

Shrimad Bhagavatam

Canto 1

Chapter 1 The Questions of the Sages at Naimiśāraṇya

|| 1.1.1 ||

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ |
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ satyaṁ param dhīmahi ||*

TRANSLATION

Let us meditate upon the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa, who is the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe, as the material and efficient cause, since he is the only knower of all objects and the only independent being; who revealed the Vedas to Brahmā within his mind; who is difficult to understand even for the learned; whose body is thought to be made of matter due to illusion just as one mistakes fire, water and earth for each other; and who negates all false arguments regarding his existence by possessing a transcendental, inconceivable form, and by the strength of devotees' experiencing him though his *svarūpa-śakti*.

COMMENTARY

The cloud of Śrī-caitanya has rained a sweet shower of mercy, producing a river of devotion to himself where the *jīvas* play like elephants in the Gaṅgā. May the dark cloud of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, made golden with a flash of lightning, illuminate the sky of my mind!

I worship the one absolute truth, Kṛṣṇa, who is eternal bliss and supreme consciousness, (Nityānanda, Advaita-Caitanya), personified as the eternal *Bhāgavatam* which is the complete form of *Brahma-sutra*, in its most embellished form and who resides with eternal *bhakti* and the eternal devotees in the eternal spiritual abode.¹

I take shelter of the eternal form, name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa known from *Bhāgavatam*, which I studied for a long time by the mercy of *guru*. After having

¹ *sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam
vastv advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam*

studied the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* of Sanātana and after having understood the conclusions of Lord Caitanya from the *Sandarbhās* of Jīva, by the mercy of Śrīdhara Svāmī, I produce this commentary to show the essence of *Bhāgavatam*.

I am not learned. Oh! I am rash in this attempt! The cause, being either my own foolishness or the causeless mercy of the Lord, gives rise to its manifestation, even in an unqualified person. If its cause is my foolishness, it will produce mockery, and if its cause is mercy of the Lord, it will produce bliss with every word for the devotees.

I offer myself and everything I have to the absolute Lord who is dearer than life to all the cowherd men and women, and to the service of his dear devotees.

It is not so surprising that this popularly read scripture has qualities of the absolute entity *brahman*, comparable to the fruit of a desire tree, a lamp and the sun. I praise this work which assumes the form of Mohinī in the assembly of *devas* and demons, giving the sweet topics of the Lord to the devotees, and denying them to the demons.

Svayam Bhagavān, the sweet ocean of all auspicious qualities, the king holding the greatest power, the most splendid sun, shone and then disappeared at scheduled times over the earth. The meanings of the various scriptures, Purāṇas and Itihāsas, placed in three groups just as men are classified into three groups, are like night watchmen (guarding the treasure of satisfaction of the heart), but through time, destiny, the appearance of irregularity, and even laziness, some of the meanings have fallen into deep sleep. Consequently, the great treasure - satisfaction of the heart of all people and the authors of the works - has been stolen by those who have appeared like thieves and given wrong interpretations to those scriptures. This is understood from the following:

*jugupsitaṁ dharma-kṛte ’nuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramaḥ*

The people in general are naturally inclined to enjoy, and you have encouraged them in that way in the name of religion. This is verily condemned and is quite unreasonable. SB 1.5.15

However, under these conditions the Lord makes his appearance:

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |
abhutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham ||*

Whenever there is destruction in dharma, O Bhārata, and a rise in *adharmā*, I manifest my own body. BG 4.7

As well, according to the *Gītā*, the Lord comes to save the devotees and destroy

the demons. (BG 4.8) Just as he appears for these purposes as Matsya among the fish, as Varāha among the animals, as Haṁsa among the birds, as *svayam bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa among humans, and as Upendra among the *devatās*, so the Lord has now appeared as the crown jewel of the scriptures, *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, among the Vedas, for restoring *dharma* and delivering the devotees.

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha |
kalau naṣṭa-dṛṣām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ ||*

This Bhāgavata Purāṇa is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to his own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purāṇa. SB 1.3.43

This indicates that *Bhāgavatam* is another form of Kṛṣṇa, similar to the oneness of I and mine (Kṛṣṇa and the book about Kṛṣṇa). Thus, it bears no comparison with other works. Kṛṣṇa has appeared as *Bhāgavatam* through Śukadeva and Parikṣit, and like the sun among the planets, it shines among the Purāṇas. It has twelve forms (volumes), just as the sun has twelve forms for each of the months of the year. With eighteen-thousand verses like its leaves, it has appeared like a desire tree to fulfill the goals of the great devotees.

First Explanation:

In the beginning of the work, the author, Śrī-kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana - the crown jewel among *ācāryas* - invokes auspiciousness with meditation on his cherished deity.

Param means “to the highest limit.” *Satyam* means “that Supreme Lord who exists in all time and space.” *Dhīmahi* means “let us worship or meditate on.” The plural indicates all the *jīvas* continuing in time and space as part of one’s own group and thus indicates teaching them meditation by these instructions. The meaning of the *sūtra*, *athāto brahma jijñāsā* (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.1) is indicated from this since meditation alone is the result of inquiry.

The Lord’s supreme power is indicated in this verse with *janmādy asya yataḥ*. (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.2) (Let us meditate on the Supreme Lord) from whom (*yataḥ*) arises creation, maintenance and destruction (*janmādi*) of the universe (*asya*). Should they meditate on time, which causes all this?

No. The Lord is the cause because he is the material and efficient cause (*anvyād itarataś ca*). *Anvyād itarataḥ* (*anvaya* and its opposite) can mean *anvaya-vyatireka*, which, in talking about causality, can refer to cause and effect. The Lord in relation to the universe is like the earth which, as a material cause, is inherent in the pot, and the pot which, as an effect, is inherent in its material cause, the earth. Thus this phrase means that the Lord is the material cause (*upādāna-*

kāraṇa). The word *ca* indicates the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) which is time, because the Lord takes the form of time to influence *prakṛti*. Thus the Lord is the cause (*janma*) by being the material (*anvayād itarataḥ*) and the efficient cause (*ca*).

Or the word *anvaya* (meaning inclusion or entrance into) can also indicate that the Lord is the cause and destruction (*janmādi*) because everything enters the Lord. The universes enter into the Lord at destruction (and issues from him at the time of creation). *Itarataḥ* then indicates divisions of matter taking place at the level of secondary creation outside the Lord. That means that the Lord is the basis (*adhithātr-kāraṇa*) of the whole universe, just as water is the basis of earth, and fire is the basis of water. Thus the Lord is that person from whom creation, maintenance and destruction takes place because everything is contained within him (*anvayāt*) and everything in the secondary creation is outside him, but based on him (*itarataḥ*).

Or the word *anvaya* (meaning sequence) can mean that the Lord is creation and destruction (*janmādi*), because he is the whole sequence of creation, maintenance and destruction. The Lord enters into the universe, as the final agent of causality, in the process of creation; he enters the universe as the final agent for dispensing results of action in maintenance; and he enters the universe in the form of Śiva as the final agent in the process of destruction. In this explanation, it should be understood that the cause includes within itself the effect, and the Lord as cause enters into the effect, the universe. Thus the Lord is identified as creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. The universe itself is kept at a distance from the *svarūpa* of the Lord by the use of the descriptive word *itarataḥ* (different), since the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe is different from the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti*. *Ca* indicates it is non-different from the *māyā-śakti*. Thus *anvayād itarataḥ ca* means the Lord is the creator, maintainer and destroyer since he is non-different from the universe in its phases of creation, maintenance and destruction, but this universe is different from his *svarūpa*, and non-different from his *māyā-śakti*.

Thus in the first line the two *Vedānta-sūtras*, *janmādy asya* (1.1.2) and *tat tu samanvayāt* (1.1.3),² have been spoken.

“But if the Supreme Lord is said to be the material cause of the universe, he should be devoid of change. Therefore should one not say that the Supreme Lord is the efficient and *prakṛti* is the material cause.” No. It is not so. The *śrutis* say *yaḥ sarvajñāḥ sarva-vit*: he, who is omniscient, knows all. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.7) *Sa iḅṣata lokān*: he glanced over the worlds and then created (*Aitareya Upaniṣad*); and *tad aikṣata bahusyām prajāyeya*; he glanced and said, “Let me be many, Let me create progeny.” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.3) These verses indicate that only a conscious entity is the cause of the universe, and thus the Lord is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe. Since *prakṛti* is a *śakti* of the Lord and the *śakti* and possessor of the *śakti* are non-different, the Lord is the

² The usual meaning of this is “That the Lord is the creator is known from the confirming statements of scripture.” However here it can also mean “The Lord is the creator because he is the material and efficient cause.”

material cause through *prakṛti*. But the Lord remains unchanged in spite of being the material cause, because by his very nature he transcends *prakṛti*. This is explained by the Lord:

*prakṛtir yasyopādānam ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ |
sato 'bhivyañjakaḥ kālo brahma tat tritayam tv aham ||*

Prakṛti is the material cause, the *puruṣa* is the foundational cause. Time, the indirect cause, is agitator of *prakṛti*. I am all three. SB 11.24.19

Scripture does not state that *prakṛti* is the material cause independently. The Lord, conscious of all things, is alone the cause of the universe by his independence. Unconscious *prakṛti* is not the cause. Thus the verse says that the Lord is fully conscious (*abhijñah*) concerning all matters relating to the creation and destruction of all real objects (*artheṣu*). This statement illustrates the meaning of *īkṣater nāśabdām*: being described in the scriptures, the Lord is not beyond the description of words (though he remains beyond the material). (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.5)

The meaning of the *sūtra* is this. The *brahman* which was discussed is the cause of the universe. Why? Because of seeing; because of specialized conclusions arising from seeing, or in other words, from hearing about the Lord in the statements of *śruti* which describe him as the cause of the universe. Therefore *brahman* is not indescribable. It is not that the Lord cannot be proved by authoritative words. He can be proved by the scriptures.

The *śrutis* state that the conscious Lord is the cause:

tad aikṣata bahu syām prajāyeya

He glanced at *prakṛti*. May I become many; let me create progeny. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.3

Sad eva saumyedaṁ agra asīt

O gentle one! The eternal Lord existed before this universe. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1

Ātmā vā idam eka evāgra asīt

The Lord existed before this universe. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.1.1

Tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūta

From that Lord arose the ether. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1

Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante

From the Lord all creatures arise. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 1

And the *smṛti* says:

*yataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni bhavanty ādi-yugāgame |
yasmimś ca pralayaṁ yānti punar eva yuga-kṣaye ||*

From the Lord all creatures arise at the beginning of the first *yuga* and in him they merge at the time of universal destruction.

One may object that the *mahat-tattva* and other elements had not arisen so that he could have a body which could perform actions. Therefore the verse says that the Lord is independent (*svarāt*). He controls everything by himself (*svayam rājate*) through his spiritual *svarūpa* (non-different from himself). Thus the *śruti* says *na tasya kāryam kāraṇam ca vidyate... svābhāvikī-jñāna-bala-kriya ca*: In the Lord there is no material cause and effect; he has his own inherent knowledge, strength and action. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8)

One may object that in the creation of the universe, one should understand that Lord Brahmā has independent powers, for in the *śruti* it is said *hiraṇyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jātaḥ patir eka asīt*: Brahmā was born before other creatures; he alone existed. (*Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 6) Therefore Brahmā should be the object of worship. The verse answers this objection in the second line. It is the Lord, *satyam param*, who revealed (*tene*) the Vedas (*brahma*) — knowledge of himself — to Brahmā (*ādi-kavaye*). Thus Brahmā is dependent on the Lord. One may object that it is well known that Brahmā did not study the Vedas from anyone. That is true. He received it in his mind (*hṛdaye*). This is stated in the *Bhāgavatam*.

*pracoditā yena purā sarasvatī vitanvatājasya satim smṛtim hṛdi
sva-lakṣaṇā prādurabhūt kilāsyataḥ sa me ṛṣṇām ṛṣabhaḥ prasīdatām*

May the Lord, the best of the sages, be pleased with me! Inspired by him, at the beginning of the kalpa, Sarasvatī, whose aim is to reveal Kṛṣṇa, appeared from the mouth of Brahmā and revealed proper memory to carry out creation in his heart. SB 2.4.22

As well *sudṛṣṭam hṛdi me tadaiva*: why did I not see him in my heart at that time? (SB 10.14.15) The meaning of the *gāyatrī mantra* was revealed to him by that method. It is said in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (53.20):

*yatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm varṇyate dharma-vistaraḥ |
vṛtrāsura-vadhoptam tad bhāgavatam iṣyate ||*

He spoke the *Bhāgavatam* where the killing of Vṛtrāsura is described and where, after starting with *gāyatrī*, *dharma* is elaborately described.

In another Purāṇa it is said:

*grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasro dvādaśa-skandha-sammitaḥ |
hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā yatra vṛtra-vadhā tathā |
gāyatrī ca samārambhas tad vai bhāgavatam viduḥ ||*

The *Bhāgavatam* is understood to be that work starting with *gāyatrī mantra* in which there are eighteen thousand verses and twelve volumes, and in which spiritual knowledge spoken by Hayagrīva and the killing of Vṛtra are described.

Someone may argue: “Perhaps Brahmā realized the truth of the Vedas on his own (from within the mind) just as a person sometimes gets a realization during sleep.” To answer this argument, then it is said that Brahmā, independently, does not have the power to realize this knowledge, for even the greatly learned are bewildered about this (*yad sūrayaḥ muhyanti*). This explains the following *sūtra*. *Etena netaro 'nupapatteḥ*: a *jīva* is not described (in the mantra "*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*"), because such an interpretation of the mantra is illogical. (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.16)

There is another objection. When we talk about meditation it indicates that we meditate on an object that has a form. Forms are made of the three *guṇas* of matter, and must be therefore temporary. This objection is answered in the third line. It is like reversal; or one thing appearing as another (*vinimayaḥ*), just as light may appear to be water, or water may appear to be earth or earth in forms like glass may appear to be like water to an ignorant person. In this way one falsely (*mṛṣā*) thinks that the perfect, spiritual form of the Lord to be made of the three *guṇas* (*tri-sargaḥ*). *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (1.33) says:

*tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-
talāsīnam*

I saw that one form of Govinda, a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, seated at the base of desire tree in Vṛndāvana.

Rāma-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

ardha-mātrātmako rāmo brahmānandaika-vigrahaḥ

Rāma is the half-syllable and form of spiritual bliss.

Nṛsimha-tāpanī Upaniṣad says:

ṛtam satyam param brahma puruṣam nṛ-keśari-vigraham

The form of Nṛsiṃha is the supreme *brahman*, the *puruṣa*, knowledge and truth.

*nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇa-vigraha ātma-tantro
niścetanātmaka-śarīra-guṇaiś ca hīnaḥ |
ānanda-mātra-kara-pāda-mukhodarādīḥ ca |*

The Lord has a form full of faultless qualities, which is independent. He is devoid of the qualities of lifeless, material bodies. All the parts of his body such as hands, feet, head and belly are bliss alone. *Dhyāna-bindu Upaniṣad*

nanda-vraja-janānandī sac-cidānanda-vigrahaḥ

Kṛṣṇa has a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss which gives joy to the people of Vraja. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* 2.36.25

*sarve nityāḥ śāśvatās ca dehās tasya parātmanah |
hānopādāna-rahitā naiva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit ||*

The bodies of the Lord are all eternal, unchanging, and devoid of faults. They are never the product of matter. *Mahā varāha Purāṇa*.

This is also understood from the *Bhāgavatam*:

*asyāpi deva vapuṣo mad-anugrahasya
svecchā-mayasya na tu bhūta-mayasya ko 'pi
neśe mahi tv avasituṃ manasāntareṇa
sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteḥ*

My dear Lord, neither I nor anyone else can estimate the potency of this transcendental body of yours, which has shown such mercy to me and which appears just to fulfill the desires of your pure devotees. Although my mind is completely withdrawn from material affairs, I cannot understand your personal form. How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness you experience within yourself? SB 10.14.2

*taṃ matvātmajam avyaktaṃ martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam
gopikolūkhale dāmnā babandha prakṛtaṃ yathā*

Being absolute, beyond relativity, he is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although he is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yaśodā, considering him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope. SB 10.9.14

tasmād idaṃ jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṃ

*svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇam puru-duḥkha-duḥkham
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante
māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti*

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from you, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge. SB 10.14.22

*tāvat prasanno bhagavān puṣkarākṣaḥ kṛte yuge
darśayām āsa taṁ kṣattaḥ śābdam brahma dadhad vapuḥ*

Then, in the Satya-yuga, the lotus-eyed Supreme Personality of Godhead, being pleased, showed himself to that Kardama Muni and displayed his transcendental form, which can be understood only through the Vedas. SB 3.21.8

*satya-jñānānantānanda- mātraika-rasa-mūrtayaḥ
asprṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām*

The *viṣṇu-mūrtis* all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the *jñānīs* engaged in studying the Upaniṣads. SB 10.13.54

Even the devotees in Śvetadvīpa and Vaikuṅṭha have forms. These forms are not material, since the word *atīndriya* is used. *Nārāyaṇīya* says:

*anindriyā anāhārā aniṣpannāḥ sugandhinaḥ |
ekāntinas te puruṣāḥ śveta-dvīpa-nivāsinaḥ ||*

The inhabitants living in Śvetadvīpa, devoted completely to the Lord, are all fragrant, beyond the material senses, without any need for material food and without material movement. *Mahābhārata* 12.323.26

*dehendriyāsu-hīnānām vaikuṅṭha-pura-vāsinām
deha-sambandha-sambaddham etad ākhyātum arhasi*

The bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha are completely spiritual, having nothing to do with the material body, senses or life air. Therefore, kindly explain how associates of the Lord were cursed to descend in material bodies like ordinary persons. SB 7.1.35

What doubt can there be that their bodies are non-material? Some persons argue with all these conclusions. In answer to this, the following is said. Through the power of realization of the Lord fixed in the devotee's heart by the *svarūpa-śakti*, or through the Lord's form shining with power and sweetness increasing at every moment (*dhāmnā*), which belongs only to the Lord and which is thus extraordinary (*svena*), throughout all three phases of time (*sadā*), all false arguments (*kuhakam*) about the Lord are negated (*nirasta*). This is indicated in *tarko 'pratiṣṭhānāt*: argumentation is not accepted concerning the Lord, because it is insubstantial. (*Vedānta-sūtra* 2.1.11) *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṃ svām*: the Lord reveals his form to that person whom he chooses. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.3) The use of the word *svām* to modify *tanuṃ* indicates that the body of the Lord arises from his *svarūpa-śakti*. That his mind and eyes are not material is also understood from the statements *bahu syām* (let me become many) and *sa aikṣata* (he glanced), since these senses are employed before the agitation of *prakṛti*, which produces material mind and senses. As well *parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca* (*Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8) indicates that his knowledge, strength and actions arise from his own nature (*svābhāvikī*), not *prakṛti*.

