

śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

Maharṣi
Durvāsā
& ŚRĪ DURVĀSĀ-ĀŚRAMA



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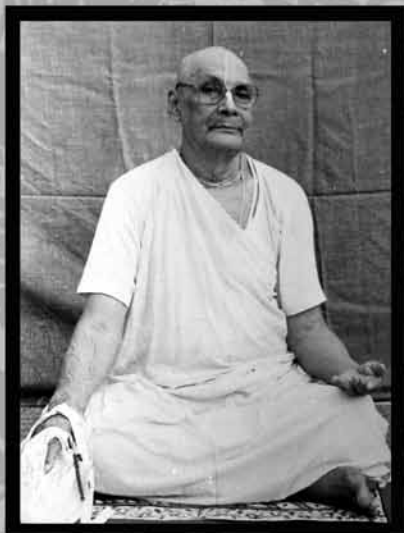
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nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



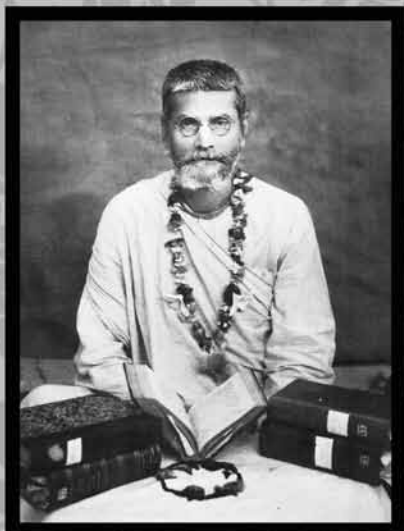
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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

PREFACE

Śrī Durvāsā Ṛṣi and Śrī Durvāsā-āśrama possess an amazing speciality: they can both be traced back to Satya-yuga.

In about 1994, the responsibility of looking after Śrī Durvāsā-āśrama was offered to Śrīla Gurudeva, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*. This is a very potent and famous pastime place in Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala. Acknowledging this as the desire of his *śrīla gurupāda-padma, guru-paramparā* and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their associates, Śrīla Gurudeva accepted this responsibility. Due to his tireless effort Śrī Durvāsā-āśrama was restored, and to protect the old, worn down hill on which the *āśrama* is built, a concrete wall was made. Śrīla Gurudeva then constructed a magnificent temple and arranged for the immaculate daily worship of the ancient deity of Śrī Durvāsā Ṛṣi along with Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī and Śrī Yamunā-devī and Gopeśvara Śīva. Today, by Śrīla Gurudeva's mercy, many faithful persons come to this pastime place. It is their good fortune that they receive *darśana* of the deities here, especially at the auspicious time of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* and Śrī Vasanta-pañcamī.

Śrīla Gurudeva has published this booklet, *Maharṣi Durvāsā & Śrī Durvāsā-āśrama*, with the desire to spread the glory of this place, even to the general public. He compiled the content found in this booklet to give us specific information of both Maharṣi Durvāsā and his *āśrama*.

Whoever tastes the sweetness of the pastimes within in these pages is bound to feel most fortunate and indebted to Śrīla Gurudeva.

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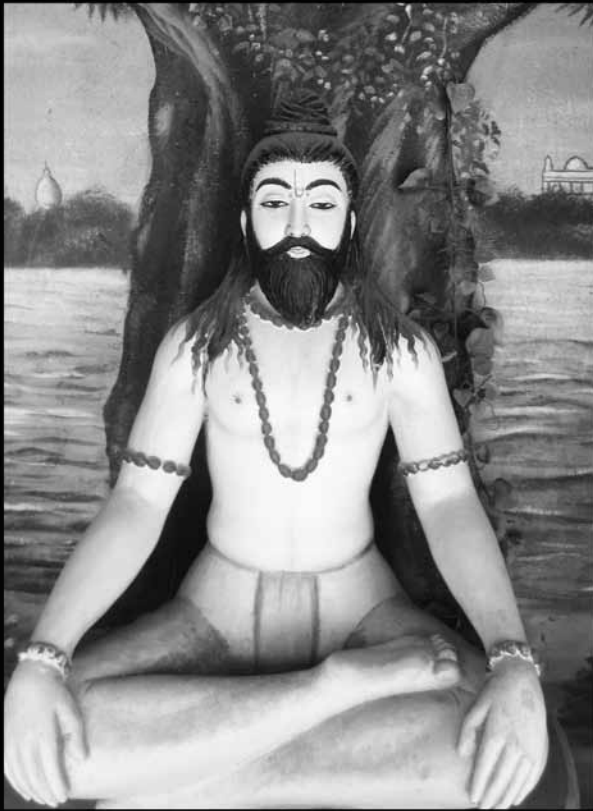
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Maharṣi
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Maharshi Durvāsa



raja-maṇḍala consists of twelve primary forests. Within each of those main forests are numerous subsidiary forests, and within those secondary forests are many groves. Of the twelve main forests, Bhadravana, Bhāṇḍīravana, Bilvavana (Belvana), Mahāvana and Lauhavana are situated on the eastern side of the Yamunā, and Madhuvana, Tālavana, Kumudavana, Bahulāvana, Kāmyavana, Khadīravana and Vṛndāvana are on the western side. Within Lauhavana, the very ancient *āśrama* of Durvāsā is situated some distance from the Yamunā, directly across from Viśrāma-ghāṭa, Mathurā.

Maharṣi Durvāsā is a famous perfected *yogī* and a great sage from three *yugas*: Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara. It is not mentioned anywhere that he ever died. Even today he is living somewhere in disguise. He is a very unusual *ṛṣi*. It is most difficult to know what he will do next or when, and therefore, he is always difficult to understand. He descended here as a partial expansion of Mahādeva Śāṅkara. Sometimes it is seen that even without cause he becomes exceedingly angry. He is capable of bestowing all material benedictions.

MAHĀDEVA'S DESCENT AS DURVĀSĀ - THE SON OF MAHAṚṢI ATRI AND ANUSŪYĀ

Mahaṛṣi Durvāsā's *āśrama* is a very ancient place. Here, Durvāsā performed austerities by which he attained numerous perfections. In three *yugas*, also, this *āśrama* is famous. From all over India, people come to see it and pray for the fulfilment of their various material desires.

Mahaṛṣi Atri was a mentally-born son (*mānasa-putra*) of Brahmā, the creator of the material universes. Once, the three demigods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa appeared before Atri to give him a boon. Upon receiving *darśana* of all three of them, Atri became very satisfied. With great love and a faltering voice he began to offer them prayers. The three gods were pleased and told him to accept a boon of his choice from them. After consulting his wife, Anusūyā, he asked that the three of them, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, become their sons. Saying, "So it shall be," the three demigods departed for their own abodes.

After some time, as Devarṣi Nārada was playing his *viṇā* and singing the glories of Bhagavān, he met Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Umā, and made a point of highly extolling the glories of Anusūyā's chastity to them. He said, "Due to her chastity, Anusūyā, the wife of Atri, is now the most famous woman in the entire universe. Within all three worlds, there is no woman more chaste than she is."

