended by the Vedas, He, the Goal of all Saintly Souls, demonstrated how one at home may arrive at the regulation of one's religiosity, economic development and sense gratification [the *puruṣārthas*]. (29) With Kṛṣṇa answering to the highest standard of a householder's life, there were over sixteen thousand and one hundred queens [see also 10.59** and 7.14]. (30) Among them there were eight gems of women, headed by Rukmiṇī, who I, along with their sons, one after the other have described previously, oh King [see 10.83 & 10.61: 8-19]. (31) Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Who Never Fails in His Purpose, begot in each of His many wives ten sons [and one daughter]. (32) Among these there were eighteen *mahārathas* of an unlimited prowess, whose fame spread wide. Hear now from me their names. (33-34) They were Pradyumna and [His son] Aniruddha; Dīptimān and Bhānu; as also Sāmba, Madhu and Bṛhadbhānu; Citrabhānu, Vṛka and Aruṇa; Puṣkara and Vedabāhu; Śrutadeva and Sunandana; Citrabāhu and Virūpa; Kavi and Nyagrodha. (35) Oh best of kings, Pradyumna, the son of Rukmiṇī, was the most prominent one of these sons of Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Madhu. He was just like His father. (36) He, the great chariot fighter, married the daughter of Rukmī [named Rukmavatī] from whom next Aniruddha was born who was endowed with the strength of a ten thousand elephants [see 10.61]. (37) He, as you know, married Rukmī's granddaughter [Rocana] from whom next His son Vajra was born, one of the few who survived the battle with the clubs [see 3.4: 1 & 2]. (38) Pratibāhu was his son, who next fathered Subāhu, whose son Śāntasena had Śatasena as his son. (39) No one born in this family was poor in wealth or had few children, was short-lived, small in prowess or neglecting the brahminical interest.

(40) The glorious deeds of the men born in the Yadu dynasty cannot be summed up, oh King, not even in a ten thousand years. (41) I heard that there were thirty-eight million eight-hundred thousand teachers for the children of the Yadu family. (42) Who can keep count of the Yādavas when Ugrasena alone among its great personalities was assisted by ten thousand times ten thousand, hundreds of thousands of men [*]? (43) The most pitiless Daityas, who in [past ages in] wars between the gods and the demons had been killed, took their birth among the human beings and arrogantly troubled the populace. (44) In order to subdue them, the devas were by the Lord ordered to descend in the one hundred-and-one clans of the family, oh King [see 10.1: 62-63]. (45) Kṛṣṇa, on account of His mastery, represented for all the Yādavas who were His faithful followers, the authority of Lord Hari, and that is why they prospered. (46) Because the Vṛṣṇis always thought of Kṛṣṇa, they, in their activities of sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on, forgot the presence of their own bodies [and hence were fearless, see also 10.89: 14-17]. (47) Oh King, when Kṛṣṇa took His birth among the Yadus He outshone the pilgrimage site of the heavenly river [the Ganges] that washes from His feet. Because of His embodiment friends and foes attained their goal [7.1: 46-47]. The undefeated and supremely perfect goddess Śrī belongs to Him, she for whom others are struggling. His name, being heard or chanted, is what destroys the inauspiciousness. He settled the dharma for the lines of [disciplic] succession [the schools of the sages]. With Lord Kṛṣṇa holding the weapon that is the wheel of Time [His *cakra*], it is no wonder that the burden of the earth was removed [see also 3.2: 7-12]. (48) He triumphs as the Ultimate Abode and is known as the son of Devakī. He is the devotion of the Yadu nobles who with His arms [or His devotees] puts an end to the unrighteous ones. He is the Destroyer of the distress of the moving and not-moving living beings. He is the One who, always smiling with His beautiful face, awakens Cupid in the damsels of Vraja [see 10.30-33, 10.35, 10.47]. (49) Thus proceeding with the wish to protect His transcendental path [of devotional service], He for the sake of His *līlā* has assumed various personal forms. With them imitating the [human] ways, He has destroyed the [burden of the] karma [belonging to them]. When one wants to follow His feet one will have to listen to the stories about this Best One among the Yadus. (50) A mortal who at every sacrificial ceremony hears about, sings about and meditates on the beautiful topics concerning Mukunda, heads from his home for His abode, the place where the inescapable sway of death is arrested. Even those who ruled this earth [like Dhruva and Priyavrata] went into the forest for this sake.'

*: The paramparā adds here that according to the rules of Mīmāṃsā interpretation the number of three is taken as the default number when no specific number is given. So literally would strict to the rules be said here that Ugrasena would have had 30 trillion attendants.

**Thus the tenth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam ends named:
The Summum Bonum.**

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