*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet |
prakṛtibhyaḥ param yac ca tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam ||*

One cannot use material reasoning on those things which are inconceivable. Inconceivable refers to those things existing beyond *prakṛti*. *Mahābhārata* 6.6.11

The potential mood indicates that material arguments are forbidden to be used against the Lord. It is just as strong as the prohibition: *para-dārān na gacchet*: one should not have sex with other men's wives. If the demons, who eagerly take up arrows of logic aimed at the Lord, fall to hell, let them fall there. Enough of their discussions!

Second explanation:

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa who is known as *Satya*, who — through his abode Mathurā and by revelation of his form to his devotees — destroys ignorance concerning himself; whose body, though appearing to be material to the demons, is not temporary at all; who, after appearing in Vasudeva's house went to Nanda's house, knowing how to cheat Kāṁsa and who, knowing the appearance of his devotee's *prema* in Vraja, remained there because of his own people, though he is in all cases independent; and who revealed that the cows and calves were actually the supreme *brahman* to Brahmā by his will — which bewilders even persons such as Nārada.

It is said in *Bhāgavatam*:

*daśamasya viśuddhy-arthaṁ navānām iha lakṣaṇam
varṇayanti mahātmānaḥ śrutenārthena cāñjasā*

The great devotees such as Vidura and Maitreya describe properly the nine topics in order to impart the highest knowledge of the tenth topic, through the words of the scripture and stories to illustrate their meaning. SB 2.10.2

Since the Supreme Lord is the *aṅgī* in relation to all other topics, and since Kṛṣṇa is the chief form of the Lord, and since there is praise for his extraordinary qualities, Kṛṣṇa should be indicated in the first verse. Thus a second explanation of the first verse has arisen devoted only to Kṛṣṇa. This is indicated at the beginning with the description of Kṛṣṇa's birth.

(*Satyam param dhīmahī* is explained as Kṛṣṇa.)

*satya-vrataṁ satya-param tri-satyam satyasya yonim nihitam ca satye
satyasya satyam ṛta-satya-netraṁ satyātmakam tvām śaraṇam
prapannāḥ*

O Lord, You never deviate from your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation—creation, maintenance and annihilation—you are the Supreme Truth. Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as *antaryāmī*, the inner force. You are equal to everyone, and your instructions apply for everyone, for all time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto you. Kindly give us protection. SB 10.2.26

Saṅjaya, explaining the derivation of Kṛṣṇa's names, explains why Kṛṣṇa is addressed as Satya:

*satye pratiṣṭhitāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ satyam atra pratiṣṭhitam |
satyāt satyam ca govindas tasmāt satyo hi nāmataḥ ||*

Kṛṣṇa is fixed in the highest truth, and truth is fixed in him. Because all truth arises from him, Govinda is respected as truth or *satya*. *Mahābhārata* 5.68.12

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa also says *satyaṁ śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ dhīmahi param brahma narākṛtī*: we meditate upon Kṛṣṇa, the supreme *brahman* with human form. And *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says *tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet*: therefore Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Lord, and one should meditate on him.

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa, the *jīvas'* ignorance of whom (*kuhakam*) is always destroyed by his abode called Mathurā and by his form (*svena dhāmnā*) which can be seen by mercy even today. The two causes are illustrated by the following two verses.

mathyate tu jagat sarvaṁ brahma-jñānena yena vā |
tat-sāra-bhūtaṁ yad yasyām mathurā sā nigadyate ||

Mathurā is defined as that place which excites the whole world as it is non-different from the Lord, or that place in which the essence of spiritual knowledge is extracted (*mathyate*).

śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt pūyante 'nte-vasāyinaḥ
tava brahma-mayasyeṣa kim utekṣābhimarśinaḥ

O Lord, even outcastes are purified by hearing and chanting your glories and meditating upon you, the Absolute Truth. What then to speak of those who see and touch you? SB 10.70.43

According to *Amara-koṣa*, *dhāma* means house, body, effulgence and influence.

“Whatever is seen by the material eye is temporary. Because Kṛṣṇa’s form can be seen in the material world it must be temporary.” The bodies made of the three *guṇas* (*tri-sargaḥ*) by the combination of three visible elements earth, water and air, are false (temporary). But the form which created those three *guṇas* is not false (not temporary). The transcendental body of the Lord, though seen by the demons with material bodies, is seen by them without realization of its sweetness, just as sugar candy has no sweet taste when eaten by a person afflicted with jaundice.

This is because of the will of the Lord, arising from him inconceivable *svarūpa*, which accomplished his various pastimes. The devotees, however, can realize that form of sweetness by the influence of the Lord’s inconceivable mercy.

ānarta-dhanva-kuru-jāṅgala-kaṅka-matsya-
pāñcāla-kunti-madhu-kekaya-kośalārṇaḥ
anye ca tan-mukha-sarojam udāra-hāsa-
snigdhekṣaṇaṁ nṛpa papur dṛśibhir nr-nāryaḥ

tebhyah sva-vikṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ
kṣemaṁ tri-loka-gurur artha-dṛśaṁ ca yacchan
śṛṇvan dig-anta-dhavalam sva-yaśo 'śubha-ghnam

gītām surair nṛbhir agāc chanakair videhān

The men and women of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-jāngala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pañcāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala, Arṇa and many other kingdoms drank with their eyes the nectarean beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotuslike face, which was graced with generous smiles and affectionate glances. Simply by glancing at those who came to see him, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the three worlds, delivered them from the blindness of materialism. As he thus endowed them with fearlessness and divine vision, he heard demigods and men singing his glories, which purify the entire universe and destroy all misfortune. Gradually, he reached Videha. SB 10.86.20-21

These verses show that by his mercy alone his great powers can be understood.

Nārāyaṇādhyātma says:

*nityāvyakto 'pi bhagavān īkṣate nija-śaktitaḥ
tām ṛte paramānandaṁ kaḥ paśyetām itaṁ prabhum*

Though the lord is eternally invisible, he is seen by his own energy. Who can see the Lord full of supreme bliss without that energy?

Here is an explanatory verse:

*tataḥ svayaṁ prakāśatva-śaktyā svecchā-prakāśayā
so 'bhivyakto bhaven netre na netra-viśayaḥ kṛtaḥ*

Thus by his self-manifesting energy, arising by his own will, the Lord, who is not visible to the eye, becomes visible to the eyes.

The *śruti* says *tāsām madhye sāksāt brahma gopāla-purī hi*: in the middle of that expanse one can see the abode of Kṛṣṇa made of *brahman*. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*) Thus the abodes of the Lord, also made of spiritual matter become visible. Those who are knowledgeable by the Lord's mercy conclude that things like pots, which are seen and which are not spiritual, are temporary.

Having explained that the cause of the Lord's appearance is his mercy, his pastimes are described. I meditate upon Kṛṣṇa, who after his birth (*janmādi yataḥ*) in Vāsudeva's house showed the form of Viṣṇu, described his previous appearances, etc. and later went (*anu ayāt*) elsewhere (*itarataḥ*), to the house of Nanda. Why did he go? Knowing his own purposes (*abhijñāḥ artheṣu*), such as, how to cheat Kaiṁsa or knowing those who had revealed forms with various types of *prema* such as *vātsalaya* in Vraja, he went to Nanda's house. But this does not mean that he is dependent on others. He is independent, ruling over himself (*svarāṭ=svena rājate*). Or *svarāṭ* can mean that he remained there in Vraja (*virājate*) because of his relatives such as Nanda (*svaiḥ*).

Because of his performing such pastimes under the control of *prema* of his devotees in Vraja, one should not think that he is a fool. He revealed (*tene*) the calves and cowherd boys to be *brahman* (*brahma*) even unto Lord Brahmā (*ādi-kavaye*), by his will alone (*hṛdā*), by which, through his power of *yoga-māyā*, even the intelligence of persons like Śiva and Nārada are bewildered.

Or Kṛṣṇa by the statements of his *svāmśa* form Matsya revealed his form as impersonal *brahman* to Satyavrata (*ādi-kavaye*), who was the wise man (*kavi*) and founder of his dynasty (*ādi*). This is described in the following verse:

madiyam mahimānam ca param brahmeti śabditam |
vetsyasy anugṛhītam me sampraśnair vivṛtam hṛdi ||

By my mercy, you will realize my power known as the impersonal Brahman, which will be disclosed in your heart through questions and answers. SB 8.24.38

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains this verse as follows: you will directly see (*vetsyasi*) this *brahman*, which will be by my mercy (*me ahugṛhītam*); it will be explained at the beginning of the prayers of the Personified Vedas (SB10.87.2) that the *brahman* is realized by the Lord's mercy alone.

Third explanation:

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa, from whom arises *madhura-rasa* through meeting and separation; who, as the hero, most skilful in everything related to *rasa*, is beyond the material realm; who conveyed to Bharata Muni the same *madhura-rasa*, about which other poets are bewildered; in whom alone arises the three types of literary meaning, in extraordinary form; and who defeats the withered arguers by the extraordinary influence of the experience of *madhura-rasa*.

Another meaning is revealed in the verse, showing the highest choice of Kṛṣṇa's *rasa*, with the appearance of the highest sweetness with the *gopīs*, even though he has other associates in *sānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya*.

tatrātīśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
madhye mañinām haimānām mahā-marakato yathā

In the midst of the dancing *gopīs*, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared most brilliant, like an exquisite sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments. SB 10.33.6

Let us meditate on Kṛṣṇa from whom appears the highest *rasa śṛṅgāra-rasa* (*janma ādyasya*). Previously this *rasa*, though existing, had disappeared because of the

censure by conservative spiritual aspirants. By meeting (*anvayāt*) and separation (*itarataḥ*) this *rasa* with the *gopīs* is accomplished. Just as Bhīmasena is represented by the word Bhīma, so the *ādyā-rasa* is represented by the word *ādyā*. Or because *Bhāgavatam* is considered to the scriptural form of *madhura-rasa* (*pibata bhāgavatam rasam*) by the proximity of the verses the word *ādyasya* can infer the word *rasasya* as the object which is being described. The state created by meeting and separation actually establishes the *rasa* as its counterpart. Thus there is no worry that the original form of *rasa* is degraded by this condition. Rather such a state indicates the secret nature of this *madhura-rasa*.

Next there is an elaboration of the *vibhāva* in the form of the *ālambana*. Kṛṣṇa is knowledgeable of, or skilful in (*abhijñah*), all things suitable for *rasa* such as the sixty four arts. But unlike material heroes such as Nala who are affected by time and *karma*, Kṛṣṇa, the *viṣaya* of spiritual *rasa*, is independent and spiritual (*svarāt*).

Rasa should not be accredited to other persons. He alone conveyed the truth about *ādi-rasa* (*brahma*) through his mind (*hṛdā*) unto Bharata Muni (*ādi-kavaye*), the famous exponent of material *rasa*. This reveals that *rasa* originates only from Kṛṣṇa. *Amara-koṣa* says that *brahma* can mean Vedas, truth or austerity.

In this truth (*yatra*) the poets are bewildered because of the descriptions with concentration on material heroes such as Nala. An example is given. Just as one mistakes fire or earth for water, people think the *rasa* directed only to the Lord should be directed to material persons. There is no *rasa* in material heroes whose temporary bodies end in ashes and worm waste. Rather, on consideration, in this there is a contradiction to *rasa* — **distaste or disgust** — because of the perversion of the object of love, *vibhāva*. The unintelligent describe *rasa* in such persons.

In the Lord there is the creation of the three meanings; literal, metaphorical and suggested, or creation of allusion (*dhvani*), skill in composition (*guṇa*) and literary ornaments (*alaṅkāra*). These are real (*amṛṣā*) and become amazing because of their extraordinary nature in Kṛṣṇa. The life force of the material hero made simply of proud words of poets is false

Some persons do not accept *rasa*. By the amazing influence of the direct experience of tasting *madhura-rasa* (*dhāmnā*) which is extraordinary (*svena*), Kṛṣṇa defeats the withered Mīmāṃsakas.

Fourth explanation:

Without deceit, in correct manner, aspiring for the highest goal, we meditate on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from whom arises the height of *madhura-rasa*. By giving up the other *gopīs* and following only her, as *dhīra-lalita* he showed his expertise in the chief aspects of *rasa* and she exhibited herself as an independent lover. Kṛṣṇa imparted through the heart to Śukadeva, knower of this *rasa* from birth, the

Bhāgavatam, by which the devotees faint in ecstasy and undergo transformation, just as fire, water and earth reverse their properties and by whose influence the three śaktis remain eternally.

Among all the *gopīs*, the peak of sweetness arises in the company of the queen of Vṛndāvana, the principal *gopī*. This is indicated in the following verses:

*kasyāḥ padāni caitāni yātāyā nanda-sūnunā
amśa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ kareṇoḥ kariṇā yathā*

Here we see the footprints of some *gopī* who must have been walking along with the son of Nanda Mahārāja. He must have put his arm on her shoulder, just as an elephant rests his trunk on the shoulder of an accompanying she-elephant. SB 10.30.27

*anayārādhito nūnam bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

Certainly this particular *gopī* has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, Govinda, since he was so pleased with her that he abandoned the rest of us and brought her to a secluded place. SB 10.30.28

A meaning which indicates this should be found in the first verse of *Bhāgavatam*.

We meditate upon the Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from whom there is the appearance (*janma*) of *madhura-rasa* (*ādyasya*). This means that these two are the supreme receptacle of the art of *madhura-rasa*.

Giving up all other *gopī* lovers (*itarataḥ*), he followed her alone and became obedient to her (*anvayāt*). *Itarataḥ* has an ablative meaning (from others) and indicates a suppressed indeclinable participle.³ The following verse shows how he followed only Rādhā.

*atrāvaropitā kāntā puṣpa-hetor mahātmanā
atra prasūnāvacyaḥ priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ*

And over here that intelligent boy must have put her down to gather some flowers. Just see how in this place dear Kṛṣṇa collected flowers for his beloved. SB 10.30.31-32

Because he gave up other *gopīs* and followed her alone, he is known as *dhīra-lalita* lover,⁴ favorable for cultivating *rasa*. He is thus called “one who is fully knowledgeable of the chief *rasas* filled with *madhura-rasa* (*artheṣu abhijñāḥ*).” And because he is *dhīra-lalita*, she alone remains with her lover (*svarāt*), as a *svādhīna-*

³ *Lyab lope karmaṇy adhikaraṇe ca*: an inclinable participle can be suppressed in favor its object being put in ablative case. “Giving up other *gopīs*” becomes “from other *gopīs* (*itarataiḥ*). *Varttikā* on Pāṇini’s *sūtras*.

⁴ *Dhīra-lalita* is a male lover, skilful in the arts of pleasing his beloved and controlled by her.

kāntā, a woman who controls Kṛṣṇa.

In order to reveal all this, he imparted through the heart the *Bhāgavatam* (*brahma*) containing as its essence the five chapters on *rasa* to Śukadeva, knower of this *tattva* (*kavaye*) from his birth (*ādi*). The *Bhāgavatam* is called *brahma* in the following verse. *idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam*: this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is furnished with *brahman*. (SB 1.3.40) *śuka-mukād amṛta-drava-samyutam*: *Bhāgavatam* is sweetness flowing from the mouth of Śuka. (SB 1.1.3) *Śuka-vāg-amṛtābdhīnduh*: Kṛṣṇa is the moon rising from the sweet ocean of words of Śuka. (*Kṛṣṇa-astottara-śata-nāma-stora, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*)

From hearing the *Bhāgavatam* (*yad*) since it has *rasa*, the devotees faint in ecstasy from tasting the *rasa* (*yad sūrayaḥ muhyanti*). Or because Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the objects of their hearing and seeing, their close associates (*sūrayaḥ*), though most wise, become bewildered. This means that they take on qualities opposite their normal qualities, out of ecstasy. And others are included in this ecstasy also. This is illustrated through an example. Their ecstasy is just like earth, water and fire reversing their properties. For instance the moon, a form of fire, on seeing the *rāsa-līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, gave up its quality of moving and became stunned like earth. Water, on hearing the sound of the flute, became stunned like earth. Stones made of earth because liquid like water.

By the influence of these two (*yatra dhāmnā svena*) the creation of the three consorts (*tri-sargaḥ*) Śrī, Bhū and Līlā; or the *gopīs*, the queens and Lakṣmīs; or the internal, external and marginal potencies becomes factual (*amṛsā*). This means that the consorts such as Śrī who have been manifested by Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, by their influence, by their being the basis of the consorts, exist eternally because of their eternal relationship. We meditate on them without deceit, as in real forms (*satyam*) and as the most excellent forms (*param*). Thus the object of worship (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, *viśaya*) of the *Bhāgavatam* has been shown as the subject of the first verse.

Fifth explanation:

Let us meditate on the most beneficial spiritual process which is beyond the *guṇas*, which brings about the appearance of the Lord as Bhagavān and by which there is realization of *brahman* and Paramātmā in the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*; which is complete knowledge, independent of other processes; which was revealed by Nārada to Vyāsa, but which is bewildering to even great sages; which is not mixed with the three *guṇas*; and which defeats its opponents by its very nature of giving direct experience of bliss.

The process of *bhakti* is indicated by scriptures as the *abhidheya* by which the *āśraya*, Kṛṣṇa, can be attained. It brings about the highest realization and attracts even Kṛṣṇa. That *bhakti* then becomes the *prayojana*, *prema*. Thus *bhakti-yoga* should also be considered as the subject of this verse. Because of this, another

meaning is included as an essential theme of this verse. Thus it is said in the Twelfth Canto:

*mṛṣā giras tā hy asatīr asat-kathā na kathyate yad bhagavān adhokṣajāḥ
tad eva satyaṁ tad u haiva maṅgalaṁ tad eva puṇyaṁ bhagavad-guṇodayam*

Words that do not describe the transcendental Lord but instead deal with temporary matters are simply false, harsh and useless. Only those words that manifest the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord are actually truthful, auspicious and pure.