When the three goddesses heard these words of Devarṣi, their faces revealed their disappointment. They were proud of being renowned as the most chaste women within the three worlds and could not tolerate that another woman may be more chaste than they were. They insisted that their respective husbands – Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Viṣṇu and Śrī Maheśa – put such a difficult test before Anusūyā's chastity that she would be unable to pass it. The three

husbands tried to convince their wives that because Anusūyā is most austere, extremely chaste and a great devotee of Bhagavān, by attempting to test her chastity they were risking defeat. Still, their wives were insistent.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa arrived at the *āśrama* of Śrī Atri and Anusūyā at Citrakūṭa. At that time the austere Anusūyā was alone in the *āśrama*, which was situated in a dense jungle within a mountain range. Atriḥ was in a nearby mountain cave immersed in worshipping Bhagavān. Upon seeing the three demigods enter their *āśrama*, Anusūyā stood up and offered *praṇāma* with folded hands. “How can I serve you, our worshipable guests?” she asked. She then came to them with water and with some fruits and roots in her hands. But they were not ordinary guests. They said, “If you give us alms while being completely naked we will accept them. Otherwise we will be dissatisfied and go away.”

Upon hearing these strange words, Anusūyā thought for a moment. She then requested them to wait there and went to her husband Atriḥ, telling him of the remarkable condition they had put on their acceptance of alms. Atriḥ meditated on it and understood that these three guests were none other than Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. He told his wife, “These are not three ordinary guests but Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa themselves. Welcome and honour them according to their desire; there will be no harm.” Anusūyā returned to her *āśrama* and said to the three gods, “I agree to serve you according to your desire, but according to my desire you must also become newborn babies and sit on my lap.” At once they became babies and began to play on her lap, and she began nurturing the three children with great love. The three children were named Candramā, Dattātreya and Durvāsā. Brahmāḥ had descended as Candramā, Viṣṇu as Dattātreya and Maheśa as Durvāsā.

After some time the three goddesses Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Umā became very worried because their husbands had not returned. They had come to know from Devarṣi Nārada that their husbands had become babies and were playing on the lap of Anusūyā. They adopted the dress of ordinary women and together went to Anusūyā's *āśrama*. After welcoming and honouring them, Anusūyā asked them, "Who are you?"

They replied, "We are your daughters-in-law."

"How have you become my daughters-in-law?" she asked.

Hesitating due to some shame, they replied, "Those three children playing in your lap are none other than our husbands. Because our husbands have become your sons, we have therefore become your daughters-in-law."

Smiling, Anusūyā said, "What do you want?"

"We want our husbands back," they replied. "Please be merciful and return them to their original forms so we will be able to serve them again."

Anusūyā said, "They will remain with me in their present forms as my sons while simultaneously returning to their original forms and accompanying you back to your respective abodes."

This story is from the beginning of Satya-yuga. The complete narration of this story can be found in the Purāṇas and in the *Mahābhārata*.

MAHARṢI DURVĀSĀ IN SATYA-YUGA

AMBARĪṢA MAHĀRĀJA AND DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

When Durvāsā had grown up somewhat, he gave up both eating and drinking water and started performing severe austerities on the order of his parents. He especially performed the eightfold *yoga* practice of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇa* and so forth, by which he achieved many mystic perfections. He had become renowned in the world as a perfected *yogī*. Whatever he predicted would actually happen. He made thousands of disciples.

He constructed an *āśrama* on the bank of the Yamunā and lived there. When the necessity arose or when he desired to do so, he would also go travelling. Many great *ṛṣis* and *maharṣis* came to his *āśrama* to meet with him. His *āśrama* was situated within a beautiful grove on the banks of the Yamunā and was exceedingly charming. Warbling cuckoo birds, dancing peacocks, restive deer and other varieties of animals and birds fearlessly inhabited the grove. The nearby Yamunā was full of lotus flowers, and from the *āśrama*, one could hear the sound of the river's current. His *āśrama* must have been very charming.

On the bank across the river from Durvāsā's *āśrama* was the beautiful palace of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa came to this place, far away from his capital, for the purpose of performing *sādhana-bhajana*.

Once he was following a Mahā-dvādaśī vow of fasting from all food and water while remaining awake all night. The following morning, after performing his daily duties such as bathing, chanting *gāyatrī-mantra* and performing his *arcana-pūjā*, he requested the Vaiṣṇavas, *brāhmaṇas* and guests who were present there to accept *bhagavat-prasāda*. He himself desired to break his fast by accepting

Bhagavān's *caraṇāmṛta* when suddenly, Mahārṣi Durvāsā arrived. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa became very pleased to see him and said, "O great sage, today it is our great fortune to have the opportunity to serve a guest of your stature. Ṭhākurajī's *mahā-prasāda* is before you; please accept it."

As mentioned earlier, Durvāsā was a temperamental *ṛṣi*; his nature was most peculiar. No one knew what he would do next. Śrī Durvāsā Ṛṣi said, "I have not yet finished my daily duties such as bathing. After going to the Yamunā and performing them, I will return here." Saying this, he left for the bank of the Yamunā.

The prescribed time to break the fast was within two hours after sunrise, and it was quickly expiring. Durvāsā was late returning. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa found himself in a dilemma. If he broke his fast without having fed his *brāhmaṇa* guest, he would be guilty of disrespecting him and of violating the rules of suitable moral worldly conduct. Also, if the *ṛṣi* became dissatisfied, he could possibly curse Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. But on the other hand, by not breaking his Mahā-dvādaśī fast within the scheduled time, his *bhakti* would suffer. After consulting with *brāhmaṇas* who were conversant with the laws of *dharma*, he broke his Mahā-dvādaśī fast by accepting a single drop of *caraṇāmṛta*. In scriptures there is provision for those who fast from water for the day to break their fast the following morning with *caraṇāmṛta* or other liquids. But for those who accept foods such as fruit as *anukalpa* (a token amount of non-grain *prasāda*) on the day of their fast, the rule is that they must break their fast the following morning with food grains that have been offered to Bhagavān. In any circumstance one should never disrespect *bhakti*; otherwise one's *bhakti* will be destroyed. To protect one's spiritual life it is proper to leave considerations of mundane *dharma* aside. With this understanding, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa



broke his fast with *caraṇāmṛta*. By doing so, his Mahā-dvādaśī fast was simultaneously broken and also not broken.

As soon as Mahārāja Ambarīṣa had broken his fast, Durvāsā Ṛṣi arrived there. By his mystic power, he knew that Mahārāja Ambarīṣa had broken his fast, and he began to tremble with anger. “You are a big atheist!” he said. “You invited me to take *prasāda*, but before feeding me you ate something yourself. Now I will punish you.” Saying this he tore some matted hair from his head and threw it on to the ground. From this hair, a female fire demon named Kṛtyā manifested and approached Mahārāja Ambarīṣa to burn him to ashes. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa simply stood there with folded hands. He was completely fearless because he was exclusively surrendered to Bhagavān.

Just then Bhagavān, who is especially affectionate to His devotees, sent His Sudarśana *cakra* there to protect His devotee.

The *cakra* burnt the *rākṣasī* Kṛtyā to ashes and then turned towards Durvāsā. Durvāsā was terrified and ran for his life. He crossed Pātāla, Svarga and all the other fourteen planetary systems. Finally, he arrived at Śiva-loka where he began beseeching Śaṅkara to save him. All the while the Sudarśana *cakra* followed behind him at great speed. Upon seeing him, Śaṅkara said, “You are quite peculiar. You have quarrelled with a devotee of Bhagavān. You do not know glories of His devotees? I cannot offer any help to someone who has committed an offence at the feet of a devotee of Bhagavān. Go directly to Bhagavān Viṣṇu; it is His *cakra*. Only He and no one else can protect you.”

Durvāsā immediately went to Viṣṇu-loka and began praying for his life at the feet of Bhagavān Viṣṇu: “Prabhu! Please save me, I am severely aggrieved. Other than You there is no one who can save me.



I am fully surrendered to You. Since You are affectionate to those who take shelter of You, it is natural for You to protect me.”