*tad eva ramaṁ ruciraṁ navaṁ navaṁ tad eva śāśvan manaso mahotsavam
tad eva śokārṇava-śoṣaṇaṁ nṛṇāṁ yad uttamaḥśloka-yaśo 'nugīyate*

Those words describing the glories of the all-famous Lord are attractive, relishable and ever fresh. They are a perpetual festival for the mind, and they dry up the ocean of misery. SB 12.12.49-50

Taking *bhakti* as the subject of the verse, *param*, the best, then means “beyond the three *guṇas*,” since *bhakti* is another form of the real substance (*vāstava-vastu*). *Satyam* refers to *bhakti-yoga* which is full of the most auspicious qualities beneficial for spiritual practitioners (*sat*). *Satyam param dhimahi* then means “let us meditate on transcendental *bhakti-yoga*.”

lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam

It is filled with the qualities of *bhakti-yoga*, which is beyond the *guṇas*. SB 3.29.12

*na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyaṁ nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ*

O Uddhava! Because I have personally established it, this process of *niṣkāma-bhakti* is beyond the *guṇas*. Even by starting and not completing the process, there is no destruction of results. SB 11.29.20

vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghanaḥ sac-cidānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati

The Lord full of knowledge and bliss is situated in *bhakti-yoga* which is also eternity, knowledge and bliss. *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.78

Then the power of *bhakti* is described. From *bhakti* (*yataḥ*) there is an appearance

(*janma*) of the Supreme Lord (*ādyasya*) in the worshippers as Bhagavān. As well, by the association of *bhakti* (*anvayāt*) there is realization of the Supreme Lord as *brahman* and Paramātmā in other processes (*itarataḥ artheṣu*) — *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

“But it is well known that cultivation of pure *jñāna* alone gives realization of *brahman*.” No. The Supreme Lord is *jñāna* in complete form (*abhijñāḥ*). Because *jñāna* is in the mode of *sattva* only, without the association (*anvaya*) of *bhakti*, there can be no realization of *brahman* or Paramātmā.

Thus it is said:

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvara na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam*

Even the stage of *jñāna* without the bondage of *karma* is not glorious because it is devoid of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What to speak of *sakāma-karma* which is suffering during practice and perfection, and *niṣkāma-karma*, when not offered to the Lord? SB 1.5.12

*bhakyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram*

Only by *bhakti* can a person know me as Brahman. Then, knowing me as Brahman by that *bhakti*, he merges with Me. BG 18.55

”*Jñāna-yoga*, for realizing *brahman*, is dependent on *bhakti*, and *bhakti*, for realizing Bhagavān, is dependent on *jñāna*.” To counteract this argument, it is said that this *bhakti-yoga* reigns independently (*svarāṭ*).” The king being independent is not dependent on anyone.

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ |
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param ||*

The person desiring destruction of all desires, the person with all desires, even the person with the intense desire for liberation, if he has good intelligence, will worship the Supreme Lord with pure *bhakti*. . SB 2.3.10

Tivreṇa bhakti-yogena means “by pure *bhakti*.” *Bhakti* should remain unmixed with *jñāna* or other elements, just as the sun’s rays remain

untouched by the clouds.

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api
sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Everything that can be achieved by *karma*, penance, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, mystic yoga, charity, *dharma* and all other auspicious means of perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through *bhakti*. If somehow or other my devotee desires Svarga, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.32-33

On the other hand mixed *bhakti* is prohibited for devotees:

*tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha*

Therefore, for a devotee engaged in my loving service, with mind fixed on me, the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation is generally not the means of achieving the highest perfection within this world. SB 11.20.31

However such pure *bhakti* cannot be attained without the mercy of devotees. This is next stated in the verse. That *bhakti* was revealed (*tene*) by mercy to Vyāsa (*ādīkavaye*) by Nārada, who has Brahman (Kṛṣṇa) in his heart (*brahma-hṛdā*).

“But how can we understand that even omniscient Vyāsa’s knowledge of *bhakti* is dependent on another person (Nārada)?” Even the sages such as Vasiṣṭha are bewildered about *bhakti-yoga* which is beyond the *guṇas*. Because it is impossible for minds and intelligences generated from the *guṇas*, to understand by themselves about *bhakti-yoga* without the mercy of devotees, those persons only attain ignorance (*muhyanti*). This is mentioned in the Haṁsa-guhya prayers:

*yac-chaktayo vadatām vādinām vai vivāda-saṁvāda-bhuvo bhavanti
kurvanti caiṣām muhur ātma-mohaṁ tasmai namo 'nanta-guṇāya bhūmne*

I offer respects to the great Lord of eternal qualities, whose material energy is the cause of agreement and disagreement among those who make philosophies and then argue with others, whose material energy continually bewilders them as to the real nature of *ātmā*. SB 6.4.31

“But *bhakti* is not completely beyond the *guṇas*. This is shown in the Third Canto where *bhakti* is described as *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*.” In this *bhakti* (*yatra*) the idea that it is made of the *three guṇas* (*tri-sargaḥ*) is unfounded (*mṛṣā*). Although milk is not made of fire, water of dust in its natural state, it can become

burned by fire, diluted by water and contaminated with dirt. Similarly, *bhakti-yoga*, beyond the three *guṇas*, is called *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika* only because of the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* possessed by persons practicing *bhakti*.

“Many people will object if you say *bhakti-yoga* is beyond the *guṇas*.” This *bhakti-yoga* defeats all the arguers because of its very nature (*dhāmnā svena*) -- being filled with unprecedented sweetness that can be realized by the devotees. This means that since it is directly realized, it does not depend on any other proof to defeat the arguers.

Bhāgavatam is compared to a lamp in the following two verses:

*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atititīrṣatām tamo 'ndham
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam
tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi gurum muninām*

I surrender to the son of Vyāsa, the incomparable *guru* of all the sages, who mercifully spoke the *Purāṇa* full of hidden meanings, the essence of all the scriptures, the essence of hearing, for all the people of this world, even in the future; who spoke the *Bhāgavatam*, which revealed the excellence of *rasa* to Śukadeva, and which is the revealer of *ātmā* for those desiring to cross dense ignorance with ease. SB 1.2.3

*kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārūnyatas
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmahī*

I meditate upon that pure, spotless Nārāyaṇa, who is free from suffering and death and who previously revealed this incomparable lamp of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this *Bhāgavatam* to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. SB 12.13.19

Bhāgavatam is compared to the sun:

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

Though Kṛṣṇa, departing Dvārakā, arrived at Prabhāsa, and then disappeared along with his six opulences, this Purāṇa, another form of the sun, has now risen in Kali-yuga for those who have lost their knowledge. SB 1.3.43

Bhāgavatam is described as giving a tasty fruit in the third verse of this chapter with *nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ rasam*: it is the matured fruit (of *rasa*) of the desire tree of the Vedas. (SB 1.1.3)

Bhāgavatam is compared to Mohinī *avatāra* because it gives different results to different people:

ādi-madhyāvasāneṣu vairāgyākhyāna-saṁyutam
hari-līlā-kathā-vrātā-mṛtānandita-sat-suram
sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad brahmātmaikatva-lakṣaṇam
vastv advitīyaṁ tan-niṣṭhaṁ kaivalyaika-prayojanam

From beginning to end, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is full of the Lord's pastimes which give bliss to the devotees, endowed with a sense of renunciation. This *Bhāgavatam* is the essence of all Vedānta philosophy because its subject matter is one Brahman, a substance with no duality. The main goal of the work is merging. SB 12.13.11-12

The first explanation of this first verse of *Bhāgavatam* shows its nature as a light (giving deliverance from misery through general understanding of the Lord *or adhyātmā*). The second explanation shows it as the sun (more powerful, destroying misconceptions of the demons, bringing joy to the devotees). The third, fourth and fifth explanations show it is the bestower of tasty fruit full of *rasa* (revealing *madhura-rasa*, Rādhā and pure *bhakti*). The devotees, being the rightful recipients, are considered to be like the *devatās*, since they receive the nectar in the form of relishing the rarest taste of these five meanings. The *Bhāgavatam* is considered to be like Mohinī, serving out these different meanings of *Bhāgavatam* to the devotees.

Though all twelve cantos of the *Bhāgavatam* are like the tasty fruit, the sun and the lamp, the topics of creation and destruction (*sarga* and *nirodha*) and various verses describing this are considered to be the lamp, since those topics reveal only the general aspect of the Lord (*adhyātmā*). Secondary creation (*visarga*), maintenance (*sthāna*), protection (*poṣaṇa*) and other topics (*ūti*, *manvantara*, *īśānukathā*, and *mukti*) are considered to be the sun since they reveal, in addition, the results of forbidden practices for enjoyment and renunciation available in *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa* and their unlimited sub-varieties. Topics dealing with the appearance and pastimes of the Lord (*āśraya*) and his devotees, and with *bhakti* and *prema*, are

considered to be the tasty fruit of *rasa*. All the topics however give joy to the devotees of the Lord by taking on a meaning favorable for *bhakti*. The same topics however are like Mohinī and take on a different meaning for bewildering the demonic group who give meanings unfavorable for *bhakti*. One should not say that it is unbecoming to eulogize the unfavorable meanings of the *Bhāgavatam* which is directly filled with *bhakti-rasa*. The Supreme Lord is full of all *śaktis* and so is the *Bhāgavatam*. Thus it takes meanings corresponding to the minds of various types of persons (*adhikāris* of this *śāstra*), for such revelation is befitting the person (the Lord) who possesses all powers.

*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ paraṁ yoginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajaḥ*

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as a material form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity. SB 10.43.17

In the above verse it is mentioned *virāḍ aviduṣām*: for the foolish he appeared to be a material person. Thus everything is in agreement.

|| 1.1.2 ||

*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kim vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt ||1.1.2||*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord becomes immediately captured in the heart of the accomplished devotees by hearing *Bhāgavatam* and even by those who have suddenly developed a desire to hear it. This does not happen with other works. In the *Bhāgavatam* alone, created by the Lord himself, is presented the real, permanent object which can be understood by those without selfish intentions, and which bestows auspiciousness and release from the material world of miseries. In the *Bhāgavatam* alone is presented the process for attaining that highest object, devoid of all material goals and liberation.

COMMENTARY

Since *Bhāgavatam* is the essence of all scripture, and, among all scriptures, shows what is beneficial and unbeneficial for the *jīva*, and since it has discerned with

conviction the root of all benefit, it laments for the great diversity of recommendations of what is beneficial and unbeneficial for the *jīva*, arising from people's different qualifications and from different philosophical opinions. *Bhāgavatam* gives bliss to all the listeners and thus allows everyone to achieve the highest object completely. That is made clear in this verse.

Through the hearing process, the *Bhāgavatam* (*atra*) which is most auspicious (*śrīmat*), the Lord (*īśvaraḥ*), the shelter of all else, Śrī-kṛṣṇa, is immediately brought under control and captured (*avarudhyate*) in the heart by the accomplished persons (*kṛtibhiḥ*), the persons devoid of selfishness (*nirmatsarāṇām*), who are mentioned in the verse as being qualified for this scripture. This indicates that *prema* arises in the devotees, since the Lord is brought under control only by *prema*. *Praṇaya-raśanayā dhṛtānghri-padmaḥ*: the Lord's lotus feet are tied by ropes to the devotee. (SB 11.2.55)

*na rodhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā*

*vratāni yajñaś chandāmsi tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām*

O Uddhava! Only by associating with my pure devotees one can destroy material attachment and attain me. One cannot attain me by *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, distinction of *ātmā* from body, practice nonviolence, study of the Vedas, austerity, *sannyāsa*, sacrifices, charitable projects, donations, vows, worship of *devatās*, secret mantras, holy places, and observing prohibitions and rules.
. SB 11.12.1-2

Kṛṣṇa enters the hearts of even those who have suddenly developed the desire to hear from the moment they begin listening. Since they develop the desire to hear from that moment, even before having faith, it means that they develop *prema* simply by hearing *Bhāgavatam*. Then how much more quickly they would develop *prema* if they begin hearing with faith!

*madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api pariḡitam śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*

The name of Kṛṣṇa is sweeter than the sweetest, the most auspicious of all things auspicious, the highest fruit in the tree of all the Vedas, and is composed entirely of pure consciousness. O best of Bhṛgu's dynasty! Heard once with faith or in negligence, it can deliver any human being. *Prabhāsa-*

This verse indicates the inconceivable power in the extraordinary words denoting Kṛṣṇa.

*durūhādbhuta-vīrye 'smin śraddhā dūre 'stu pañcake |
yatra svalpo 'pi sambandhaḥ sad-dhiyām bhāva-janmane ||*

The last five items have inconceivable and astonishing power. What to speak of faith, where there is just a little relationship with these items, persons who are devoid of offenses attain the level of *bhāva*. BRS 1.2.238

The verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* shows that the mind becomes fixed in the Lord. This is called the highest attainment for the human being. And the Lord, becoming captured by the mind, cannot leave. That imprisonment occurs immediately — this means without even faith. Somehow this has the power to attract Kṛṣṇa completely. *Bhāgavatam* thus should be understood to be a great science. And if the two words *sadhyaḥ* and *kṛtibhiḥ* are taken together, then it means Kṛṣṇa is brought under control immediately for those who are accomplished or qualified (*kṛtibhiḥ*); whereas it happens after a slight delay for those who are not so qualified. Both types of persons, — the accomplished and unaccomplished — are qualified for *Bhāgavatam*. Thus it is said:

pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. SB 1.1.3

*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atititīrṣatām tamo 'ndham
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam
tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi munīnām*

I surrender to the son of Vyāsa, the incomparable *guru* of all the sages, who mercifully spoke the Purāṇa full of hidden meanings, the essence of all the scriptures, the essence of hearing, for all the people of this world, even in the future; who spoke the *Bhāgavatam*, which revealed the excellence of *rasa* to Śukadeva, and which is the revealer of *ātmā* for those desiring to cross dense ignorance with ease. SB 1.2.3

Tat-kṣaṇāt can also mean because of Kṛṣṇa's (*tat*) merriment or festival (*kṣaṇāt*) he becomes caught in the devotee's heart. Since Kṛṣṇa becomes supremely blissful by being trapped in the heart filled with *prema*, this also indicates that Kṛṣṇa is happy and filled with *prema* when the devotees hear *Bhāgavatam*. This result is not achieved by any other scripture or other practices (*kim vā paraiḥ*).

Having described the excellent results of this scripture, the verse describes the excellence of the maker. *Mahāmuni* indicates that the Lord himself became the sage and planned the work, for this is explained in the scriptures. The *Bhāgavatam* was first revealed in abbreviated form by the Lord himself in four verses.

*kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad-rātāya kārūnyatas
tac chuddham vimalam viśokam amṛtam satyam param dhīmahī*

I meditate upon that pure, spotless Nārāyaṇa, who is free from suffering and death and who previously revealed this incomparable lamp of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this *Bhāgavatam* to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. SB 12.13.19

Having then been revealed in full by Vyāsa, what is to be understood in this work through hearing it? That object which is substantial, which is fixed in the beginning middle and end of time (*vāstavam*) can be understood (*vedyam*) by those without selfishness. And even those who are selfish, by hearing this work, lose their selfishness. Even the selfish will have enthusiasm for hearing it, for even such persons can understand the work. This permanent object (*vāstavam vastu*) includes the name, form, qualities of the Lord, his abodes such as Vaikuṅṭha, his devotees and *bhakti*. Because other real objects (*vastu*), the things of this world, are not permanent, it should be understood that though both Vaikuṅṭha and the material world are real, Vaikuṅṭha is really substantial (*vāstavam*) and the material world is not. Unreal objects such as a flower in the sky are called *avastu*. What will happen with gaining this knowledge of the permanently real? It gives auspiciousness (*śivadam*) in the form of becoming an associate of the Lord with *prema* as the desired result. It gives release from the three miseries or liberation (*tāpa-trayonmūlanam*) as the unsought result.

In this work what is recommend action to be undertaken? It vehemently rejects (*projjhita*) that path which cheats, which deceives a person from the real goal. In other words *sakāma-karma* is rejected. The prefix *pra* (completely) indicates that path promising liberation is also rejected. *Niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* with its limbs of sense and mind control, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* are also rejected. But *parama-dharma*, pure *bhakti-yoga*, is to be performed. It is called *parama* or supreme, because *bhakti* is the best process, because it gives all types of happiness (material happiness, liberation and *prema*) and because even though it bestows the lesser benedictions, it remains uncontaminated. Thus, this verse shows the action to be performed (*abhidheya-tattva*). It will be shown later that anyone who is a

human being can perform *bhakti*:

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati*

The supreme occupation for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. SB 1.2.6

Repetition of *atra* (in this work) is employed for emphasis. In this scripture and not in any other work, the Lord becomes controlled by the devotees. In this scripture and not in any other work, the substantial object is presented. In this work and no other work, the highest *dharma* which rejects all cheating is presented. All other *yogas* are excluded in this work alone. And it should be understood that in describing what is presented only in the *Bhāgavatam*, all things which are not *yoga* at all are also rejected.

|| 1.1.3 ||

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

TRANSLATION

O knowers of *rasa*! O fortunate souls! Constantly drink from the mouth of Śukadeva the *Bhāgavatam*, the fruit of the tree of the Vedas, which has dropped from the tree to this earth, which is immortal, liquid, which is the essence of sweetness and which includes all types of liberation.

COMMENTARY

In the previous verse (1.1.2) of the *Bhāgavatam*, the powers of *Bhāgavatam* to capture the Lord in the heart were described. In this verse, the sweetness of *Bhāgavatam* is described. *Nigama* refers to the *Veda*. The *Veda* is a desire tree because it naturally gives fruit in the form of various *puruṣārthas* (human goals — *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*) which are desired by those who resort to it. However, because of its nature as a tree (being magnanimous, fulfilling everyone's desires), it also gives the fruit known as the *Bhāgavatam* (since some people desire that). *Bhāgavatam* also means that which belongs to Bhagavān as the proprietor. This implies that he alone gives the scripture to his devotees, and thus persons other than them do not have rights to it. *Galitam* means that it falls down of its own accord when ripened on the tree, not by force. Thus, it is completely full of sweetness. Even after falling from a high position in the tree, it does not break, nor does it lose its sweetness. That is because it comes down from the highest position, from Nārāyaṇa, to the branch of Brahmā, then to the lower branch of Nārada, then to Vyāsa, and finally to the mouth of Śuka. Thus, without being

damaged, it is endowed with liquid sweetness like honey. The parrot, Śuka, has even made an opening in the fruit with his beak for bringing out the sweetness. Moreover, having been tasted by him, that fruit becomes even sweeter. Moreover, it remains unbroken, coming down step-by-step from the branch of Sūta and others. What is implied here is that without the *guru-paramparā*, one cannot drink *Bhāgavatam* in its unbroken form--just by trying to taste it through use of one's limited intelligence.

How should the fruit be consumed? That is explained. One should drink it, for this fruit is the essence of taste (*rasam*), devoid of skin, seed and other objectionable parts. *Laya* means liberation (*sāyujya*) or attaining the conditions of *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sāmīpya* and *sārūpya*. The word *ālayam* then means that the fruit extends beyond these types of liberation, because *Bhāgavatam* is famous for glorifying the Lord's pastimes. Or *laya* can refer to the eighth *sāttvika-bhāva* called *pralaya*, fainting. One should drink until one develops the eight symptoms up to the final one, fainting. Though one will not be able to drink the nectar when one has fainted, when the fainting wears off, one again awakens to consciousness and begins drinking until one faints again. One cannot give up drinking. Thus the word *muhur* (continuously) is used. Or *muhur* can have another meaning. Though one has drunk it, by again drinking it, one develops more relish for it. This is surprising (*aho*). O knowers of *rasa* (*rasikāḥ*)! This refers only to the devotees, for they develop *rati* (*bhāva*) which becomes the *sthāyi-bhāva*. In that position they can taste the *rasa* of *Bhāgavatam*. *Jñāna-yogīs* and *karma-yogīs* cannot claim this position. O auspicious persons (*bhāvukāḥ*)! You are most auspicious and all others are inauspicious!

There is another reading of *bhāvukāḥ*. This would mean “persons who perform actions for tasting the beautiful.” Bhaṭṭanāyaka says that a permanent emotion is established by actions relating to tasting the beautiful. Taking this meaning, *bhāvukāḥ* indicates persons who appreciate the Lord — who is *rasa* personified.

Starting with *brahma vid āpnoti param*, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* describes the creation of the *annamaya-puruṣa* after listing elements starting with *ākāśa* coming from *brahman*. Different forms internal to the previous one are then successively described: the *annamaya-puruṣa*, *prāṇamaya-puruṣa*, *manomaya-puruṣa*, *vijñānamaya-puruṣa* and finally the *ānandamaya-puruṣa* which is considered to be *brahman*. *Brahma-sūtra* (1.1.13) describes this. *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*: from the repetition of the words, *ānandamaya* refers to the Supreme Lord. But it also says *ānanda ātmā brahma-puccham pratiṣṭhā*: impersonal *brahman* is only the tail of that *ānandamaya-puruṣa*. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.5) The Lord is the basis of that *brahman*. After that, the *Upaniṣad* says *raso vai saḥ rasam hy evāyam labdhānandī bhavati*: the Lord is *rasa*; realizing the Lord one attains bliss. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7) But does *saḥ* refer to the *ānandamaya-puruṣa* (the Lord) under discussion or to the *brahma-puccham* (impersonal *brahman*)? This doubt cannot be considered, for after discussion of the different *puruṣas* to have *saḥ* refer to the *brahma-puccha* would break the structure of the progression expressed in the text. The Lord of

course is well known to be *rasa*, since he is filled with bliss. The Lord is superior to the *brahman*, being its support. *Gītā* says *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham*: I am the basis of the *brahman*. (BG 14.27) This statement as well shows that Kṛṣṇa is superior to the *brahman*.

*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroḥ śīśuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virād aviduṣām tattvaṁ param yuginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajāḥ*

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when he entered it with his elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, his parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the *yogīs* as the Absolute Truth and the *Vṛṣṇis* as their supreme worshipable deity. SB 10.43.17

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that this verse illustrates that Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavān*, is the form of all *rasas* combined, starting with *madhura-rasa*, because the verse describes that different types of persons realized different *rasas* in Kṛṣṇa just on seeing him. In other words, Kṛṣṇa is the form of all *rasas*. Thus, both *Gītā* and *Bhāgavatam* proclaim Kṛṣṇa to be *rasa*. The *jīva*, attaining the Lord who is *rasa*, attains the highest level of bliss, for, after this, the discussion of bliss is concluded with the words *ānandasya mīmāṃsā bhavati*: this concludes the examination of bliss. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 8.2) Or the meaning can be that other forms of the Lord, on seeing Kṛṣṇa, become filled with bliss. This is evident in the following verses.

*dvijātmaṅgā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā mayopanītā bhūvi dharma-guptaye
kalāvātīrṇāv avaner bharāsurān hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me*

[Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said:] I brought the *brāhmaṇa*'s sons here because I wanted to see the two of you, my expansions, who have descended to the earth to save the principles of religion. As soon as you finish killing the demons, who burden the earth, quickly come back here to me. SB 10.89.58

*yan martya-līlāpayikaṁ sva-yoga-māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ param padam bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his *yoga-māyā*. That form astonishes even the Lord of *Vaikuṅṭha*. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

In any case Kṛṣṇa is *rasa*, the fruit, but this fruit is not directly situated on the tree of the Vedas. It has fallen down (*galitam*) nearby. This object, *rasa*, is not on the tree itself. It is not to be searched out in the Vedas, but rather it is found in the mouth of Śukadeva. One can say that Vyāsa, knowing that this fruit was very tasty, took it and put it in the mouth of his son out of affection. Śukha-mukhāt can also indicate a cause: the *rasa* is sweeter *because of* coming from the mouth of Śukadeva. This sweetness of *rasa* is shown in Śukadeva's statements such as the following:

yeṣāṃ ahaṃ priya ātmā sutaś ca sakhā guruḥ suhr̥do daivam iṣṭam

Because the devotees accept me as their friend, their relative, their son, preceptor, benefactor and Supreme Deity, they cannot be deprived of their possessions at any time. SB 3.25.38

Bhuvi then indicates Vraja-bhumi. *Bhāvukāḥ* and *rasikāḥ* indicate the dear *gopīs*. O dear relishers of Kṛṣṇa's *rasa*, drink the sweetness of the *rasa* arising from his form (*bhāgavatam*). Or *pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam* can mean "relish *rasa* up to the point of embracing (*ālayam*) Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa's *rasa* is indestructible (*amṛta*) and flows away quickly from the mind and eye (*drava*). Therefore drink that indestructible nectar in the form of his lips. In that case, *nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam* means "rāgānuga-bhakti which is the fully ripened fruit (*galitam*) on the tree of the Vedas." This fully ripened fruit is *rāgānuga-bhakti* following after the sentiments of the *gopīs* (which is the highest type of love). This is an acceptable meaning because, as mentioned in the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*, the Vedas, taking up that type of *bhakti*, accepted the forms of hundreds of thousands of *gopīs*, and drank the sweet *rasa* of his lips. This very secret meaning can be seen in the the payers of the Personified Vedas (SB 10.87).

Some persons explain the phrase *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* in another way. Certainly they do, but such explanations should be regarded as incorrect since they are out of context and fanciful. The explanation given here is correct.

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

The meaning of these verses is as follows. Though a person may question how one can attain *brahman* by *bhakti* and how one can attain realization of the one *brahman* without qualities by worship of the Lord, you can attain realization of *brahman* by worshipping me, because (*hi*) I am the shelter (*pratiṣṭhā*) of even the *brahman*, famous in the *śrutis* as the shelter of everything. *Pratiṣṭhā* means "that in which something is standing." *Pratiṣṭhā* means shelter as well, in many *śruti* texts,

such as *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. I am the shelter of liberation (*amṛtasya*). This meaning is made clear by the word *avyaya* (indestructible), since this will exclude the *amṛta* of the heavenly planets. I am also the shelter of *bhakti* (*dharmasya*) which is continuous (*śāśvatasya*), being present as *sādhana* and as the result of *sādhana* (*prema*). I am the shelter of *prema* (*aikāntikasya sukhasya*), the goal of *sādhana-bhakti*. Because everything is dependent on me, by worshipping me with a desire for merging into impersonal *brahman*, one can merge into the *brahman* and attain the quality of *brahman*. In support of this, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.76) says *śubhāśrayasya cittasya sarvagasyācalātmanah*: Viṣṇu is the shelter of all auspiciousness and the *brahman*.

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī *sarvagasyātmanah* means that Viṣṇu is the shelter of even the impersonal *brahman* (*sarvagasya*). This confirms what the Lord himself says: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. Viṣṇu-dharma in describing Naraka-dvādaśī says:

*prakṛtau puruṣe caiva brahmaṇy api ca sa prabhuh
yathaika eva sarvātmā vāsudevo vyavasthitah*

Vāsudeva is situated as the soul of all things, in *prakṛti*, the *puruṣa*, and the *brahman*.

Also Viṣṇu-dharma in describing *māsarkṣa* worship says:

*yathācyutas tvam parataḥ parasmāt sa brahmabhūtāt parataḥ parātmā
tathācyuta tvaṁ kuru vāñchitaṁ tam mamāpadaṁ cāpaharāprameya*

Just as Acyuta, Paramātmā, is superior to all others, he is superior to *brahman*. Therefore unlimited Acyuta, you should fulfill my wish and remove me from all dangers. *Viṣṇu Dharma* 26.13

In *Hari-vaṁśa*, the Lord says to Arjuna in the story where Mahaviṣṇu steals the sons of the *brāhmaṇa*:

*tat param paramaṁ brahma sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat
mamaiva tad ghanam tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata*

This supreme *brahman* spreads throughout the whole universe. O Bhārata, understand that *brahman* is my condensed effulgence.

Brahma-saṁhitā says:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-
koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam |
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi ||*

I worship the Supreme Lord Govinda, whose powerful form radiates effulgence known as the undifferentiated, unlimited, all-encompassing *brahman*, which is completely distinct from its powers displayed in unlimited planets throughout billions of universes. *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.40

The *śruti* text *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says:

*yo 'sau jāgrata svapna-suṣuptim atītya tūryātīto gopālas tasmai vai namo
namaḥ*

I offer repeated respects to Kṛṣṇa who is beyond the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the *brahman*.

|| 1.1.4 ||

*naimiṣe 'nimiṣa-kṣetre
ṛṣayaḥ śaunakādayaḥ
satraṁ svargāya lokāya
sahasra-samam āsata*

TRANSLATION

At the place called Naimiśāraṇya, the place of Viṣṇu, the sages headed by Śaunaka applied themselves to a sacrifice lasting a thousand years for attaining the planet of the Supreme Lord (or for going to the heavenly planets).

COMMENTARY

Offering my respects to my guru and to the ocean of mercy, Kṛṣṇa, I take shelter of Śrī Śuka, the eye of the universe and master of the world.

My eyes are covered by ignorance, but Śrīdhara Svāmī, who wrote *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, being very merciful to me in producing this commentary, is my means to success.

This commentary belonging to the Lord, called “Giving bliss to the hearts of the devotees” has arisen by the mercy of the *ācāryas* and my *guru*.

Facing the listeners, the speaker invokes auspiciousness at the beginning of the recital of *Bhāgavatam* by uttering *om*. It is said:

*omkāraś cātha-śabdaś ca dvāv etau brahmaṇaḥ purā
kaṅṭham bhittvā vinirjātau tena māṅgalikāv ubhau*

In ancient times the words *om* and *atha* were uttered by Brahmā. Thus, both words produce auspiciousness.

By *om* the speaker indicates that *Bhāgavatam* is an expansion of the meaning of

om. Brahmā created a wheel in his mind. The rim of a wheel is called a *nemi*. That place where the rim (*nemi*) fell off (*śīryate*) is called *nemiśa* or *naimiśa*. *Vāyu Purāṇa* describes this:

*etan manomayaṁ cakram mayā sṛṣṭaṁ viśṛjyate
yatrāsya śīryate nemiḥ sa desas tapasaḥ śubhaḥ
ity utkvā sūrya-saṅkāśaṁ cakram sṛṣṭvā manomayam
praṇipatyā mahādeva visasarja pitāmahaḥ
te 'pi hrṣṭatarā viprāḥ praṇamya jagatāṁ prabhum
prayayus tasya cakrasya yatra nemir vyaśīryata
tadvaṁ tena vikhyātaṁ naimiśaṁ muni-pūjitaṁ*

“This mental wheel created by me will be released. The place where the rim comes off will be favorable for performing austerities.” Having said this, and having created the wheel brilliant like the sun in his mind and offering his respects to it, Brahmā released that great deity, the wheel. The rejoicing *brāhmaṇas*, offering respects to the lord of the universe, then journeyed to the place where the rim of wheel fell off. That forest became known as *Naimiśa* and is worshipped by the sages.

Various devotees have personal desires to fulfill through various types of *bhakti*. All the desires of all these persons upon which their minds, free of distraction, have become fixed, can be fulfilled by immersion in the topics of *Bhāgavatam*. The *Bhāgavatam* has been arranged to bring out this point clearly at the very beginning, with the description of the sages at *Naimiśāraṇya*.

Naimiśa can also be spelled *Naimiṣa*. The meaning of *Naimiṣa* with a cerebral ṣ is found in the *Varāha Purāṇa*. The Lord spoke to the sage *Gauramukha*:

*evaṁ kṛtvā tato devo munim gaurmukhaṁ tadā
uvāca nimiṣeṇedaṁ nihataṁ dānavaṁ balam
araṇye 'smiṁs tatas tv etan naimiṣāraṇya-samjñitam
bhaviṣyati yathārthaṁ vai brāhmaṇānām viśeṣakam*

Having done that, the Lord then spoke to *Gauramukha*. The powerful demon was killed in that forest (*araṇya*) quickly in a moment (*nimiṣa*). Thus this place is called the *Naimiṣāraṇya*. It will be very suitable for *brāhmaṇas* in the future.

....

By using this word with this meaning, it is suggested that one should reside in this place for quickly killing the enemies such as material desire. In the beginning *Śaunaka* and the other sages were attached to *sakāma-karma*. Thus the verse indicates they performed sacrifice for attaining *Svarga*. It is well known however that by hearing and contemplating various *Purāṇas* and other scriptures from *Romaharṣaṇa*, they became inquisitive about spiritual life. By association with *Sūta Gosvāmī* (*Ugraśravas*) they developed a small taste for *bhakti*. (Showing their

inquisitiveness) it is said:

*karmaṇy asminn anāśvāse dhūma-dhūmrātmanām bhavān
āpāyayati govinda-pāda-padmāsavaṁ madhu*

You let us, blackened by the smoke at this uncertain sacrifice, drink the intoxicating nectar of the lotus feet of Govinda. SB 1.18.12

When they took up *bhakti*, then their inquisitiveness became weakened, and performance of sacrifice for attaining Svarga became false. That is indicated in the following:

*kalim āgatam ājñāya kṣetre ’smin vaiṣṇave vayam
āsīnā dīrgha-satreṇa kathāyām sakṣaṇā hareḥ*

Knowing well that the age of Kali has already begun, we are assembled here in this holy place to hear at great length the transcendental message of the Lord and in this way perform sacrifice for the Lord. SB 1.1.21

The power of *bhakti* is indicated by the cessation of attachment to prescribed duties which arose in them from hearing *Bhāgavatam*. The power of *bhakti* is also indicated by the appearance of complete disinterest in impersonal liberation within Śukadeva.

*pariniṣṭhito ’pi nairguṇya uttama-śloka-līlayā
gṛhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān*

O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. SB 2.1.9

There is another meaning to Svarga however. Svarga means “glorified (*gīyate=ga*) in Svarga (*svar*).” Svargāya (who is praised in Svarga), like the name Urugāya (who is greatly praised), indicates the Lord. His *loka* is Vaikuṅṭha. Therefore *svargāya lokāya* means for “going to Vaikuṅṭha of the Lord.” *Animiṣa* (not blinking) in this verse refers to Viṣṇu, because in SB 1.1.21 quoted above, the sages themselves identify the place as *kṣetre ’smin vaiṣṇave*, a place of Viṣṇu. They applied themselves (*āsata*) to performing *karma*, pious prescribed actions (*satram*) which were to last for a thousand years (*samāḥ*). Or the sentence can mean “They performed (*āsata*) a sacrifice of killing animals such as the *agniṣṭoma* (generally performed for going to Svarga).” This use of the verb is similar to expressions such as “He performs (*nirvapati*, he sprinkles) *śrāddha* rites to the Pitṛs on the dark moon or “they perform (*upayānti*- they approach) the marriage of a eight-year-old girl.” Thus the meaning of *ās* (to sit) can here mean “perform” with

suppression of the meaning of the original root.

|| 1.1.5 ||

*ta ekadā tu munayaḥ prātar huta-hutāgnayaḥ |
sat-kṛtaṁ sūtaṁ āsīnaṁ papracchur idam ādarāt ||*

TRANSLATION

Once, the sages, having offered oblations into the sacrificial fire in the morning, with great respect inquired from Sūta who had been received properly and was seated.

COMMENTARY

Huta-hutāgnayaḥ munayaḥ means “the sages who had offered oblations (*huta*) into the sacrificial fires (*hutāgnayaḥ*).”

|| 1.1.6 ||

*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ—
tvayā khalu purāṇāni setihāsāni cānagha |
ākhyātāny apy adhītāni dharma-śāstrāṇi yāny uta ||*

TRANSLATION

The sages said: O sinless Sūta! Certainly you have not only studied but also explained the Purāṇas and the *dharma-śāstras* along with histories such as *Mahābhārata*.