Bhagavān Viṣṇu replied, “I am unable to protect those who are inimical to My devotees. I am the heart of My devotees and they are My heart. I can never abandon them, and I am actually under their control. Only the devotee at whose feet you have committed an offence can forgive you; I am unable to. Therefore, if you desire your own well-being, return to my devotee Ambarīṣa and beg forgiveness from him.”

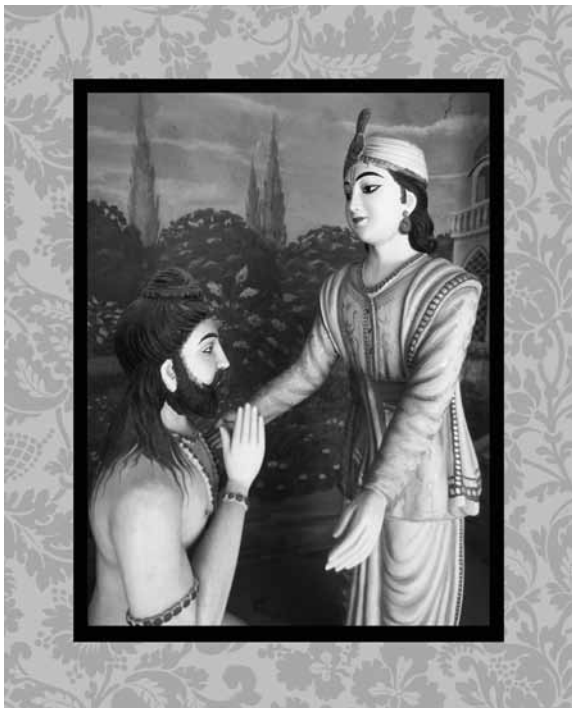
Hearing this, Mahārṣi Durvāsā became quite desperate. Seeing no other solution, he decided to return to Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. When he arrived there, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa folded his hands and humbly offered *praṇāma* to him. But Durvāsā fell at his feet and, for his own welfare, begged forgiveness and began praying for his life. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa then pacified the Sudarśana *cakra* by offering prayers to it.

Upon learning of the remarkable glory of *bhakti*, Durvāsā was astonished and said, “How fortunate are the devotees of Bhagavān! Today I have learned the greatness of Bhagavān Anantadeva’s devotees. O King, although I offended you, still you desired only auspiciousness for me. For those saintly persons who have grasped the lotus feet of *bhakta-vatsala* Bhagavān Śrī Hari with their firm *prema-bhāva*, what activity could be difficult? The hearts of those *mahātmās* who serve the lotus feet of Tīrthapāda Bhagavān are so magnanimous that they are capable of renouncing anything, and their auspicious instructions purify the hearts of others; therefore, they remain bereft of nothing whatsoever. Aho! You have been very kind to me. Disregarding my offence, you have saved my life.”

From the moment Durvāsājī had begun running here and there to save his own life, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa had not eaten anything. He was simply waiting for Durvāsā to return. He touched Durvāsā’s feet

and then lovingly fed him. Being satisfied with the meal, Durvāsāji respectfully said, “O King, now you also take your meal.”

Satisfied, Durvāsā sang the praises of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa and returned to his *āśrama*. Maharṣi Durvāsā’s character changed after this incident with Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. From that time on he was indifferent toward impersonal knowledge (*brahma-jñāna*) and the practice of eightfold mysticism (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*). Having learned the glories of pure devotees, he became inclined towards the path of devotion to Bhagavān (*bhakti*).



MAHARṢI DURVĀSĀ IN TRETĀ-YUGA

BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ RĀMACANDRA AND DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

After the afore-mentioned events, Durvāsā stayed mostly at his *āśrama* within Vraja-maṇḍala. When the necessity arose, he would travel within this world and to other worlds too. From Tretā-yuga, also, there are many narrations concerning Maharṣi Durvāsā that are found in different Purāṇas, as well as in the *Mahābhārata*.

Śrī Rāmacandra descended to this Earth planet and performed pastimes for eleven thousand years. At the end of this period, by the desire of Brahmā, Kālapuruṣa (Time personified) assumed the form of a great sage and approached Śrī Rāmacandra. He requested Rāmacandra to speak with him in a solitary place, where no other person could hear. Śrī Rāmacandra looked toward Lakṣmaṇa and said, “Stand by the palace door and prevent anyone from entering. If anyone enters and interrupts our conversation, he will pay with his life.” In this way, Lakṣmaṇa guarded the palace door. Inside Kālapuruṣa and Śrī Rāmacandra began conversing. Kālapuruṣa delivered to Śrī Rāmacandra a message from Śrī Brahmā which said, “Now the time for Your pastimes in this world has come to an end. Therefore, You should return to Your eternal abode.” During their conversation, Maharṣi Durvāsā arrived at the palace door and said to Lakṣmaṇa, “I want to see Śrī Rāmacandra immediately about something very important.”

Lakṣmaṇa replied, “O great soul, tell me what it is and I will quickly see that it is attended to.”

But Durvāsājī, being prone to anger by nature, said, “I will only meet directly with Rāmacandra. If you do not allow me to meet with Him, I will curse Him and all His subjects to burn to ashes.”

Lakṣmaṇa thought, “It would be better if I alone were burned to ashes rather than Śrī Rāmacandra and all His subjects.” He thus went alone to Rāmacandrajī.

Although Kālapuruṣa and Śrī Rāmacandra had completed their conversation, Kālapuruṣa was still in the room. Śrī Rāmacandra asked, “Lakṣmaṇa, why have you come here at this inappropriate time?”

Lakṣmaṇa replied, “Prabhu, Maḥarṣi Durvāsā has come to the door. He wants to meet with You immediately, and You only. If there is any delay, he is ready to burn You, all Your subjects, and me, also, to ashes with a curse.”

Rāmacandra bade farewell to Kālapuruṣa and then with great sadness, gravely said, “Lakṣmaṇa, do you not remember My vow? I vowed that any person who entered while we were conversing would pay with their life. For a virtuous person, renouncing a dear one is the same as taking the dear one’s life. Therefore, I am renouncing you for life.” Offering *praṇāma* at the feet of Śrī Rāmacandra, Lakṣmaṇa left the royal palace and went straight to the bank of the river Sarayu. After bathing in the river, he drew his consciousness inward, to a state of meditation, and returned to his eternal abode.

In the palace, Śrī Rāmacandra called for Durvāsā. When Durvāsā entered, Śrī Rāmacandra welcomed him with great respect and asked him, “Maḥarṣi, what service may I do for you?”

Durvāsājī replied, “I’m very hungry. Feed me at once with whatever foodstuffs You have at home.”

Śrī Rāmacandra served Durvāsā whatever eatables He had in His palace. Durvāsā filled his stomach with the delectable foodstuffs and, fully satisfied, left that place.

Rāmacandra was most aggrieved in separation from His younger brother Lakṣmaṇa. Upon receiving the news that Lakṣmaṇa had returned to his own abode, He, also, contemplated returning to His

abode. He installed His two sons Lava and Kuśa, as well as His nephews, as kings of different kingdoms, and took all His subjects to the sacred bank of the river Sarayu, where they all bathed. Meanwhile thousands of airplanes as luminous as the sun descended there. Śrī Rāmacandra and His devotees boarded those airplanes and returned to their original abode.

Śrī Rāmacandra seemingly renounced Lakṣmaṇa, but He can never actually renounce him, because Lakṣmaṇa is the very embodiment of the *dhāma*. He always remains with each of Bhagavān's incarnations and assists Him in His various pastimes. Lakṣmaṇa was the first to return to the eternal Sāketa-dhāma and waited for Śrī Rāmacandra to arrive, welcoming Him when He reached there.