COMMENTARY

Itihāsāni refers to works such as *Mahābhārata*.

|| 1.1.7-8 ||

*yāni veda-vidāṁ śreṣṭho bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ |
anye ca munayaḥ sūta parāvara-vido viduḥ ||
vettha tvaṁ saumya tat sarvaṁ tattvatas tad-anugrahāt |
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya guravo guhyam apy uta ||*

TRANSLATION

O Sūta Gosvāmī! Because you are submissive, by the mercy of the *gurus*, you know all matters in truth which the Supreme Lord Vyāsa, best among knowers, and other sages who know *brahman* with and without qualities have understood. The *gurus* should speak the secret to the disciple who has affection for the *gurus*.

COMMENTARY

Vidāṁ refers to persons who know. *Parāvara-vidaḥ* means persons who know both

the *brahman* with qualities and without qualities. *Gurus* should speak the secret to the disciple who has affection (*snigdhasya*) for the *gurus*. This is in the potential, and thus expresses the following idea. Since you were a disciple having affection for your *gurus*, they must certainly have revealed the secret to you and you must have understood all those confidential subjects. While rejecting sages who extract their own ideas from all these confidential topics and then speak, we are asking you, the speaker of all authorized doctrines, about these subjects.

|| 1.1.9 ||

tatra tatrāñjasāyusman bhavatā yad viniścitam |
pumsām ekāntataḥ śreyas tan naḥ śamsitum arhasi ||

TRANSLATION

O long-lived sage! You should tell us at once in easy terms, and thoroughly, the highest object for mankind that you have discerned in all the scriptures.

COMMENTARY

“Then I will speak all things.” They reply with this verse, saying which conclusions they want to hear among all the conclusions of scripture. O long-living sage! This indicates that he studied and deliberated on the scriptures for a long time. Tell us completely (*ekāntataḥ*), or from the beginning (ablative sense “from one end”), concerning the highest goal of mankind, that you discerned from looking at all the scriptures (*tatra tatra*), in statements that can be understood at once (*añjasā*). *Śreya* means that to which there is nothing greater, that which has no equal, and that which is not included in something else when comparing degrees of excellence. Later in the work it will be revealed that this highest goal is *prema*, not Svarga or liberation, because *prema* brings even Bhagavān under control. Among the forms *brahman*, *Paramātmā* and Bhagavān, Bhagavān is the chief form.

|| 1.1.10 ||

prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ |
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O worthy sage, capable of knowing what is beneficial at this time! In Kali-yuga people are generally short-lived, lazy, unintelligent, devoid of the good fortune of devotee association, and afflicted by various problems.

COMMENTARY

“You should hear everything from my mouth. Then you can decide what the best is.” The sages reply with this verse. O honorable sage, you who know what is suitable for time and place! In Kali-yuga people are generally short-lived. If they

have long life by chance, then they are lazy to investigate spiritual topics. Even if someone is not lazy then he is unintelligent. Even if someone is intelligent, he is unfortunate, for he is devoid of association with devotees to teach the highest actions. Even if someone has that association of devotees, he is afflicted. Under the control of affliction from sickness and other problems, he does not get the time to hear from the mouth of the devotee, or even if he does hear, he cannot discern the highest goal for the human being and then carry out actions to attain it. Or the sequence of qualities can mean that all people have all the bad qualities.

|| 1.1.11 ||

*bhūrīṇi bhūri-karmāṇi śrotavyāni vibhāgaśaḥ |
ataḥ sādho'tra yat sāraṁ samuddhṛtya manīṣayā |
brūhi bhadrāya bhūtānām⁵ yenātmā suprasīdati ||*

TRANSLATION

O learned sage! For the welfare of all living beings, please, after extracting the essence of scriptures using your wisdom, describe the practices worthy of hearing which include many actions, by which our intelligence will be satisfied.

COMMENTARY

The sages request, “Please tell us the principal means among all the processes for attaining the highest goal, which is easily executed by people living in Kali-yuga.” Tell us the many practices worthy of hearing about (*bhūrīṇi śrotavyāni*), those which should be practiced, which include many actions (*bhūri-karmāṇi*). Or tell us the scriptures worthy of hearing because they explain the many practices for attaining the highest goal, which themselves contain many actions, by which our intelligence (*ātmā*) becomes satisfied. Later it will be explained that these actions are hearing, chanting and other devotional acts.

|| 1.1.12 ||

*sūta jānāsi bhadraṁ te bhagavān sātvatām patih |
devakyām vasudevasya jāto yasya cikīrṣayā ||*

TRANSLATION

O Sūta! Blessings to you! You know for what purpose the Lord, master of the Yadus, appeared in Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY

Again the sages request Sūta to speak about the practice of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā. “All auspiciousness to you (*bhadraṁ te*)” is a blessing pronounced out of enthusiasm. Viṣṇu is called *satvān* (possessor of *sat*) because he possesses all the devotees (*sat*) as his expansions. The followers of Viṣṇu are then called *sātvatas*. Use of *sātvatām* as the possessive plural instead of *sātvatānām* is

poetic license. Or the word *sātvatām* may be derived from the *sautra* root *sāt*, which takes a causative meaning “giving pleasure” according to *anupasargālimpa*. (Pāṇini 3.1.138) The noun *sāt*, “he who gives pleasure” is Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord. Those who possess the Lord by service are then called *sātvataḥ* or devotees. The possessive plural form is *sātvatām*. *Sātvatām patiḥ* then means “Lord of the devotees.”

You know for what purpose the Lord, master of the Yadus was born in Devakī, wife of Vasudeva (*vasudevasya*). He appeared to broadcast his wonderful qualities, not to relieve the burden of the earth. This is proved by Kuntī’s conclusive statement:

*bhave ’smin kliṣyamānānām avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ
śravaṇa-smaraṇārḥāṇi kariṣyann iti kecana*

Some say that you appeared to engage those suffering in the material world due to their actions covered by ignorance and desire in hearing and remembering about you to attain *prema*. SB 1.8.35

|| 1.1.13 ||

*tan naḥ śuśrūṣamānānām arhasy aṅgānuvarṇitum |
yasyāvatāro bhūtānām kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca ||*

TRANSLATION

O Sūta (*aṅga*)! You should describe that Lord to us, who are eager to hear. The Lord made his appearance for the liberation and material prosperity of all beings.

COMMENTARY

What is the result of curiosity about Kṛṣṇa? We will feel ourselves successful by hearing about him. The sentence in the second line actually continues until verse 16, connected by the word *yasya* in this verse with the correlative is *tasya* in verse 16. The Lord appeared for the liberation (*kṣemāya*) and prosperity (*bhavāya*) of the living beings. What else remains for him to do?

|| 1.1.14-16 ||

*āpannaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ ghorām yan-nāma vivaśo gṛṇan |
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta yad bibheti svayaṁ bhayam ||
yat-pāda-saṁśrayāḥ sūta munayaḥ praśamāyanāḥ |
sadyaḥ punanty upasprṣtāḥ swardhuny-āpo nu sevayā ||
ko vā bhagavatas tasya puṇya-ślokeḍya-karmaṇaḥ |
śuddhi-kāmo na śṛṇuyād yaśaḥ kali-malāpāham ||*

TRANSLATION

What person, desiring satisfaction of his intelligence, will not hear the glories of the Lord, whose actions are praised by reputed persons; whose name, which fear personified fears, immediately liberates helpless persons afflicted by the terrors of material existence; and whose devotees, having taking shelter of his lotus feet and having fixed their mind in the Lord, immediately purify others of all sins just by their thinking of the devotees, whereas the waters of the Gaṅgā purify only by contact and direct service.

COMMENTARY

The phrases *saṁṣṛtim ghorām* (terrifying material life), *vivaśaḥ* (helpless) and *sadyaḥ* (immediately) indicate persons like Ajāmila. By the utterance of even one name of the Lord, fear at its very root (*svayam bhayam*, like *svayam bhagavān*), the form of Mahākāla, causing destruction of the universe, becomes afraid. What then to speak of death and Yama in charge of death? And what to speak of having fear of lesser beings such as servants of Yama?

Those who take shelter of the Lord's two feet — the devotees — purify people of the contamination of ignorance immediately, just by people remembering those devotees. How much more purification will take place by seeing, touching or serving those devotees! This is understood because of a similar statement later:

yeṣāṁ saṁsmaraṇāt puṁsāṁ sadyaḥ śuddhyanti vai grhāḥ |
kiṁ punar darśana-sparśa- pāda-śaucāsanādibhiḥ ||

Simply by our remembering you, our houses become instantly sanctified. And what to speak of seeing you, touching you, washing your holy feet and offering you a seat in our home? SB 1.19.33

It should be understood that the waters of the Gaṅgā purify by their direct presence, having been brought from a distance place. Otherwise, there would be a contradiction to the statement *muktis tvad-darśanād eva na jāne snāna-jam phalam*: liberation comes from seeing you; I do not know the result of taking bath. Also it is said *svardhunyā darśanād eva sādḥūnām ca smaraṇād api muktir*: one can attain liberation by seeing the Gaṅgā and remembering the devotees. Thus the superiority of the devotee is indicated. The water of the Gaṅgā, flowing from the Lord's feet, by having a relation with the Lord, actually does purify but being touched (*upaśpr̥ṣṭāḥ*, touched upon). *Sevayā* means by actions such as worship, obeisances, etc. or it can mean by respect in general. The particle *nu* (certainly) indicates a difference from the previous statement (ie. “on the other hand”). Lack of grammatical ending on the compound *svardhuny-āpas* is poetic license.

Śuddhi-kāmaḥ means “one who desires satisfaction of the intellect” because it was previously said *yenātmā suprasīdati*: by which the intelligence is satisfied. *Yaśaḥ* or fame of the Lord means his extraordinary actions such as his victory over Śiva, Indra, Brahmā and others and his pastimes such as the *rāsa-līlā*.

|| 1.1.17 ||

*tasya karmāṇy udārāṇi parigītāni sūribhiḥ |
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Please tell us, full of faith, about the activities of the Lord who supports the forms of all *avatāras* by his will—activities of killing the demons and bestowing the highest bliss to his devotees, which are glorified by the sages.

COMMENTARY

Karmāṇi refers to the activities of killing demons in common with other *avatāras*. *Udārāṇi* (generous) means fulfilling the desires of the devotees. *Kalāḥ dadhataḥ* means “of he who supports the forms of the *avatāras*.” The constant presence of these *avatāras* during the time when Kṛṣṇa appears indicates the completeness of Kṛṣṇa as *avatārī*.

|| 1.1.18 ||

*athākhyāhi harer dhīmann avatāra-kathāḥ śubhāḥ |
līlā-vidadhataḥ svairam īśvarasyātma-māyayā ||*

TRANSLATION

O intelligent sage! Narrate the non-material stories of *avatāras* of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, who performs his eternal pastimes independently by his *yoga-māyā* potency.

COMMENTARY

Śubha means non-material. The Lord performs pastimes in the present which are actually eternal in nature by his *yoga-māyā* potency (*ātmā-māyayā*).

|| 1.1.19 ||

*vayaṁ tu na vitṛpyāma uttama-śloka-vikrame |
yac-chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām svādu svādu pade pade ||*

TRANSLATION

We are not fully satisfied with the exploits of the Lord whose fame is the highest, because at every moment those exploits become more relishable for the hearers who have knowledge of *rasa*.

COMMENTARY

Uttama-śloka means “he whose fame or good qualities are the best.” Or it came mean “he who is praised by the best persons.” We are not completely satisfied in hearing about the exploits of Uttama-śloka. We do not consider that it is

sufficient. In other words, we are completely satisfied with whatever we have done in performing sacrifices and *yoga*. Let us continue to hear about the activities of the Lord. Or the sentence can mean “Let others be satisfied, but we are not.” That is indicated by the word *tu*. The meaning is this. In three ways one knows that one has had enough of something and is satisfied: by sufficiency of quantity (as with food in the belly), by lack of awareness of the taste, and by lack of relishing the object. In this verse, there is insufficiency for the hearers (*śṛṅvatām*) because the exploits are not directly present, being present only as sound in the ether contacting the ear. Satisfaction is negated for a person who is not capable of appreciating the taste or *rasa*, for a person who is just like an animal. However the sages have appreciation of *rasa* (*rasa-jñānām*). But still they are not satisfied. Unlike chewed sugarcane which loses its taste and becomes detestable, the topics of the Lord are most excellent because of the increase in taste at every moment (*pade pade*) after tasting. The sages have not lost taste, but are still dissatisfied. The locative termination on *pada pada* (*pade pade*) indicates “at every moment.”

|| 1.1.20 ||

kṛtavān kila karmāṇi saha rāmeṇa keśavaḥ |
atimartyāni bhagavān gūḍhaḥ kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Keśava, whose intentions remain concealed because he is deceptive to mankind, performed pastimes with Balarāma.

COMMENTARY

This verse clarifies the activities of the Lord. Though Kṛṣṇa’s actions are human because he is *brahman* in human form, his actions like lifting Govardhana surpass the actions of humans. Those actions are impossible for others living at that time. Thus his actions are describes as “beyond human” (*atimartyāni*). But the Lord is hidden (*gūḍhaḥ*). The reason is given. He is deceptive to the human beings (*kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ*). He is deceptive to materialistic persons such as Jarāsandha by disguising himself as a *brāhmaṇa* to make a request, in order to help his devotees. He is deceptive with the spiritual devotees — the *gopīs* who were attracted to the sound of his flute, by giving them instructions on proper conduct in order to increase the manifestation of *prema*. Since the bewilderment of the demons is because of their material ignorance and the bewilderment of the devotees like the *gopīs* is because of their *prema*, the Lord does not actually cheat anyone. He conceals himself in order to give instruction only. The formation of *kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ* follows the *Varttika* on Pāṇini 22.35 listing words starting with *gaḍu*. In a *bahu-vrīhi* compound the locative case word is placed first in the compound, but in words starting with *gaḍu*, the word in the locative case is placed at the end. (The compound would normally be *mānuṣa-kapaṭa*, deceptive to men, but by the exception it becomes *kapaṭa-mānuṣa*.)

|| 1.1.21 ||

*kalim āgatam ājñāya kṣetre'smin vaiṣṇave vayam |
āsīnā dīrgha-satreṇa kathāyām sakṣaṇā hareḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Knowing that the age of Kali has arrived, taking the opportunity, we have seated ourselves at this place sacred to Viṣṇu on the pretext of a prolonged sacrifice in order to hear about the Lord.

COMMENTARY

“Well it is indeed surprising that persons such as you, absorbed in ritualistic sacrifices, have enthusiasm for hearing about the glories of Kṛṣṇa.” “Please understand that our interest in sacrifice has now become a show only.” *Sakṣaṇā* means “having obtained the opportunity,” or it can mean “with joy.”

|| 1.1.22 ||

*tvaṁ naḥ sandarśito dhātrā dustaram nistitīrṣatām |
kalim sattva-haram puṁsām karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam ||*

TRANSLATION

We desire to cross the insurmountable ocean of Kali, the destroyer of all good qualities. Like the pilot of a ship, you have appeared before us by the grace of the Lord to guide us over that ocean.

COMMENTARY

Karṇadhāraḥ means a pilot of ship.

|| 1.1.23 ||

*brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe brahmaṇye dharmavarmaṇi |
svām kāṣṭhām adhunopete dharmāḥ kaṁ śaraṇam gataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Please tell us where *dharmā* has taken shelter, now that Kṛṣṇa, master of all *yogas*, devoted to the righteous, and the protector of *dharmā*, has entered his abode.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa is the protector of *dharmā* (*dharmavartmaṇi*), acting like armor for *dharmā*. The cause is then mentioned. *Yogeśvare* (master of all *yogas*) indicates Kṛṣṇa's powers. *Brahmaṇye* (devoted to the righteous) indicates his merciful nature. *Svām kāṣṭhām* means his own *sthiti* or *maryādā*. According to *Amara-koṣa*, *kāṣṭhā* means excellence, continuous condition or direction and *maryādā* means righteousness and continuous condition. That abode became invisible to worldly people after a hundred and twenty-years after its appearance.

The six questions of the sages were:

1. You should explain what is most beneficial for humanity.
2. Tell us who have faith the essence of all the scriptures by which the intellect is pleased.
3. You should tell us, who desire to hear, the purpose of Kṛṣṇa's appearance from Devakī.
4. Describe the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa who has all the *avatāras* within him.
5. Describe the stories of the *avatāras*.
6. Tell us the shelter of *dharma* now that Kṛṣṇa has departed.

It should be understood that the answers to these six questions along with some related matters constitutes the *Bhāgavatam*.

Chapter two

|| 1.2.1 ||

vyāsa uvāca—

*iti sampraśna-saṁhr̥ṣṭo viprāṇāṁ raumahaṛṣaṇiḥ |
pratipūjya vacas teśāṁ pravaktum upacakrame ||*

TRANSLATION

The son of Romaharṣaṇa (Sūta or Ugraśravas), delighted at the questions of the sages respecting their words, began to speak.

COMMENTARY

In the second chapter there is a description of three items: the process (*abhidheya*), *bhakti*; the goal (*prayojanam*), *prema*; and the object of worship, the Supreme Lord Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa.

The son of Romaharṣaṇa was Ugraśravas (also called Sūta).

|| 1.2.2 ||

sūta uvāca

*yaṁ pravrajantam anupetam apeta-kṛtyaṁ
dvaipāyano viraha-kātara ājuhāva |
putreti tan-mayatayā taravo 'bhinedus
taṁ sarva-bhūta-hṛdayaṁ munim ānato'smi ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said:

I offer my respects to the sage Śukadeva, who has entered the mind of all beings, and to whom Vyāsa, his father, cried out with pain of separation “O son!” when Śukadeva, without even undergoing *saṁskāras*, left home and could

not be brought back. Even the trees, being attached to Śukadeva, called out “O son!”

COMMENTARY

Here Sūta begins to reflect. I will speak the answer to the questions, the essence of all the scriptures, the very substance. They have asked for the essence which will please their intellects (*yenātmā suprasīdati* SB 1.1.11). If their intellects are not satisfied with this, what will happen? Therefore among all the essences, I should seek out that which is pleasing to the intellect as decided by the most righteous persons. Even though some righteous persons will say that the intellect is pleased with Sāṅkhya, some will say the intellect is pleased with Mīmāṃsā, or with the Upaniṣads, or the Vedānta-sūtras which discern the conclusion of the Upaniṣads, all that cannot be admitted. Among the sages, the chief is Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana-vyāsa, who knows all the philosophies, who wrote the Vedānta-sūtras, and whose vision is based on clarity of mind. I should speak that scripture, which remained steady, without objections from anyone, since it gave pleasure to all the sages, after withstanding the tests of all the great luminaries, the greatest philosophers present in the assembly gathered around King Parīkṣit. I should speak that scripture which is pure like the *jāmbūnada* river. I should speak the *Bhāgavatam*. Therefore I should surrender to Śrī-śukadeva, the speaker of the *Bhāgavatam*. He thus begins reciting this verse.

Śukadeva had departed, leaving everything (*pravrajantam*). Though he was nearby, Vyāsa could not catch him (*anupetam*). He had not received his sacred thread (*apeta-kṛtyam*) Vyāsa called out the protracted words, “O son!” But not only his father had great affection for him. *Padma Purāṇa* says:

yenārcito haris tena tarpitāni jaganty api |
rajyanti jantavas tatra jangamāḥ sthāvarā api ||

He who worships the Lord pleases all living entities. All moving and non-moving beings are controlled by him.⁶

Thus even the trees lamented. Being completely attached to Śukadeva (*tan-mayatayā*) the trees, since they were facing him, called out in the form of echoes “O son!” When a person is attached to something he is said to be *tan-maya*. Thus *strī-maya* means a person who is attached to women. This affection for a person who resides in the mind of all living beings, like the attraction for the all-attractive deity of the Lord, is not a material illusion. Thus it is not a fault if Vyāsa seemed to lose his sense of discrimination.

Or there is another meaning. The trees, as another form of Śukadeva (*tan-mayatayā*), called out in echo, “O son!” to answer Vyāsa. If I am your son, then you are also my son. Illusion is the cause of thinking “I am the father, you are the son. Who is the son of whom? Who is the father of whom?” Enlightening Vyāsa

⁶ This verse is quoted in BRS 1.1.28 to illustrate the first two types of *subhādā*: he has affection for the world and the world has affection for him.

about this truth, they hint “Why are you bewildered?”

For establishing attachment to Śukadeva, it is then described that he had entered into the minds of all living entities (*sarva-bhūta-hṛdayam munim*) by the power of his *yoga*. That being so, let him also enter my heart and speak the *Bhāgavatam* through my mouth! He who can enter into the dull trees and pacify his father by answering back can also enter my heart and please the intellects of all the hearers by the *Bhāgavatam*. Implied here is the rule that at the time of lecturing, other speakers of *Bhāgavatam* should also meditate in this way.

|| 1.2.3 ||

*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atititīṛṣatām tamo 'ndham |
saṁsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-guhyam
tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi gurum muninām ||*

TRANSLATION

I surrender to the son of Vyāsa, the incomparable guru of all the sages, who mercifully spoke the Purāṇa full of hidden meanings, the essence of all the scriptures, the essence of hearing, for all the people of this world, even in the future; who spoke the *Bhāgavatam*, which revealed the excellence of *rasa* to Śukadeva, and which is the revealer of *ātmā* for those desiring to cross dense ignorance with ease.

COMMENTARY

He says that the reason for Śukadeva inspiring Sūta is his mercy. He should not only deliver Parīkṣit, but he should also deliver all the persons born in this world in the future. At that moment, Sūta remembered all the future generations. And for those who desire to cross (*atititīṛṣatām*) the dense (*andham*) ignorance (*tamaḥ*) with great ease (*ati*), the *Bhāgavatam* causes revelation (*dīpam*) of the *jīva* (*adhyātma*) — he who controls (*adhi*) the elements of the body such as *mahattattva*. This refers to the secondary result of the *Bhāgavatam*—destruction of ignorance—for the desirers of liberation. For the pure devotees, *Bhāgavatam* contains the essence of all the *śrutis*, of all the Upaniṣads, and taking another meaning of *śruti*, *Bhāgavatam* is the essence for those who relish with the ear (*śruti*) by hearing. This is indicated by 1.1.3, where *Bhāgavatam* is said to be the ripened fruit of the tree of the Vedas. For Śukadeva as well (*sva*), *Bhāgavatam* revealed the power of abundant *rasa* (*anubhāvam*). Thus it is said:

*sva-sukha-nibhṛta-cetās tad-vyudastānya-bhāvo
'py ajita-rucira-līlākṛṣṭa-sāras tadīyam
vyatanuta kṛpayā yas tattva-dīpam purāṇam
tam akhila-vṛjina-ghnam vyāsa-sūnum nato 'smi*

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the son of

Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who destroys of all sin, and who, though fixed in his own bliss with no distractions, became attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and mercifully spread the Bhāgavatam which describes Kṛṣṇa, and reveals the *rasa* of his pastimes. SB 12.12.69

It is also said *harer guṇākṣipta-matir*: his mind also became attracted to the qualities of the Lord by studying *Bhāgavatam*. (SB 1.7.11)

*pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇya uttama-śloka-līlayā
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān*

O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. SB 2.1.9

Or *svānubhāvam* can mean “that which produced Śukadeva’s power.” This explanation indicates that *Bhāgavatam* made Śukadeva superior to all other sages. *Ekam* means incomparable, without a second. Śukadeva became the guru of all the sages such as Nārada and Vyāsa who were seated in the assembly of Parīkṣit and taught them *Bhāgavatam* as if it had not been heard before. The *Bhāgavatam* must be taught to them as well. The *Tattva-sandarbhā* has pointed this out.

|| 1.2.4 ||

*nārāyaṇam namaskṛtya naram caiva narottamam |
devīm sarasvatīm vyāsam tato jayam udīrayet ||*

TRANSLATION

After offering respectful obeisances unto the presiding deities Nara-nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, unto the subject of the work Kṛṣṇa, unto the śakti of the work Sarasvatī, and unto the sage entrusted with the work Śrīla Vyāsadeva, one should utter "Jaya."

COMMENTARY

Having offered respects to *guru*, Sūta offers respects to *devatā*, presiding deity, etc. Nara-nārāyaṇa are designated as the presiding deities of this work since they have authority over the place.⁷ The *devatā* or subject of the *Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa (*narottamam*). Sarasvatī is the *śakti*.⁸ The word *ca* indicates the *ṛṣi* (sage) of the work, Vyāsa.⁹ Some editions have the word *vyāsam* instead of *caiva*. That makes the meaning clear. The *bija* is *om* and the meter is predominantly *gāyatrī*, since the first verse of *Bhāgavatam* begins with *om* and reference to *gāyatrī*. Having offered respects to these persons, one should utter “Jaya.” This is a verb form, calling out

⁷ Vyāsa first wrote the work in Badarikāçrama, where Nara-nārāyaṇa reside.

⁸ This is not the material deity. In the spiritual world exist counterparts to the *devatās* of the material world who assist the Lord in his pastimes there. For instance *divyā* Sarasvatī gives Kāñḍea *mantra* to Brahmā in *Brahma-sāhitā*.

⁹ Before reciting a *mantra* or a scripture, it is customary to utter the name of the sage who revealed the *mantra* (in this case Vyāsa), the meter (*gāyatrī*), the form of the Lord who is the subject of the *mantra* (Kāñḍea), the *bēja* of the work or *mantra* (*oā*), the *çakti* of the work or *mantra* (Sarasvatī), the *adhīñhātā-devatā* (Nara-nārāyaṇa) and the purpose of uttering the *mantra*.

to Kṛṣṇa with raised hands. (*Jaya Śrī-kṛṣṇa!* Victory to Kṛṣṇa!) By using the potential case, Sūta teaches other sages of the Purāṇas to do the same. *Jaya* also refers to this scripture because one can conquer *samsāra* by studying it. So the meaning would be “One should then speak the *Bhāgavatam* (*jayam*). In this verse, since the verb form *namaskṛtya* indicates that another action immediately follows, the word *tataḥ* with the meaning of “next, then” would be superfluous. Therefore *tataḥ* describes the subject of the sentence. *Tataḥ* is a past participle of *tan* (to spread words, to speak). Thus *tato jayam udīrayet* means “the speaker should utter *jaya*.” This is the opinion of some.

|| 1.2.5 ||

munayaḥ sādhu pṛṣṭo 'haṁ bhavadbhir loka-maṅgalam |
yat kṛtaḥ kṛṣṇa-sampraśno yenātmā suprasīdati ||

TRANSLATION

O sages! You have asked good questions about what is beneficial for the world, because you have asked questions all about Kṛṣṇa, by which the intellect is immediately satisfied.

COMMENTARY

It has been said previously (1.2.1) that Sūta respects the words of the sages. This verse describes that respect. O sages (*munayaḥ*)! The questions are very good because I have been asked about what is auspicious for the world. Why is that good? You have asked questions about Kṛṣṇa, all sorts of questions about Kṛṣṇa (*sampraśnaḥ*). And why is that good? By such questions about Kṛṣṇa the intellect becomes satisfied. It is my experience that by such question about Kṛṣṇa alone immediately the intellect becomes satisfied.

|| 1.2.6 ||

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje |
ahaituky apratihataḥ yayātmā suprasīdati ||

TRANSLATION

The supreme *dharma* for all human beings (*sādhana bhakti*) is that by which *prema-bhakti* to the Lord arises, which is not caused by anything other than itself, cannot be obstructed, and which satisfies the mind completely.

COMMENTARY

This verse answers the second question of the sages: what is the final essence of all the scriptures. That essence is highest *dharma* for anyone who is a human being (*puṁsām*), meaning hearing and chanting about the Lord. It is said:

etāvān eva loke 'smin puṁsām dharmāḥ paraḥ smṛtaḥ
bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ

That is the only means for attainment of the final perfection of life. Therefore persons whose minds are fixed on the Lord engage in the intensive practice of devotional service. SB 6.3.22

By this statement, The word *para* along with *dharma* in the present verse can indicate only *bhakti-yoga*. *Etavān eva* indicates exclusion of other processes as *para-dharma*. The essence of scripture is *bhakti-yoga* by which *prema-bhakti* (*yataḥ bhaktiḥ*) appears. It arises without cause (*ahaitukī*). Mixed *bhakti* is excluded in this definition (since it has cause). “But you are really evading the truth here (saying that *prema* is not caused by *sādhana-bhakti*).” No. *Dharma* consisting of hearing and chanting about the Lord is called *sādhana-bhakti*, and in the mature state it is called *prema*. Both are called *bhakti*, for it is said *bhaktiḥ sañjāyā bhaktiḥ bibhraty utpulkāṁ tanum*: the devotee possesses a body with ecstatic symptoms by *prema* developed through *sādhana-bhakti*. (SB 11.3.31) In the verse being discussed, the former *bhakti* (*para dharmo*) is the cause of the later type of *bhakti* (*yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*), just as an unripe mango is the cause of a ripe mango. Considering one the cause of the other because of the difference in taste is simply a conception for understanding the different strengths of *bhakti*, though *sādhana-bhakti* and *prema* are not actually different things. The various states of infancy, youth and adulthood in one person are actually not conditions of cause and results of that cause (since the person remains). On the other hand, when pots, cloth and cooked rice arise, the original names and forms of mud, thread and raw rice disappear. One cannot compare these examples to *bhakti* and *prema*.

One also not say that the famous cause of *bhakti* is association of devotees, for association of devotees is part of *bhakti*. It is the second stage, as understood from the statement *ātau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bjajana-kriyā*. (BRS 1.3.11) And later it will be said:

*śuśrūṣoḥ śraddadhānasya vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt*

O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva. SB 1.2.16

Such things as charity, vows, austerity, sacrifices, and selfless performance of duties are to some degree causes of *bhakti* in *sattva-guṇa*, practiced as an *aṅga* of *jñāna*. But they are not causes of pure *bhakti*, because it is said:

*yam na yogena sāṅkhyena dāna-vrata-tapo-'dhvaraiḥ |
vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ prāpnuyād yatnavān api ||*

Even though one engages with great endeavor in the mystic yoga system, philosophical speculation, charity, vows, penances, ritualistic sacrifices, teaching of Vedic mantras to others, personal study of the Vedas, or the renounced order of life, still one cannot achieve Me. SB 11.12.9

Nor can it even be said that the mercy of the Lord is the cause of pure *bhakti*, for it is non-final cause, making one search out a further cause. One cannot say that the Lord's mercy is absolute, without further cause, for then it would mean the Lord is unjust and prejudiced in choosing to give mercy without reason to certain individuals and not to others. However if one says that the cause of *bhakti* is the mercy of the devotee, it is not so incorrect. Though the *uttama-bhaktas* do not make distinctions and are thus not prejudiced, one does see the *madhyama-bhakta* making distinctions between the Lord, the devotee, the innocent and the demon. Thus because the Lord is dependent on the devotee, the Lord's mercy follows after the mercy of the devotee. That is the correct conclusion.

But then how is *bhakti* said to be without cause (*ahaitukum*) in this verse? Because the Lord's mercy is included in the mercy of the devotee, and because that mercy is included in association with devotees, and because devotee association is an *aṅga* of *bhakti*, *bhakti* is said to be without cause (since an *aṅga* of *bhakti* causes *bhakti*). Moreover the cause of devotee's mercy is but the *bhakti* present in the heart of the devotee, because without that *bhakti* in his heart there is no possibility of his mercy arising. In all ways therefore, *bhakti* is the cause of *bhakti*. Therefore *bhakti* is said to be without cause. From the point of view of *bhakti*, the devotee, *bhakti*, the Lord, and his mercy are not separate items. Even though *bhakti* appears by *bhakti* (thus being self-manifesting), it does not negate the fact that *bhakti*'s self-manifesting nature comes from the Lord.

This *bhakti* cannot be prevented by anything (*apratihatā*). This is mentioned in the following verse:

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau*

Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord. SB 3.29.11

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has also said *sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ saty api dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe: bhakti* is without destruction, though it is the cause of destruction of obstacles. (*Ujjvala-nīla-maṇi* 14.63) *Apratihata* can also mean that this *prema-bhakti* is not contaminated by *jñāna* or *karma*. By that *bhakti* (*yayā*) the mind (*ātmā*) becomes completely satisfied (*suprasīdati*). Because of the impossibility of the mind being

satisfied with the presence of material desires, it is evident that this *bhakti* being discussed is without any material desires.

|| 1.2.7 ||

*vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ |
janayaty āśu vairāgyam jñānam ca yad ahaitukam ||*

TRANSLATION

Bhakti dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa, endowed with special moods, quickly produces detachment from material goals and knowledge of the Lord devoid of the desire for liberation.

COMMENTARY

What form does that satisfaction of the mind take? This satisfaction of the mind is filled with knowledge and experience of the form, qualities and sweetness of the Lord, which cause complete disgust with all inferior objects. That is explained in this verse. This *bhakti* is endowed (*yojitaḥ*) in an excellent manner (*pra* for *prakarṣeṇa*), with *dāsya*, *sakhya* and other loving emotions. Another meaning of *bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ* is “*bhakti-yoga* has been made the only goal (*prayojana*).” Separate endeavor for attaining knowledge and detachment are not necessary in the practice of *bhakti*, for *bhakti* itself produces them. Very quickly (*āśu*) at the time of performing *bhakti*, they are attained, for it is said:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ |
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo ’nu-ghāsam ||*

Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things—these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way that pleasure, nourishment and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating. SB 11.2.42

There is an objection that if one possesses knowledge, one attains liberation. In answer to this, the verse says that this knowledge is *ahaitukam*, without motivation for liberation. *Ahaitukam* comes from *hetu*, meaning cause or purpose, just as one can say “He lives for eating.” This means “He lives with the goal of eating.” Thus in this verse *jñānam ahaitukam* means “knowledge without the goal of liberation.” Therefore by practicing *bhakti* in which knowledge also manifests without the goal of liberation, the liberation of merging does not take place. Knowledge in this case means knowledge and experience of the Lord’s form, qualities and sweetness.

Thus it is said in the Fourth Canto:

vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ samāhitaḥ |

sadhrīcīnena vairāgyam jñānam ca janayiṣyati ||

The stage of *prema-bhakti* completely dedicated to Vāsudeva, produces complete jñāna and vairāgya. SB 4.29.37

One should practice *bhakti* with only that goal in mind (*sadhrīcīnena*), devoid of desire for liberation or other goals. The next verse shows that this type of *bhakti* is the cause of another type of *bhakti*.

so 'cirād eva rājarṣe syād acyuta-kathāśrayaḥ |
śṛṅvataḥ śraddadhānasya nityadā syād adhīyataḥ ||

O saintly king! One who hears and studies with faith very soon attains the shelter topics of the Lord to attain *prema*. SB 4.29.38

Thus it is established in this verse that *bhakti* alone functions as both the cause and the goal (and not knowledge or detachment).

|| 1.2.8 ||

dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsām viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ |
notpādayed yadi ratim śrama eva hi kevalam ||

TRANSLATION

Varṇāśrama-dharma of the human being, which does not produce attraction for topics of the Lord, is only wasted effort.

COMMENTARY

Why is *dharma* in the form of *varṇāśrama* not considered to be *para dharma*? This verse answers. That *dharma* undertaken by men—*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *sūdras* which does not produce attraction for talks about the Supreme Lord is completely useless. The *śruti* says *karmaṇā pitr-loke*: by performance of *varṇāśrama* duties one goes to Pitr-loka in the material world. (*Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.5) Performance of *varṇāśrama* duties does not produce attraction for the Lord. This is clear from Nārada's statements in the Fourth Canto:

kiṁ janmabhis tribhir veva śaukra-sāvitra-yājñikaiḥ
karmabhir vā trayī-proktaiḥ puṁso 'pi vibudhāyuṣā

Without that service what is the use of taking three births by semen, upanayanam and initiation. What is the use of ritual acts mentioned in the Vedas? What is the use of the lifespan of a devatā for a human? SB 4.31.10

*kiṁ vā yogena sāṅkhyena nyāsa-svādhyāyayor api
kiṁ vā śreyobhir anyaiś ca na yatrātma-prado hariḥ*

What is the use of yoga, sāṅkhya, sannyāsa, study of the Vedas, other auspicious acts, in which the Lord does not give realization of himself? SB 4.31.12

Because it does not produce attraction for topics about the Lord it is merely useless endeavor. Because of the temporary nature of the results of performing *varṇāśrama* duties such as attainment of Pitṛ-loka, one should give up those duties (*sva-dharma*) and perform the *paro dharma* mentioned in the previous verse consisting of hearing and chanting about the Lord.