MAHĀRĀJA ŚVETAKI AND DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

In ancient times there was a king named Śvetaki who in strength and valour was equal to Indra. At that time, there was no other king who performed sacrifices and gave in charity like he did, nor was any other king as scholarly. He arranged for great sacrifices to be performed where he gave profusely in charity. He never thought of anything other than how to perform sacrifices and give in charity. In fact, he was forever engaged in performing newer and better ritualistic sacrifices and in giving charity in various ways. But his ritualistic priests performed so many sacrifices that their eyes became affected by the smoke. They grew tired of always making offerings into the fire. Taking their permission, the king appointed new priests but soon they, also, wearied of performing sacrifices. The king searched but could not find a suitable priest to perform his sacrifices. Finally, he submitted this before the priests, who advised him, "Please go to Mahādeva Śrī Rudra. He is capable of making some arrangement."

Mahārāja Śvetaki went to Mount Kailāsa and began performing severe austerities, fasting from food and water, to please Śrī Rudradeva. Seeing his austerities, Śaṅkara was pleased with him. He appeared before Mahārāja Śvetaki, asking him to accept any benediction from him. Mahārāja Śvetaki offered *praṇāma* at the feet of the immensely powerful Śrī Rudra and said, “O master of the demigods, I want to commence a one hundred year sacrifice. If you are pleased with me, kindly come personally to perform my sacrifice.”

Śaṅkara smiled and replied, “Performing sacrifices is not my work. I will not perform your sacrifice personally, but my partial expansion, the great *brāhmaṇa* who is renowned as Durvāsā, will arrange it.”

Rudradeva called Maharṣi Durvāsā and ordered him to complete King Śvetaki’s sacrifice. Taking the order of Rudradeva on his head, Maharṣi Durvāsā performed the king’s sacrifice in strict accordance with all the rules and regulations. Mahārāja Śvetaki’s desire was fulfilled and he satisfied Durvāsā by giving him abundant remuneration.

DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI’S MARRIAGE

Maharṣi Durvāsā was a very powerful sage. His fame had spread far and wide. Once Mahārāja Urva was searching for a suitable groom for his daughter Kandali. Kandali was extremely beautiful and youthful, but she had a sharp tongue, and her anger often became ignited while speaking. Therefore, her father was eager to find a suitable groom and have her married. Taking Kandali with him, he went to the *āśrama* of Maharṣi Durvāsā and humbly offered *praṇāma* to him, beseeching him to accept Kandali as his wife.

Seeing Kandalī's youthful beauty, Durvāsā agreed. When the time for the marriage ceremony arrived, the king implored Durvāsā, "Forgive her offences. Ultimately you must forgive one hundred of her offences." Durvāsā agreed to do this.

After the wedding, Kandalī moved to Durvāsā's *āśrama*. Durvāsā realized that she was indeed quite quarrelsome, as she spoke many a word of insult. Although he spoke with her about this at length, he was unable to change her nature. After some time, when she had insulted Durvāsā more than one hundred times, the sage could tolerate no more and burned her to ashes with a curse.

Later, Durvāsā resided in Dvārakā for some days. In the Yadu dynasty was a beautiful young girl named Ekānamśā. The Yādavas arranged for this girl to marry Durvāsā, but after some time, Maharṣi Durvāsā became averse towards her, also. He renounced her and returned to his *āśrama*.

MUDGALA ṚṢI AND DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

In Kurukṣetra there was a sage named Mudgala. He was extremely pious and self-controlled. After the crops in the fields were cut, he would collect the spare grains that had fallen to the ground and sustain his life by eating them. He always spoke the truth and never criticized anyone. He had taken a vow to render excellent service to guests. He lived with his wife and son, and every fifteen days, he collected some grains from the ground and performed the ritualistic sacrifice named *iṣṭīkṛta*. After serving a meal to his guests, he and his family would eat the remnants – only once every fifteen days. As long as they only sustained themselves on the remnants from their guests, their stock of ingredients with which to feed hundreds of guests was never exhausted.

Once Durvāsā Ṛṣi, appearing like a madman, completely naked and speaking many harsh words, arrived at Mahātmā Mudgala's *āśrama* and said, "O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, I am very hungry and I desire to eat."

Mudgala replied, "Maharṣi, you are welcome." He worshipped Durvāsā with articles like *pādya*, *arghya* and *ācamanīya* and offered him a meal. Durvāsā ate all the food and even wiped the remnant foodstuffs all over himself with his unclean hands. Then he left just as he had come, and Mudgala and his family had to remain hungry.

After fifteen days, the occasion for the next sacrifice came. Durvāsā arrived there again, and again ate everything. Mudgala Muni immediately began preparing for the next sacrifice. Exactly fifteen days later Durvāsā came there and again ate everything. In this way he came at the time of sacrifice on six consecutive occasions and ate everything. Despite remaining hungry for so many days, the mind of the *muni* was not disturbed in the least. Anger, hatred, worry or the tendency to take offence could not touch his heart.

Seeing this, Maharṣi Durvāsā was very pleased and said "O *brāhmaṇa*, there is no one else in this world like you who gives so generously while remaining free from envy and contempt and tolerating insult. All living entities are sustained by food. When one feels hungry, one's mind becomes agitated, and to control it is very difficult. But you have already attained perfection. You have conquered all the worlds by your severe austerities. Therefore, may you attain residence in the heavenly planets." At that time, an airplane from Svarga-loka arrived there, but knowing full well that the virtues and shortcomings of Svarga-loka are all temporary, Mudgala Muni sent the airplane back.

MAHARṢI DURVĀSĀ IN DVĀPARA-YUGA

BY THE MERCY OF MAHARṢI DURVĀSĀ KUNTĪ OBTAINS SONS

Mahārāja Śūrasena, a king of the Yadu dynasty, had a son named Vasudeva and also a daughter named Pṛthā. There was no woman in the world whose beauty could compare to that of Pṛthā. In accordance with a promise he had taken earlier, Śūrasena gave the daughter to his cousin Kuntibhoja, who had no offspring of his own, and he adopted her as his own daughter. Since then she also became known as Kuntī. Kuntibhoja entrusted Kuntī with the entire responsibility of worshipping the household deities and honouring guests. Once Durvāsā, who followed severe vows and who always kept the nature of those vows secret, arrived at King Kuntibhoja's palace. The ṛṣi had a very volatile nature and his heart was hard. Princess Kuntī therefore attended him with the greatest of care. With great endeavour she managed to completely satisfy him. Durvāsā gave her the famous *vaśīkaraṇa-mantra*¹ from the *Atharva Veda* and also told her the rules for its use. He said, "By the kindness of whichever demigod you invoke with this *mantra*, you will obtain a son."

Having heard this from Maharṣi Durvāsā, great curiosity arose in Kuntī's mind. Though she was a maiden, to test the efficacy of the *mantra*, she invoked Sūryadeva. Immediately Sūryadeva appeared before her. Upon seeing this remarkable occurrence, the flawlessly beautiful Kuntī was astonished. Sūryadeva said, "O beautiful Kuntī, I am that Sūryadeva who you have invoked. How may I please you? I have come here to give you a son." Due to fear of society, Kuntī became shy and felt a little helpless. Again Sūryadeva spoke to her:

1 A *mantra* used to control the thoughts and actions of others. [*vaśī* – to attract or influence others; *karaṇa* – to make, to do]

“O Princess, a very valiant, charitable, self-righteous and beautiful son, fully bedecked with divine armour and earrings, will be born to you. Still, your maidenhood will remain intact.” A son was then born to Kuntī. That son came to be known as the greatly heroic Karṇa. Later, in the same way Kuntī invoked Dharmarāja, Pavanadeva (Vāyu) and the demigod king, Indra, and obtained as sons the exalted Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna respectively. This was the direct result of Maharṣi Durvāsā’s mercy.

BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ KRṢṆA’S KINDNESS TO DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Krṣṇa had taken birth in Vraja. Now He had grown up somewhat. At Ramaṇa-reti in Gokula, He was performing His childhood pastimes with Dāma, Śrīdāma, Sudāma, Vasudāma, Stoka-kṛṣṇa, Ujjvala, Lavaṅga, Subala, Madhumaṅgala and other friends. Sometimes, one boy would throw dust on another, sometimes they would play hide-and-seek, and sometimes one would try to defeat another in mock-fighting. The boy who lost would have to carry the victor on his shoulders for some distance. Meanwhile, in the course of his wandering, Durvāsā arrived there. Upon seeing the cowherd boys’ enchanting play, and especially upon seeing the incomparable beauty and sweetness of Krṣṇa and Balarāma, he simply stood there beholding everything with fixed vision.

Seeing Durvāsā staring at Him, Śrī Krṣṇa took Śrīdāma and went over to the sage. Both boys were covered in dust. Seeing Śrī Krṣṇa in front of him, Durvāsā could no longer remain steady. He began trembling and had to sit down. Śrī Krṣṇa smiled at him, and moving His body in charming ways, He asked, “Bābā, I defeated Śrīdāma, didn’t I?” He asked Durvāsā this question again and again but Durvāsā was unable to answer. He was completely stunned and could not say anything. Krṣṇa asked, “Bābā, why don’t you speak?”

Are you dumb?” Kṛṣṇa then sat in Durvāsā’s lap and pulling his beard, asked, “Bābā, tell Me: did I defeat Śrīdāma or did he defeat Me?” But still the ṛṣi was unable to answer.

Kṛṣṇa got up from his lap and began making gestures and smiling. Then suddenly, Durvāsā was forcibly drawn into Kṛṣṇa’s mouth. There he saw millions of universes and also millions of Brahmās, Viṣṇus and Maheśas. Sometimes Durvāsā entered one universe and sometimes he entered another. Wandering and wandering in this way, it seemed that many *yugas* passed. He was then fortunate to enter a universe where Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s manifest pastimes were taking place and then, just as before, he arrived at the very place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His friends were playing.

As Kṛṣṇa smiled, slightly opening His mouth, Durvāsā came out again. Having seen the remarkable nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastime, Durvāsā fell at His feet and began offering prayers. By Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, his life had become completely successful. Previously he had doubted whether Kṛṣṇa was simply the son of Nanda or if He were Parabrahma Himself, and now that doubt had been dispelled. Having learned that the son of Nanda, Śrī Nanda-nandana, is the supreme *brahma* and Svayam Bhagavān, Durvāsā offered *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* millions of times and returned to his *āśrama*. Having bestowed mercy upon His devotee Durvāsā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to playing with His friends.

DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI BLESSES ŚRĪMATĪ RĀDHIKĀ WITH EXPERTISE IN COOKING

Once the famous Durvāsā went to the palace of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, and on his request, he stayed there for some time. Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja engaged his virtuous darling daughter Rādhikā in serving the ṛṣi. Very satisfied with Princess Rādhikā’s loving

service, the ṛṣi offered Her a benediction, saying, “My daughter, may You become most expert in the art of cooking. The preparations You cook will be even more delicious than nectar and will increase the strength, intelligence, beauty and life span of whoever eats them. Whoever eats Your preparations will never be defeated by anyone and their bodily lustre will never diminish.” After saying this, he returned to his *āśrama* and Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s expertise in cooking became renowned throughout all of Vraja.

Mother Yaśodā heard from the Vrajavāsis, especially from Paurṇamāsī, of Rādhikā’s skill in cooking and the power of Her preparations. She wanted to feed Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s delicious preparations to Kṛṣṇa and thought, “I should somehow arrange for Rādhikā to come to my palace to cook. My son is thin and weak, and He has no appetite. He regularly has to face wicked demons who possess varieties of mystic powers.” Thinking thus, with the help of Yogamāyā Paurṇamāsī, Kundalatā, Viśākhā and others, she convinced Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s mother-in-law, Jaṭilā, to allow Rādhikā to come to her home daily from Jāvaṭa. The Gauḍīya *gōsvāmīs* have preserved the beautiful narration of this story in their books.

DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI COMES TO THE PĀṄḌAVAS IN KĀMYAVANA AND ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA PROTECTS THEM

Having cunningly defeated the righteous Pāṇḍavas in gambling, the sinful Duryodhana, advised and assisted by Duḥśāsana, Karṇa and Śakuni, banished them to the forest for twelve years. The Pāṇḍavas began living in Kāmyavana. Sustaining their lives by begging alms, they happily passed their time in devotional activities such as hearing and chanting narrations of Bhagavān’s pastimes.

The wicked Duryodhana, Karṇa (who was expert in knowledge of cheating), Duḥśāsana and their associates were busy devising various

schemes to place the Pāṇḍavas in hazardous situations even in their exile in the forest. Just then, by his own volition and accompanied by his ten thousand disciples, the very powerful Mahārṣi Durvāsā arrived there. Seeing that the hot-tempered Durvāsā Muni had come, Duryodhana, with great courtesy, invited him in and honoured his guest. Duryodhana abandoned his laziness and served Durvāsā day and night with the utmost care, as if he were Durvāsā's personal servant. The sage was most peculiar. Sometimes he would request that a meal be prepared for him in the middle of the night while everyone was asleep. Then he would go to bathe and upon returning say, "I will not eat; I am not hungry today," and disappear. Sometimes he would criticize the most delicious food and forbid anyone to eat it. Still, Duryodhana's mind did not become disturbed by any of this and he never became angry. Seeing this, the sage was very pleased and said, "I would like to give you a benediction. Ask from me whatever your heart desires."

Duryodhana first consulted with his villainous friends and then said, "O great sage, in our dynasty Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is the eldest and most exalted. That righteous son of Pāṇḍu is presently residing in Kāmyavana with his brothers. Taking your disciples with you, please go there and become his guest, just as you have been my guest here. My specific request is that you arrive there the moment after Draupadī has taken her meal."

"So be it," Durvāsā said and he departed for Kāmyavana.

Accompanied by his ten thousand disciples, the hot-tempered and difficult-to-please sage arrived at the Pāṇḍavas' *āśrama* in Kāmyavana. Draupadī was peacefully resting, having fed all the Vaiṣṇavas, *brāhmaṇas*, guests and her five husbands and having herself eaten. Seeing the arrival of Mahārṣi Durvāsā and his ten thousand disciples, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira stood and welcomed them with all respect. After worshipping Durvāsā according to

the appropriate regulations, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira invited him to eat something. The ṛṣi said, “First we are going to bathe and then we will return for our meal.” The sage and his disciples went to a nearby pond to bathe. The pious Draupadī, the crown jewel of chaste women, became quite worried about how she would feed the great sage. There were no foodstuffs whatsoever in the *āśrama*.

Previously, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira had worshipped Sūryadeva. Being pleased with him, Sūryadeva had given him a cooking pot that would always remain full of food as long as Draupadī used it to feed others and as long as she herself had not eaten. She could feed countless guests before she herself ate, and the supply of food in the pot was never exhausted. But on this day, she had already taken her meal and had thoroughly washed the pot; therefore, the sudden arrival of these guests was a matter of great concern. Everyone was very worried, unable to think of a solution to the predicament. Finally Draupadī began to silently remember He who killed Kāṁsa, He who is a reservoir of bliss, and He who is especially affectionate to his devotees – Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At that time, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was in His palace resting upon His bed, but upon hearing Draupadī’s call, Kṛṣṇa could not remain idle. He left His bedstead and went to Draupadī at once.