However it is also said:

*asmil loke vartamānaḥ sva-dharma-stho 'naghaḥ śuciḥ |
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti mad-bhaktim ca yadṛcchayā ||*

One who is situated in his prescribed duty, free from sinful activities and cleansed of material contamination, in this very life obtains transcendental knowledge or, by fortune, devotional service unto Me. SB 11.20.11

The Lord himself says that *karma* is the cause of *bhakti*. How can you say that *bhakti* is without cause?

That is true. It can be explained in that statement that *karma* gives rise to *jñāna*, but does not directly produce *bhakti*. That is understood from the use of the word *yadṛcchayā* (by itself) in the verse. Pure *bhakti* is independent (*yadṛcchayā*), indifferent to other processes. If by good fortune it happens to appear in a person, then he attains attraction for the Lord's topics. The meaning of *yadṛcchayā* is "by itself." By explaining the verse in another way, the self-manifesting nature of *bhakti* would be lost. Therefore such meanings are rejected. Thus even *niṣkāma-karma* is not the cause of *bhakti*. That is said in the present verse. *Paro dharma* is understood from verse 1.2.6 (*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmah*). All *dharma*s other than that, undertaken as one's duties (*svanuṣṭhitaḥ*), even if they are *niṣkāma*, and which do not produce affection (*ratim*) for topics about the Lord, are only useless labor. The word *yadi* here indicates disgust generated from the wasted labor. Medinī says *yadi* indicates disgust or doubt.

Or *yadi* can be used to express doubt where no doubt exists as in the example *yadi vedāḥ pramāṇam*: if the Vedas are proof. Or in the sentence *dhatte padam tvam avitā yadi vighna-mūrdhni*: You, the protector, place your foot on the head of obstacles, *yadi* expresses certainty. This is how Śrīdhara Svāmī explains *yadi*.

Another meaning is as follows. It is said that from this *varṇāśrama* sometimes

attraction for topics of the Lord does arise. That is true. Because one cannot attain the results of *dharma* without such affection for the Lord's topics, that affection is present but that is an appearance only, not genuine. If activities of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, whether *kāmya* (for fulfilling personal desires) or *nitya* (daily obligations), do not produce affection for the Lord's topics, they are a waste of labor (for no material results will come). For farmers, agriculture must generate affection for the king; otherwise they cannot attain its results. Intelligent people, seeing that there will be no results without attraction for those topics, perform *dharma* that produces affection for the topics of the Lord. If the foolish perform the duties without producing affection for topics of the Lord, they labor for nothing. Just as it is wasted labor if one cannot attain the results of farming because of lack of loyalty to the king, it is wasted labor if one cannot get the results of Svarga and knowledge because of lack of devotion to the Lord.

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitaṁ na śobhate jñānam alaṁ nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvara na cārpitaṁ karma yad apy akāraṇam*

Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the Infallible [God]. What, then, is the use of fruitive activities, which are naturally painful from the very beginning and transient by nature, if they are not utilized for the devotional service of the Lord? SB 1.5.12

Just as affection for the king arises only because of attachment to agriculture, so attraction to topics of the Lord arises only because of attachment to *varṇāśrama-dharma* and its material results. Therefore that attachment to the topics of the Lord is not genuine. Prahlāda has expressed a pure relationship:

*ahaṁ tv akāmas tvad-bhaktas tvaṁ ca svāmy anapāśrayaḥ
nānyathehāvayor artho rāja-sevakayor iva*

I am your servant, not desiring benefits, and you are my master, without dependence on service. Our relationship should not be anything else--like that of king and servant. . SB 7.10.6

|| 1.2.9 ||

*harmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate |
nārthasya dharmāikāntasya kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Material results are not suitable as the goal for the person dedicated to higher spiritual goals. Attainment of material assets is not the desire of the person who is dedicated to the higher path.

COMMENTARY

There are four types of persons in this world: *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and *bhaktas*. It is said *dharmād arthaś ca kāmaś ca sa kim artham na sevyate*: from performance of *dharma* comes *artha* and *kāma*. Can *dharma* not be used for any purpose? (*Mahābhārata* 18.5.49) Thus, the result of performance of *dharma* is *artha*, acquisition of material results. The result of material acquisition is desire, *kāma*. The result of *kāma* is pleasure of the senses. When the senses are pleased, for further gain of pleasure, one executes the sequence starting with *dharma* again. This is true for the *karmīs*, but does not apply to the *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and devotees. That is explained in this verse.

Dharma in this verse refers to control of mind and senses (*śama*, *dama* etc.) for the *jñānī*, to *yama* and *niyama* etc. for the *yogīs* and to hearing, chanting and other devotional processes for the devotee. Though the material results appear by executing all these processes, they are not suitable as the goal (*arthāya na kalpate*), for after examining the nature of material gain, one becomes detached from it. That is indicated in text by the word *āpavargasya*. *Apavargya* means “having the goal of *apavarga*.” The vowel is lengthened without a change in meaning, as in such words as *svarga*. Thus from *apavarga* comes *apavargya* and then *āpavargya*. It should be understood that by these processes *apavarga* is the concomitant result of practice. That *apavarga* is liberation for the *jñānī* and *yogī*, and *prema-bhakti* for the devotee.

yathā-varṇa-vidhānam apavargaś cāpi bhavati.
yo 'sau bhagavati sarva-bhūtātmany anātmnye 'nirukte 'nilayane paramātmmani
vāsudeve 'nanya-nimitta-bhakti-yoga-lakṣaṇo nānā-gati-nimittāvidyā-granthi-
randhana-dvāreṇa yadā hi mahā-puruṣa-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ.

In *Bhārata-varṣa* the many destinations--heavenly, human and hellish--are prescribed to all people, because people take birth according to actions in *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. All these goals are prescribed for the self according to the quality of action, as indicated in the Vedas. Liberation is then achieved. SB 5.19.19-20

sa vai mahā-bhāgavataḥ parīkṣid yenāpavargākhyam adabhra-buddhiḥ
jñānena vaiyāsaki-śabditeṇa bheje khagendra-dhvaja-pāda-mūlam

O *Sūta Gosvāmī*, please describe those topics of the Lord by which *Mahārāja Parīkṣit*, whose intelligence was fixed on liberation (*apavarga*), attained the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of *Garuḍa*, the king of birds. Those topics were vibrated by the son of *Vyāsa* [*Śrīla Śukadeva*]. SB 1.18.16

As well, in *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said:

niścalā tvayi bhaktir yā saiva muktir janārdana |
muktā eva hi bhaktās te tava viṣṇo yato hare ||

O Janārdana! O Lord! O Viṣṇu! That *bhakti* which is fixed on you is called liberation, because your devotees are certainly liberated.

Therefore the desire of the avid practitioner should not be for attaining material results (*arthasya kamo labhāya na*). This is because, for the avid practitioner of *apavarga-dharma*, the practice itself has its own results. In certain actions the *jñānīs* use material assets which are favorable for *śama* and *dama* and the *yogīs* uses material assets which are favorable for *yama* and *niyama*. The devotee uses material assets for service to the Lord and his devotees. This is clear.

|| 1.2.10 ||

kāmasya nendriya-prītir lābho jīveta yāvatā |
jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā nārtho yaś ceha karmabhiḥ ||

TRANSLATION

For one who desires *apavarga*, sense pleasure attained from enjoying sense objects is not the goal as long as one lives. The goal of life is inquiry into the highest truth. What is accomplished by prescribed duties is not the goal.

COMMENTARY

The pleasure of the senses (*indriya-prītiḥ*) arising from enjoying senses objects is not the goal (*lābhaḥ*). Rather, as long as one lives (*yāvatā jiveta*) one should work for the fulfillment of life (*apavarga*). The pleasure of the senses from enjoyment for the *jñānīs* or the *yogīs* consisting of the secondary results that appear along with the desired results is designated as “results of action.” Since *jñāna* and *yoga* are transformations of *niṣkāma-karma*, they perceive whatever happiness and distress they experience as results of *karma*. For the devotees, the pleasure of the senses from sense objects which accompany *bhakti* however are not called fruits of action (*karma*) since *bhakti* is not a transformation of *karma*. The devotees, however, perceive happiness to be the result of *bhakti* only. They regard suffering as the mercy of the Lord:

yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ |
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam ||

If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another. SB 10.88.8

Taking this statement of the Lord into consideration, according to the particular case, the devotee’s suffering should be regarded as direct action of the Lord or a result of devotional offenses. The goal of life (*jīvasya*) is inquiry into the highest truth (*tattva-jijñāsā*). What is accomplished (*iha*) by performance of *karmas*, such as attaining Svarga, is not the goal.

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam |
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate ||*

TRANSLATION

The knowers of truth call this truth *advayam-jñānam*, the supreme conscious being, who is called *brahman* by the *jñānīs*, *Paramātmā* by the *yogīs* and *Bhagavān* by the devotees.

COMMENTARY

What is that highest truth (*tattvaṃ*)? This verse explains. It is *advaya-jñānam*. And what is *jñānam*? It is called *brahman*. What the *jñānīs* call *brahman* is *jñānam*. According to them it is without form, without distinction of knower and known, a condition of consciousness alone.

This *jñānam* is called *Paramātmā* by the *yogīs*. This *jñānam* is *advaitam* because of oneness between him and his *śaktis--jīva* and *prakṛti*, because as cause he pervades the effect, this universe, the prison-like abode, and because *Paramātmā* is non-different from his form and abodes through particularization of his consciousness aspect. According to the *yogīs*, the form of *Paramātmā* is still pure *jñāna* because his form is also the same knowledge. Even though he is pure *jñāna*, *Paramātmā* is also the shelter of particularization of *jñāna*, because he performs functions such as acting as the witness. *Paramātmā* is just like the sun or a lamp. Though the sun is the very form of light, it is also the possessor of luminosity. Thus there is no contradiction. *Paramātmā* is understood to have a form as shown in the following verse:

*kecit sva-dehāntar-hṛdayāvakāṣe prādeśa-mātraṃ puruṣaṃ vasantam
catur-bhujam kañja-rathāṅga-śaṅkha-gadā-dharam dhāraṇayā smaranti*

Others conceive of the Personality of Godhead residing within the body in the region of the heart and measuring only eight inches, with four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conch shell and a club respectively. SB 2.2.8

This *jñānam* is called *Bhagavān* by the devotees. He is called *advayam* because material energy is the *śakti* (and *śakti* and *śaktimān* are one); because he is completely different from the *jīvas* in illusion (*advayam* meaning unique); because the *jīvas* are distinct *aṁśas* or parts of the whole (identity of part and whole); and because no one is in the same position as the Lord (*advayam* meaning having no equal). According to the devotees, though *Bhagavān* is pure *jñāna*, as the *yogīs* and *jñānīs* agree, he has a form possessing the six qualities described by the word *bhaga*, which is non-material, because the form is pure consciousness. Thus it is said in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*aiśvaryaśya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ |
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva śaṅṅām bhaga itīṅganā ||*

Bhaga of six parts is defined as: complete control, complete influence, complete excellent qualities of body, mind and words, complete beauty or wealth, complete knowledge, and complete detachment from worldly affairs. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.74

*jñāna-śakti-balaiśvarya-vīrya-tejāmsy aśeṣataḥ |
bhagavac-chabda-vācyāni vinā heyair guṇādibhiḥ ||*

The word *Bhagavān* means to be endowed with unlimited knowledge, sense power, bodily strength, power of control, influence and beauty without inferior *guṇas*. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.5.79

Though he is situated within and without in various forms of pure consciousness with two or four hands, and though there is eternally a difference between himself and the *jīva* as served and servant, he is still *advaya* or one. That the difference between *jīva* and the Lord is eternal is stated in the *Skanda Purāṇa*: *na cyavante hi mad-bhaktā mahatyām pralayād api*: my devotees are not destroyed even at the time of *pralaya*. The word *advayam* negates any conception of difference, since one must consider non-difference between the Lord and his *śaktis*, spiritual actions, and abodes.

The *jñānī* who selects the general form of the Lord is qualified for *brahman*. The *yogī* who accepts the Lord as the soul within all beings, who possesses qualities, and who is different from the *jīva*, is qualified for realizing *Paramātmā*. The devotee who accepts the Lord — who possesses an inconceivable and infinite form of knowledge and bliss, with infinite qualities and pastimes — is qualified for realizing *Bhagavān*. Actually he alone exists. This is shown in the following verses:

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitram paramānandam pūrṇam brahma sanātanam*

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of *Vrajabhūmi*! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend. *SB* 10.14.32

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne
praṇata-kleśa-nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, *Hari*, the son of

Vasudeva. That Supreme Paramātmā, Govinda, vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to Him. SB 10.73.16

*madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca param brahmeti śabditam
vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi*

By my mercy, you will realize my power known as the impersonal Brahman, which will be disclosed in your heart through questions and answers. SB 8.24.38

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham

I am the basis of *brahman*. BG 14.27

viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat

I pervade this universe by my one portion, Paramātmā. BG 10.42

This is also shown by the attainment of *prema* for the worshippers of *Bhagavān*. Because the worshippers of *brahman* and Paramātmā do not attain *prema*, it can be seen that *Bhagavān* is the root of the other forms, though *Bhagavān* is both *brahman* and Paramātmā. The *yogī* worshipping Paramātmā is superior to the *jñānīs* who worship the *brahman*. But the worshipper of *Bhagavān* is superior to the *yogīs*. This hierarchy is seen in the Gītā:

*tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ |
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna ||*

*yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā |
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ ||*

According to me, the *yogī* is better than the *tapasvī*, better than the *jñānī*, and better than the *karma-yogī*. Therefore be a *yogī*, Arjuna. But I consider he who worships me with faith, with mind attached to me, to be greater than all types of *yogīs*. BG 6.46-47

Rāmānujācārya explains that the possessive case (of the *yogīs--yogīnām*) actually means the ablative case (than the *yogīs*).

|| 1.2.12 ||

*tac chraddadhānā munayo jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā |
paśyanty ātmani cātmānaṁ bhaktyā śruta-grhītayā ||*

TRANSLATION

The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service after hearing from guru.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the practice to realize that *tattva*. The sages (*munayaḥ*) — the *jñānīs* cultivating contemplation, the *yogīs* and the devotees — see that *jñāna* of three forms by *bhakti*. Those who conceive of *jñāna* as *brahman* realize (*paśyanti*) the *jīva* (*ātmānam*) as the Lord (*ātmani*). (*tat tvam asi*: You, *jīva*, are that, the Lord.) Those who conceive of the Lord as *Paramātmā* see through meditation the lord in the heart (*ātmānam*) in their heart (*ātmani*). Those who conceive of *Bhagavān* see *Bhagavān* (*ātmānam*) in the mind (*ātmani*) and also directly in front of them (*ca*), and taste the sweetness of the Lord with their very eyes. The sages realize their form of the Lord by *bhakti*, which is first heard from the *guru* (*śruta*) and then practiced (*grhītayā*).

The word *bhaktyā* is used with its conventional meaning, indicating hearing and chanting about the Supreme Lord, *Bhagavān*. The worshippers of *brahman* and *Paramātmā* must also perform *bhakti* directed to *Bhagavān* in order to perfect their own *sādhanas*. *Jñāna* and *vairāgya* mentioned in this verse are the two *sādhanas* for the *jñānīs* and *yogīs* only. For the devotee these two arise only from *bhakti* and indicate the loving nature of *bhakti* (because he loves the Lord he strives to know the Lord and shows distaste for everything else), since separate cultivation of *jñāna* and *vairāgya* are forbidden in pure *bhakti*:

tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya yogino vai mad-ātmanah |
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha ||

Therefore, for a devotee engaged in my loving service, with mind fixed on me, the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation is generally not the means of achieving the highest perfection within this world. SB 11.20.31

Or by mentioning *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *bhakti*, the verse can express the idea that the devotees can realize through *bhakti* all the three aspects of the Lord: *brahman*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*. Some who have that particular faith (*tac craddhadhānāḥ*) develop the desire to realize all the three forms. Then, by *bhakti*, they can see all the three forms. Thus the goals of the *sādhanas* of *jñāna* and *yoga* for realizing *brahman* and *Paramātmā* will be accomplished only by *bhakti*.

|| 1.2.13 ||

ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśah |
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam ||

TRANSLATION

O best of the *brāhmaṇas*! The complete perfection of *dharma*, according to

divisions of *varṇāśrama* by men, is pleasing the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Verse 1.2.8 has already stated that *varṇāśrama* duties (*dharmah svānuṣṭhitah*) are wasted endeavor. And even *jñāna* and *yoga*, devoid of *bhakti*, are wasted endeavor.

*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho kliṣyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām*

My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble. SB 10.14.4

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śasvad abhadram īśvara na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam*

Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the Infallible [God]. What, then, is the use of fruitive activities, which are naturally painful from the very beginning and transient by nature, if they are not utilized for the devotional service of the Lord? SB 1.5.12

*pureha bhūman bahavo 'pi yoginas tvad-arpitehā nija-karma-labdhayā
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā prapedire 'ñjo 'cyuta te gatim parām*

O almighty Lord, in the past many *yogīs* in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode. SB 10.14.5

From this chapter it has already been understood that only by pure *bhakti*, unmixed with *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga*, the mind becomes satisfied.

A doubt arises. Is there not some worry in giving up *jñāna* and *yoga*? And in not doing *nitya-karmas*, is there not the calamity of great sin in omission of action, and ending up in hell? This verse answers. Though *jñāna* and *yoga* have some attraction, they depend on getting their results by performance of *bhakti*. But *bhakti* gives its results without the assistance of *jñāna* or *yoga* at all. Therefore if one pleases the Lord by *bhakti* only, that is the perfection of *dharma*. The person who does not get for the most part perfection even though performing all the rules and regulations of *karma* attains perfection directly through *bhakti*, even though

he does not perform the *karmas*. This is understood from the Lord's own words:

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat |
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api ||*

*sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā |
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati ||*

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties and all other means of perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through loving service unto me. If somehow or other my devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.32.-33

Thus the idea that the devotee incurs sin by not performing *karmas* is discarded.