Draupadī felt as though new life had entered her body. She offered *praṇāma* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and told Him about Durvāsā’s arrival there and about Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja inviting the sage for a meal. Beseeking Him to save them at this time of crisis, she said, “O *bhakta-vatsala*, I take shelter of You who are the shelter of all. You are the Supreme, the Lord of all lords, and You are capable of accomplishing anything. Therefore, please deliver us from this dilemma.”

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “I am very, very hungry, so first prepare something for Me to eat.”

Hearing this, Draupadī became embarrassed and said, “Bhagavān, the food that is in the pot given by Sūryadeva is finished for the day. I fed everyone and then also ate something myself.”

Kṛṣṇa asked Draupadī to bring the pot to Him. Hidden inside it was a minute fragment of spinach. Kṛṣṇa lifted it out with His fingers and ate it. Filling His stomach with that fragment and some water, He belched and said, “May this spinach satisfy all living entities within the entire universe, including the benefactor of all sacrifices, the Supreme Lord.”

After this, He quickly sent Sahadeva to call the sages to come for their meal. At that time they had just completed bathing and were chanting their *mantras*. Suddenly they began repeatedly belching as if they had just eaten, their stomachs feeling completely full. All the *munis* looked toward Durvāsā and said, “Our stomachs are full. Now we are unable to eat at Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja’s *āśrama*.”

Durvāsā thought this over and discerned what had happened. “O sages,” he said, “having eaten at Duryodhana’s palace and listened to his advice, we have committed a great offence to the great souls, the Pāṇḍavas. Remembering my previous incident with the exalted devotee Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, I am terrified. If we have offended the Pāṇḍavas, everything will be finished for us. For our well-being we should run away from here at once.” After saying this, Durvāsā and all the *munis* immediately fled and scattered in the ten directions.

Sahadeva searched everywhere but was unable to find the sages. Then from the *munis* who lived nearby the pond performing austerities, he heard how Durvāsā and the sages had fled. He returned to Yudhiṣṭhira and related the entire story to him. By Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, the Pāṇḍavas’ dilemma vanished.

Upon thorough deliberation it is apparent that Mahārṣi Durvāsā is a great devotee of the Supreme Lord. Sometimes, to demonstrate the superiority of *bhaktas* (devotees) over *yogīs* and *jñānīs*, he resorts

to various extraordinary methods that are difficult for ordinary people to understand.

THE GOPĪS' SERVICE TO ŚRĪ DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI AND DURVĀSĀ'S BEING FREE FROM ANY CONCEPTION OF BEING THE DOER

Once, on the occasion of some festival, the *gopīs* desired to cross the Yamunā to receive *darśana* of Maharṣi Durvāsā at his *āśrama*. They carried large plates of delicious sweet preparations on their heads. When they arrived at the bank of the Yamunā, they saw that the Yamunā was swollen and big waves were rising. There was no boat in sight to take them across the river. They were in an awful predicament when all of a sudden they saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa coming toward them. Kṛṣṇa asked, "Where are all of you going?"

The *gopīs* replied, "We want to cross the river to take *darśana* of Durvāsā Ṛṣi, but because the Yamunā is so turbulent, we are very worried. Please tell us how we can cross."

In a serious mood Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "Simply say to Yamunā, 'If Kṛṣṇa has never associated with any woman and has never even looked at any woman, then by the effect of these words, may we cross over you.'" The *gopīs* offered *praṇāma* to the Yamunā and said precisely what Kṛṣṇa told them to. They walked across the Yamunā and went to Durvāsā Ṛṣi's *āśrama*.

The *gopīs* faithfully offered *praṇāma* to Durvāsā Ṛṣi and offered him the varieties of preparations they had brought. Within an instant the *ṛṣi* swallowed up all the preparations without leaving any remnants. He then blessed the *gopīs* according to their hearts' desires. When the *gopīs* were ready to leave, they asked Maharṣi Durvāsā for a method to cross the Yamunā. Durvāsā asked them, "How did you cross the Yamunā to come here?"



The *gopīs* replied, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa ordered us to say to the Yamunā, ‘If Kṛṣṇa never associates with women or even looks at them, then by the effect of these words, please let us cross over you.’ After we said this, Yamunā made passage and we walked across.”

Durvāsā said, “When you approach the Yamunā, say, ‘If in his entire life Mahārṣi Durvāsā has never eaten anything, then by the effect of these words may we walk across you.’” The *gopīs* did precisely that. Easily they crossed the Yamunā and returned home.

The *gopīs* saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa again and said to Him, “Both You and Durvāsā are very peculiar and difficult to understand. Day and night You, Kṛṣṇa, associate with women but You say that You have never even looked at a woman. And right before us, Durvāsā ate all our preparations, but he says that he has never eaten anything. We cannot understand the words of either of you.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Although I do everything, I do not do anything. I do not possess the identity of being the doer or the enjoyer as materialistic people do. In either his gross or subtle body, physically or mentally, Durvāsā, also, does not possess the identity of being the doer or the enjoyer. Therefore, although he eats everything, he does not eat anything at all. It is very difficult for ordinary people to understand this; only a few *tattva-jñānīs* can understand.” Through the medium of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa instructed this *tattva* to the world.

DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI’S BOON TO ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA AND RUKMIṆĪ

Once, an extraordinary *brāhmaṇa* came to Dvārakā. Dressed in rags and holding a staff made from a branch of the *bel* tree in his hand, he wandered here and there. He had a long beard and big moustache. He was none other than Durvāsā Muni. The word *durvāsā* means “one who wears old, torn and dirty clothes” or “one who sustains his life by drinking only the juice extracted from *dūrvā* grass”. Durvāsā sustained his life by sometimes taking this *dūrvā* juice, and sometimes, he also shamelessly wore dirty clothes. Therefore, people knew him as Durvāsā.

Durvāsā used to wander around the royal roads, lanes, crescents and crossroads in Dvārakā, saying very loudly, “Who will receive this *brāhmaṇa* Durvāsā in their home and respect him accordingly? I am very hot-tempered. Whoever receives me in their home must not show anger toward me and must serve me nicely.” When no one would receive Durvāsā in their home, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa would let him stay in His palace as a guest and would even serve him and attend to him personally. Sometimes Durvāsā alone would eat enough food for a thousand people, sometimes he asked for a meal at an inappropriate time, sometimes he ate excessively, sometimes

without any cause he became angry, sometimes he suddenly started weeping very loudly and sometimes he abruptly began laughing.

One day, he burned to ashes the beds, sheets and other things in the room he was staying in. Then he left that place. After a little while he appeared again before Śrī Kṛṣṇa and said, “Kṛṣṇa, I am very hungry; quickly feed me some nice *khīra*.”

It was as though Śrī Kṛṣṇa was already prepared for this. Right away He fed the *muni* some nice *khīra*. After eating just a little of it, the *ṛṣi* ordered Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “Wipe this very hot *khīra* all over Your body.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa obeyed him and wiped Durvāsā’s *khīra* remnants on His head and over His entire body. Rukmiṇī was standing before Kṛṣṇa smiling, and Kṛṣṇa also wiped the *khīra* all over her. The peculiar sage then harnessed Queen Rukmiṇī to a nearby chariot in place of the horses. He sat on the chariot and gave her the order to move. Durvāsā was luminous like the sun. Right in front of Kṛṣṇa, he began goading the innocent Rukmiṇī with the whip.

Seeing this, the Yādavas became furious. As Durvāsā and Rukmiṇī moved along the road, poor Rukmiṇī tripped and fell, but the perplexing *muni* did not stop goading her with the whip. When she didn’t get up, Durvāsā leaped from the chariot and ran. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, still with *khīra* covering His entire body, ran after Durvāsā saying, “O great soul, may you be pleased.”

Durvāsā looked towards Kṛṣṇa and said, “O greatly powerful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by Your nature You have defeated anger. O Govinda, because I have not seen You commit any offence here, I am very pleased with You. Therefore, accept Your cherished benediction from me. In the three worlds Your fame will remain intact for eternal time and You will always remain the Supreme. Those items of Yours which I tore, burned or destroyed will return to their previous condition. You will have no fear of death from something striking any of Your bodily parts where You wiped the *khīra*. O Acyuta, as long as You desire,

You will remain forever youthful and immortal in this world. But You did not wipe the *khīra* remnants on the soles of Your feet. Why didn't You do this? I am not pleased that You failed to do this.”

After this, Kṛṣṇa's body assumed an extraordinary lustre.

Being pleased with Rukmiṇī, also, the ṛṣi said to her, “My daughter Rukmiṇī, among all the women in the entire universe you will be the most renowned, and in all the worlds you will obtain the topmost fame. Old age and disease will never affect you, and your bodily complexion will never diminish. Among Kṛṣṇa's sixteen thousand queens, you will be the foremost and you will be Kṛṣṇa's dear most beloved.” Having said this, Durvāsā suddenly vanished.

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE YADU DYNASTY AND ŚRĪ DURVĀSĀ ṚṢI

After cleverly arranging the Mahābhārata War, the inconceivably powerful Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa removed most of the Earth's burden. Accompanied by Śrī Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa also directly killed the kings of the demoniac classes who were burdening the Earth, but because the unconquerable Yadu dynasty still remained, Kṛṣṇa was not free from anxiety. He desired to also arrange for the Yadu dynasty to annihilate itself so that He could return to His own abode without anxiety.

In an ordinary sense, the conception given in the scriptures is that those who serve Bhagavān are endowed with a godly nature and are called *sādhvas*, or devotees. The opposite of them are those who are averse to the service of Kṛṣṇa, and they are called *asuras*, or demons. By nature, the *asuras* try to destroy Kṛṣṇa. By annihilating such demons Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs the function of the *yuga-avatāra*. Most people believe that because those in the Yadu dynasty were expansions of Bhagavān, and because they possessed the mood of

servicing Kṛṣṇa, they couldn't be considered a burden upon the Earth. But we should try to understand that the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas were also Kṛṣṇa's distant and direct relatives. They also did not descend to increase the Earth's burden. Among them, the Pāṇḍavas were Kṛṣṇa's servants and they were always prepared to serve Him in all circumstances. Although Duryodhana and others were also related to Kṛṣṇa, they were demons who possessed wicked and sinful natures and were always inimical to Him.

The dispute between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas developed into a war, and since warriors from both sides died in that war, it was possible for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to annihilate those who were inimical to Him. But in that war, Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not arrange for the destruction of those devotees or associates of His who were prepared to render service to Him forever. Only by arranging for the death of those demons who were actually burdening the Earth did He relieve the Earth of its burden.

Those members of the Yadu dynasty who were forever prepared to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who were His eternal associates also accompanied Him when He entered *aprakāṣa-līlā*, or unmanifest pastimes. But those Yādavas who were inimical to Kṛṣṇa and considered themselves equally worshipable to Him simply bewildered the common people. Śrī Kṛṣṇa arranged for these Yādavas, only, to annihilate each other and thereby simultaneously remove the remaining burden from the Earth. In fact, the pastime of the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty was like a magical illusion by which Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates returned to their respective abodes and the remaining demonic Yādavas were killed.

Thirty-six years had passed since the end of the Mahābhārata War and Kṛṣṇa was happily residing in Dvārakā, performing various pastimes with His eternal devotees. Now He desired to wind up His manifest pastimes, and He and His devotees resided there only in

the form of time. Upon His inspiration, Viśvāmitra, Asita, Kaṇva, Durvāsā, Bhṛgu, Aṅgirā, Atri, Vaśiṣṭha, Nārada and other *munis* came together to speak and hear *bhagavat-kathā* in the holy place Piṅḍāraka, near Dvārakā. One day, while some of the Yadu dynasty's impudent boys were playing, they came to their assembly.

They had brought the son of Jāmbavatī, Sāmba, there dressed as a woman, and with artificial humility they offered *praṇāma* to the sages' feet and said, "O *brāhmaṇas*, this beautiful woman wearing black eye make-up is pregnant. She wants to ask something but is too shy to do so. She is very eager to give birth to a son, and the time of her delivery is also near. All of you are omniscient. Please tell us if she will give birth to a boy or a girl."

At first the *munis* remained silent and did not answer, but when those boys began repeatedly asking the same question in an effort to ridicule them, the *munis*, by the will of Bhagavān, became enraged.

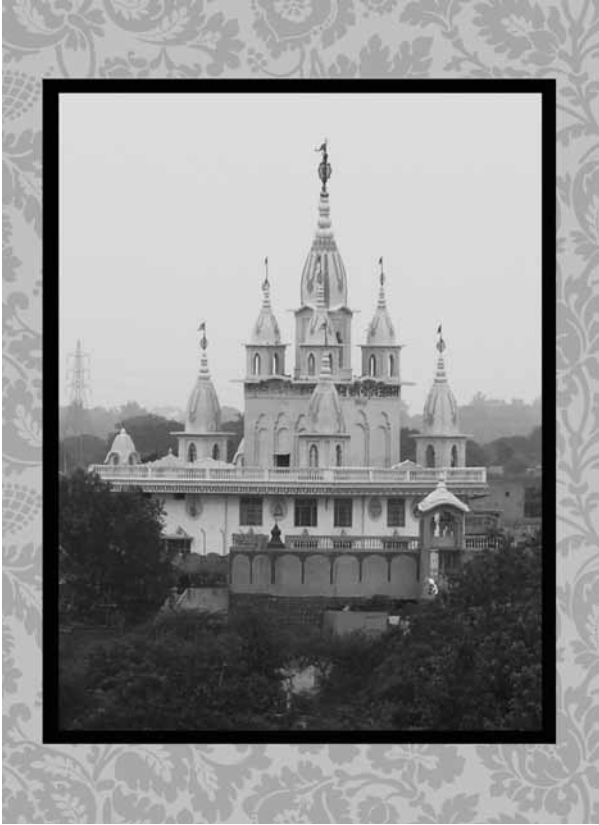
The direct expansion of Mahādeva Śaṅkara, the annihilator of the universe, Mahārṣi Durvāsā, was the leader of those *munis*. "Fools!" he said, "She will give birth to such a pestle that your dynasty will be destroyed by it." Hearing this, the boys became filled with fear. They immediately opened the cloth surrounding Sāmba's belly and saw that in reality an iron pestle was there. Very worried, they took the pestle to Mahārāja Ugrasena and related the entire incident to him. Upon seeing the pestle with their own eyes, Mahārāja Ugrasena and the residents of Dvārakā became both astonished and frightened, because they knew that the *brāhmaṇas'* curse would certainly come to pass.

Mahārāja Ugrasena had the pestle pulverised, and the resulting powder and tiny fragments of iron were thrown into the ocean. A fish swallowed the iron fragments, and the waves of the ocean brought the iron powder on to the shore. Shortly thereafter the powder grew into tall, sharp canes (*eraka*).

That fish was caught in a fisherman's net. The iron fragment in its belly was later used as an arrowhead by a hunter named Jarā. Bhagavān knew everything. Although He could have reversed the *brāhmaṇas'* curse, Bhagavān, the embodiment of time, approved of it.

In Dvārakā a massive disturbance ensued. Seeing these inauspicious omens, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa took all the Yādavas to the holy place of Piṅḍāraka to bathe and give in charity leaving only some elderly persons behind in Dvārakā. After doing so, upon the inspiration of Bhagavān, the Yādavas drank a sweet intoxicating beverage called *maireya* and began fighting among themselves. Overwhelmed with anger, they used the sharp canes named *eraka* that had grown on the shore of the ocean to begin slaughtering one another. Seeing this, Baladeva Prabhu first situated Himself on the ocean shore from where He departed for His own abode. After instructing His devotee Uddhava as well as Maitreya, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on the pretext of having been shot by the hunter Jarā's arrow, returned to Goloka Vṛndāvana in His original form. Those members of the Yadu dynasty who possessed demonic natures died in the conflict.

In this way Śrī Kṛṣṇa removed the Earth's burden and returned to His own abode. In this *mauṣala-sambhāra-līlā*, or pastime of the iron pestle and the destruction of the Yadu dynasty, the *ṛṣis* headed by Durvāsā were only the instrumental cause. In fact it was Bhagavān's desire that was the primary cause.



DURVĀSĀ-ĀŚRAMA IN ĪŚĀPURA

Maharṣi Durvāsā is Śrī Śaṅkara's incarnation, or expansion. Because Śaṅkara is *īśvara*, his place of residence is also famous as Īśāpura. In present times Durvāsā-āśrama is situated in Īśāpura, which is situated on the Yamunā across from Viśrāma-ghāṭa in Mathurā, Vraja-maṇḍala.

THE ĀŚRAMA OF ŚRĪ DATTĀTREYA IN VIṢṆUPURA

On the bank of the Yamunā, very near Durvāsā Ṛṣi's *āśrama*, the *āśrama* of Śrī Dattātreya was situated. Dattātreya is a partial expansion of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. He is also one of the three sons of Anusūyā. We find his name mentioned in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He instructed Prahlāda Mahārāja on *varṇāśrama-dharma* and *tattva-jñāna*. His life story has also been told in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Before returning to the spiritual world, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Uddhava. He related the conversation between the *avadhūta* Dattātreya and Yadu Mahārāja to Uddhava, in which Dattātreya instructed Yadu Mahārāja in the matter of *tattva-jñāna*, by mentioning his own twenty-four *gurus* to him. The place where Dattātreya's *āśrama* stood is famous today as the village of Viṣṇupura. In Dvāpara-yuga, boatmen settled there. To this day, it is primarily a village of boatmen.

THE ĀŚRAMA OF ŚRĪ PARĀSARA MUNI AND HIS SON, ŚRĪ VEDAVYĀSA

Near Durvāsā Ṛṣi's *āśrama* was the *āśrama* of Parāśara Muni. Resplendent with trees and creepers, bearing varieties of fruits and flowers, this *āśrama* was very charming. Due to the changing current of the Yamunā, no trace of this *āśrama* can be found today. Still, according to the scriptures, the *āśrama* of Parāśara existed somewhere in this area until the end of Dvāpara-yuga.

From his mind, Brahmā produced a son who was the renowned *brahmarṣi* Vaśiṣṭhājī, and one of Vaśiṣṭha's sons was Śakti Ṛṣi. Parāśarājī was the son of Śakti Ṛṣi, and his mother's name was Adṛśyantī. Vaśiṣṭhājī personally nurtured his grandson in all

respects. He especially arranged for his grandson to undergo all the appropriate *samskāras*.

Parāśara, who was religious to the core of his being, considered Vaśiṣṭha to be his father and from birth honoured him as such. One day Parāśara's mother told him, "My dear son, Vaśiṣṭhajī is not your father but your father's father. Your father was eaten by a *rākṣasa* in the forest." When Parāśara heard this, he became aggrieved. He decided to destroy all the worlds by performing austerities, but Vaśiṣṭhajī stopped him from doing so by instructing him on *tattva-jñāna*.

Parāśara was a great performer of austerities and an exalted devotee. For the benefit of human society he composed the *Parāśara-smṛti*, which is one of the primary eighteen Smṛtis. Even today it guides the Indian Hindu society.

Once, after visiting various holy places, Parāśara Muni arrived at the bank of the Yamunā and desired to cross it to reach his *āśrama*. Night had fallen, but he saw that a young girl was ushering people across the river. Parāśara was alone. He climbed aboard her boat and proceeded to cross the river.

The young girl was none other than Matsyagandhā. Previously, Brahmā had cursed an *apsarā* named Adrikā to assume the form of a fish. Then, by the semen of Uparicara Vasu, Matsyagandhā appeared in Adrikā's womb. The leader of the boatmen named Daśarāja later caught Adrikā in his net and extracted Matsyagandhā from her belly. For this reason her name was Matsyagandhā, which means "the odour of fish". Daśarāja considered her to be his daughter and raised her. She was extremely beautiful. Due to being endowed with truthfulness as well as many other good qualities, she became famous as Satyavatī. To serve her father, she guided boats across the river. Seeing her enchanting beauty, Parāśara became enamoured. The desire to have union with her arose within him, but with a simple heart, the virtuous and well-behaved Matsyagandhā said,

“O worshipable one, if my maidenhood were to be polluted, how could I ever return home? O best of the *munis*, having become blemished in this way I would no longer desire to live.”

Parāśara said, “To obtain what you desire, accept this boon from me. After giving birth to a son, you will still retain your maidenhood. The odour of fish emanating from your body will disappear and be replaced by a sweet fragrance, which will spread across the surface of the Earth for miles. A partial expansion of Bhagavān will accept taking birth from your womb. Whatever has happened here has happened only by the desire of Bhagavān.” Then Parāśara’s celestial presence entered her womb and simultaneously a remarkable baby boy was born. As they watched, the child assumed the form of a sixteen year old adolescent. This son of Parāśara became famous as Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. Because he took birth on an island in the Yamunā, he was called Dvaipāyana (island-born) and because he later divided the original Veda into four separate books, he became known as Vedavyāsa (arranger of the Vedas). At that time Vyāsadeva gave his mother Satyavatī this assurance: “Whenever you summon me, I will come to you at once and fulfil your desires.” He then left that island to perform austerities somewhere.

Satyavatī happily returned home. From that day on, her father, Daśarāja, was pleased to smell her new sweet bodily fragrance.

In Vraja it is accepted that, while residing in his own *āśrama* in Mathurā, at a Yamunā *ghāṭa* named Kṛṣṇa-gaṅgā, Vyāsadeva entered *samādhi* and composed the *rasa*-laden and spotless *mahā-purāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, for the benefit of this world. Had he not resided in Vraja and worshipped Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His *svarūpa-śakti* Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and thus obtained Their mercy, it would have been impossible for him to compose such an incomparable scripture. Therefore, the *āśrama* of Vedavyāsa must certainly have been located somewhere on the

bank of the Yamunā. If it was located at Kṛṣṇa-gaṅgā-ghāṭa, then most probably it was near Cakra-tīrtha and the *ṭīlā*, or mound, of Ambarīṣa Mahārāja.

It is possible that Daśarāja, the leader of the boatmen who raised Matsyagandhā, resided in what is today Viṣṇupura, and Satyavatī also resided there in the house of her father. Therefore, the *āśramas* of Mahārṣi Durvāsā, Bhagavān Dattātreya, Mahārṣi Parāśara and Śrī Vedavyāsa were all situated near one another. Hence, this place is very important from the perspective of recent history, from the history depicted in the Purāṇas, and as a place of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.





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