If *dharma* is perfected by *bhakti*, will the performer of *dharma* still obtain the results of *dharma*? Yes. If one performs *dharma* with material desires, one will attain those desires, but if one performs *dharma* without material desires, one will not attain material results. *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* says:

*bhaktir asya bhajanam | tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenaivāmuṣmin manaḥ-
kalpanam | etad eva ca naiṣkarmyam ||*

Bhakti is worship of the Lord, concentrating the mind on Him, renouncing all material desires for enjoyment (*upādhi*) in this world and the next. It destroys all *karmas*. *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.15

According to the following verse, since all *dharmas* are perfected by *bhakti*, the necessity of the devotees performing *dharma* is rejected.

*yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṁ tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*

As pouring water on the root of a tree energizes the trunk, branches, twigs and everything else, and as supplying food to the stomach enlivens the senses and limbs of the body, simply worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service automatically satisfies the demigods, who are parts of that Supreme Personality. SB 4.31.14

The Lord himself says:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā |
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate ||*

As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ* one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. SB 11.20.9

*ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ*

Having taken complete shelter at My lotus feet, however, a saintly person ultimately renounces such ordinary religious duties and worships Me alone. He is thus considered to be the best among all living entities. SB 11.11.32

And in the Gītā the Lord says:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
Give up all dharma and just surrender to me. BG 18.66*

Based on these verses, the meaning of the verse *yathā toror mūla-niśecanena* is as follows. Just as worship of the Lord takes the place of worshiping all *devatās*, and satisfaction of the Lord is the perfection of performance of *varṇāśrama* duties, when the Lord is satisfied with his worship, the goal of performing one's duties including worship of *devatās* is automatically achieved. In the example, by watering the root of the tree the watering of the branches and leaves takes place automatically. When the pure devotees of Bengal or other places perform a few *karmas* out of obligation because of pressure from family traditions, this is actually not performance of *karmas*, and does not give *karmic* results, because they do not have faith in the worship of *devatās*. The Lord says:

*aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat |
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha ||*

O son of Pṛthā, whatever is offered in the fire, whatever is given in charity, whatever is undertaken as austerity, but which is done without faith, is called *asad* since it bears no result now or in the next life. BG 17.28

|| 1.2.14 ||

*tasmād ekena manasā bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ |
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā*

TRANSLATION

Therefore, with mind dedicated only to *bhakti*, devoid of *karma* and *jñāna*, one should constantly hear about, glorify and meditate upon the Supreme Lord — the master of the devotees.

COMMENTARY

Because of this, one should worship the Supreme Lord with the mind devoid of

the desire to perform *karma* and *jñāna* (*ekena manasā*).

|| 1.2.15 ||

*yad-anudhyāsinā yuktāḥ karma-granthi-nibandhanam |
chindanti kovidās tasya ko na kuryāt kathā-ratim ||*

TRANSLATION

Who will not develop attraction for topics of the Lord, remembrance of whom, like a sword, will cut the knots of *karma*?

COMMENTARY

The qualification for *bhakti* is faith in topics of the Lord. This is illustrated in the following verses:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ* [SB 7.5.23] one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions. SB 11.20.9

*śraddhālur mat-kathāḥ śṛṇvan su-bhadrā loka-pāvanīḥ
gāyann anusmaran karma janma cābhinayan muhuḥ*

*mad-arthe dharma-kāmāsthān ācaran mad-apāśrayaḥ
labhate niścalām bhaktim mayy uddhava sanātane*

A person with natural faith should constantly hear topics about me, should sing and remember my topics which purify the world, and enact my exploits and birth. He should perform dharma, kāmā and artha as service to me. Having taken shelter of me, he will attain permanent bhakti to me, whose form is permanent. SB 11.11.23-24

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇas ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

Having developed faith in topics about me and being disgusted with all karmas, he knows that all enjoyments are filled with misery. But he is unable to give them up. Still, with affection for me, with faith and determination, he will continue worshipping me, at the same time SB

How does that faith arise? This verse answers. Remembrance of the Lord is a sword. Equipped with that sword (*asinā*), persons cut the bondage caused by the knot of false ego which ties one up with *karma*.

Or another meaning is as follows. People tie up small amounts of money in knots of their clothing for the purpose of daily eating by dividing up their savings and spending a little each day. This knot of money for enjoyment is compared to the *karmas* allotted in this life for enjoyment. Thus the sword of remembering the Lord cuts this knot of *prārabdha-karma*.

Who will not have attraction for topics concerning the Lord, whose remembrance cuts the knots of *karma*? Attraction for those topics arises suddenly (in all people, before having faith)! The verse indicates that a person who is more qualified, who has faith, will be even more attracted.

|| 1.2.16 ||

śuśrūṣoḥ śraddadhānasya vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ |
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt ||

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas!* Attraction for topics concerning Kṛṣṇa will arise by service to the great devotees, followed by faith, by surrender to the feet of the pure *guru*, and by the desire to hear.

COMMENTARY

Hear how attraction for topics of the Lord arises! It arises by service to the great devotees, caused by the good fortune of mercy of those great devotees. By that one develops faith (*śraddadhānasya*). By faith one takes shelter of the feet of pure *guru* (*puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt*). According to *Amara-koṣa*, *tīrtha* means water worshipped by sages, *guru*, path and cause. Being eager to hear those topics (*śuśrūṣoḥ*), he develops taste for those topics.

|| 1.2.17 ||

śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ |
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām ||

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, who purifies by the processes of hearing and chanting, who is the benefactor of the devotees who hear about him, enters the hearts of the devotees and destroys their sins.

COMMENTARY

Then from hearing with taste, one begins to hear and chant. Then Kṛṣṇa, being situated within, destroys the sins (*abhadraṇi*) in the heart.¹⁰ Kṛṣṇa being situated within refers to the process of *smaraṇam*, remembering.

|| 1.2.18 ||

*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata-sevayā |
bhagavaty uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī ||*

TRANSLATION

As the impediments to *bhakti* become generally destroyed by constant service to the devotees and *Bhāgavatam*, the stage of *niṣṭhitā bhakti* to Bhagavān, who is praised by the greatest sages, becomes established.

COMMENTARY

Bhāgavata-sevayā means by service to the devotees of Bhagavān and service to (such as hearing) the *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*. By serving the devotees and *Bhāgavatam*, the major portion of *nāmāparādhas* (*abhadreṣu*) becomes weak.¹¹ This weakening of *aparādhas* continues till the stage of *rati* (*bhāva*). *Naiṣṭhikī* refers to *niṣṭhā*, where the mind can easily concentrate on the Lord. When the *anarthas* are for the most part destroyed, the devotee attains the stage of *niṣṭhā*.

|| 1.2.19 ||

*tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye |
ceta etair anāviddham sthitam sattve prasīdati ||*

TRANSLATION

The mind becomes unaffected by lust, greed, anger, hatred and illusion which arise from *rajas* and *tamas*. Then the mind becomes fixed in the form of the Lord at the stage of *āsakti* and becomes satisfied.

COMMENTARY

The mind is not transformed (*anāviddham*) by the agitations of lust, greed and other qualities such as anger, illusion, and hatred, which arise from (*bhāvāḥ*) *rajas* and *tamas*. This means that by lack of taste for material objects, the state of *ruci* — the appearance of relishing of hearing, chanting and other processes — arises. In the previous state, the mind was pierced by the sharp arrows of lust and greed etc. How could the mind be satisfied in that state? How could the mind attain real taste for chanting in that state? A person afflicted with pain cannot relish food. After this, the mind becomes fixed (*sthitam*) in the *śuddha-sattva* deity of the Lord (*sattve*). This is the stage of *āsakti*.

¹⁰ This is the stage of *anartha-nivrōti*.

¹¹ In *Mādhurya-kadambinē* Viçvanāth analyzes the *abhadra* or *anarthas* into four types: arising from sin, arising from piety, arising from *aparādha* and arising from performance of *bhakti*. The effects of *aparādha* take longer to destroy and continue in the stage of *bhāva*.

|| 1.2.20 ||

*evam prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ |
bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam mukta-saṅgasya jāyate ||*

TRANSLATION

Then the mind becomes joyful and satisfied on attaining *rati*. Finally *prema* develops, accompanied by the appearance of complete detachment. The devotee then experiences the Lord's form, qualities, pastimes, powers and sweetness.

COMMENTARY

By this method, with the development of *āśakti*, with worship of Kṛṣṇa at every moment, *rati* then appears (*prasanna-manasaḥ*). Without *rati*, there could never be constant detachment from objects of material enjoyment, and without constant detachment, there could never be satisfaction of the mind. Then *prema* to Bhagavān appears (*bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ*). From that arises realization (*vijñānam*) of the Lord's form, qualities, pastimes, powers and sweetness. The desired result of *bhakti* has thus been explained. Accompanying results were previously mentioned with *janayaty āśu variāgyam jñānam ca yad ahaitukam*. Here also they are mentioned with the phrase "appearance of *vairāgya*" (*mukta-saṅgasya*).

|| 1.2.21 ||

*bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ |
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare ||*

TRANSLATION

Ignorance is cut and all doubts are destroyed. On seeing the Lord in the mind and with the eyes, all *karmas* are destroyed.

COMMENTARY

The knot in the heart, ignorance, is cut. This is a reflexive verb form (*karma-kartari*) which indicates that destruction of ignorance is not the main result sought in *bhakti*. All doubts, such as thinking that the attainment is impossible, are destroyed. Having seen the Lord, who is the soul (*ātmani*), all *karmas* are destroyed. Or the Lord, being in the mind (*ātmani*), and then being seen directly, all *karmas* are destroyed. Thus both the *sphurti* of the Lord in the mind and direct appearance to the eyes are indicated.

*satām kṛpā mahat-sevā śraddhā guru-padāśrayaḥ |
bhajaneṣu sprhā bhaktir anarthāpagamas tataḥ |
niṣṭhā rucir athāśakti ratiḥ premātha darśanam |
harer mādhyānubhava ity arthāḥ syuś caturdaśe*

The fourteen steps are as follows: mercy of devotees, service to devotees,

faith, surrender to *guru*, desire for worship (or hearing), *bhakti*, clearance of *anarthas*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āśakti*, *rati*, *prema*, seeing the Lord, and experiencing the Lord's sweetness.¹²

|| 1.2.22 ||

ato vai kavayo nityam bhaktim paramayā mudā |
vāsudeve bhagavati kurvanty ātma-prasādanim ||

TRANSLATION

Thus the wise constantly perform *bhakti* - which gives joy to the mind - to Lord Kṛṣṇa with great joy.

COMMENTARY

By saying “with great joy” it is indicated that even at the stage of *sādhana-bhakti* there are no difficulties.

|| 1.2.23 ||

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās tair
yuktaḥ parama-puruṣa eka ihāśya dhatte |
sthity-ādāye hari-viriñci-hareti samjñāḥ
śreyāmsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nṛṇām syuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The one supreme *puruṣa*, accepting the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, for creation, maintenance and destruction, is called Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The best results for the devotees will come from Viṣṇu with *śuddha-sattva* body.

COMMENTARY

It has just been explained that one should perform *bhakti* alone rather than *karma* or *jñāna*. Similarly one should worship Bhagavān alone, giving up worship of the *devatās*. That Lord, though one, appears in many forms as *avatāra* for pastimes. Thus the Tenth Canto says *bahu-mūrtye-eka-mūrtikam*: he is one form and many forms. (SB 10.40.7) The *avatāras* are of two types: those which are related to the *cit-śakti* and those related to the *māyā-śakti*. Those which are related to the *cit-śakti*, such as Matsya and Kūrma are to be worshipped. Those which are related to the *māyā-śakti*, through *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. Among them, Viṣṇu is to be worshipped. That is stated in this verse.

Even though there is only one *puruṣa* or *ādi-puruṣa* in this universe, for creation, maintenance and destruction (*sthity-ādāye*) of the universe (*asya*), the Lord, joined with *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, accepts the names Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The *sandhi* in *hareti* is poetic license. The Lord is described as *parama* (beyond)

¹² This is Viçvanātha's verse.

because though he is linked with the *guṇas*, by his inconceivable energy he is situated separately from them, untouched by them. Among those forms, Viṣṇu will bestow the desired results to the devotees (*śreyāmsi*). Viṣṇu is addressed as *sattva-tanoḥ*. By seeing verse 25 in this chapter this can only mean that Viṣṇu possesses a body of *viśuddha-sattva*, not material *sattva*. Otherwise there would be a contradiction to other statements in *śruti* and *smṛti* :

Sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca

Viṣṇu is the one conscious witness, beyond the *guṇas*. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.11

Sattvādayo na santīṣe yatra ca prākṛtā gunā

In Viṣṇu there are no material *guṇas*. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.9.44

Harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ

Viṣṇu is devoid of the *guṇas*; he is the person beyond matter. *SB* 10.88.5

Though Viṣṇu is involved with the material *sattva-guṇa*, he is not at all contaminated by it. Viṣṇu would not take up a material body of *sattva*, since *sattva* has the qualities of revelation or knowledge and indifference to enjoyment. *Sattva* should not eclipse the spiritual manifestation of eternity, knowledge and bliss. *Rajas* is agitating and causes addition (creation); and *tamas* is obscuring and causes subtraction (destruction). Thus *rajas* and *tamas* will disturb and cover bliss. Thus Brahma and Śiva accept bodies of *rajas* and *tamas* because those *guṇas* eclipse bliss. They have bodies composed of *guṇas*, whereas Viṣṇu does not. This is the logical explanation.

Viṣṇu is without *guṇas* since by being the manifest form of *sattva*, he accepts proximity to *sattva*. Thus he carries the function of protecting the universe but does this with no contamination of the qualities of material *sattva*. One cannot say that his existence beyond the *guṇas* is negated by his participation in the world, because he does not possess material *sattva* by relationship of contact or inherence. He is situated in *sattva* only by being next to it. It should be understood however that his protection of the devotees does not arise from *sattva* but from *śuddha-sattva* of his *svarūpa*.

Brahmā is a *jīva*, since he is Hiraṇyagarbha (with a material body made of *mahat-tattva*). The distinction between the supreme *brahman* and Brahmā is based on the context of descriptions of Brahmā, just as the identity of *brahman* is confirmed the context. *Netaro 'nupapatter*: the supreme *brahman* is not a *jīva* by the context of the discussion in Upaniṣads. Only because of the powers conferred by the supreme Lord on Brahmā situated in *rajas*, he is considered an *avatāra*.

*bhāsvān yathāśma-śakaleṣu nijeṣu tejah
svīyam kiyat prakatayaty api tadvad atra |
brahmā ya eṣa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā*

govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||

I worship the supreme lord Govinda who becomes Brahmā, the creator of the universe (by bestowing his powers to that *jīva*), just as the sun displays a small portion of its powers of heat and light in all the sun stones which represent it. Brahma-saṁhitā 5.49

Because Śiva is not a *jīva*, he is considered to be the Supreme Lord associated with the *guṇas*. Thus it is said:

*kṣīram yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ |
yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||*

I worship the supreme lord Govinda who becomes the form of Śiva who is said to be non-different from Govinda, but who is also different because of his contact with the transformations of *prakṛti*, just as milk becomes yogurt, which can be said to be non-different from its cause, but acts in a different manner. Brahma-saṁhitā 5.45

Some say that, of Brahmā and Śiva, Śiva is *īśvara* or the supreme lord. Others say that he is connected with the *guṇas*. They explain as follows. It should be understood that *yoga* means connection by proximity, by contact and by supervision. The *puruṣa*, connected with the *guṇas* only as the supervisor, is devoid of *guṇas*, being situated in his *svarūpa*. Brahmā and Śiva however are connected to *rajas* and *tamas* by contact, and therefore called *sa-guṇa*, endowed with the *guṇas*.¹³ Being related to *sattva-guṇa* only by proximity, the *puruṣa* in the form of Kṣīrodakaśāyī-*viṣṇu* is devoid of *guṇas*, being situated in his *svarūpa*. Thus it is said:

*yogo niyāmakatayā guṇaiḥ sambandha ucyate |
ataḥ sa tair na yujyate tatra svāmśaḥ parasya yaḥ ||*

The relationship of the *puruṣa* with the *guṇas* is that of being their controller. Among the three, he who is the *svāmśa* of *svayam-rūpa* Kṛṣṇa, is not bound by the *guṇas*. *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.2.18

|| 1.2.24 ||

*pārthivād dāruṇo dhūmas tasmād agnis trayīmayah |
tamasas tu rajas tasmāt sattvaṁ yad brahma-darśanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Smoke is superior to dull wood, and fire, sacred to the Vedas, is superior to

¹³ Rūpa Gosvāmé explains in *Laghu-bhāgavatamāta* that Çiva appears to be covered by *tamas*, but actually is not.

smoke. Similarly *rajas* is superior to *tamas*, and *sattva* is superior to *rajas*, since it is favorable for realizing the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Tamas, *rajas* and *sattva* have the respective qualities of obscuring, agitating and revealing knowledge. Of these *sattva* is the best because it is not unfavorable for *śuddha-sattva*. This is shown through an example. Superior to wood — which is devoid of the quality of action and unable to reveal its nature (being unconscious) — is smoke. Smoke has an active nature. Superior to smoke however is fire, which has the qualities of action and revelation. It is called *trayīmayah* (related to the Vedas) because it is used in rituals mentioned in the Vedas. *Rajas*, which is agitating, is superior to *tamas* which is inert. *Sattva*, being devoid of inertia and agitation, is superior since it gives a vision of *brahman*.

sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato jñānam eva ca

Knowledge arises from *sattva*. Greed arises from *rajas*. Inattention, confusion and ignorance arise from *tamas*. BG 14.17

It is not obstructive to *śuddha-sattva* and does not cover it. It does not interfere with seeing *brahman*. It is thus an assistant in spiritual life. Without *bhakti* however, seeing the Lord (or even impersonal *brahman*) is impossible. This is confirmed later in the *Bhāgavatam*.

It is said of the Lord's form *ānando brahmaṇo rūpam*: the supreme lord has a form of bliss. The *guṇas* of *māyā* - *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* - cannot act independently of him. *Māyā paraity abhimukhe ca vilajjamānā*: *māyā* flees from the Lord, being ashamed. (SB 2.7.47) Thus it is by the will of the lord, by his touch alone, that *ānanda* becomes qualified by agitation in the form of *Brahmā*. Being qualified by revelation, *ānanda* becomes *Viṣṇu* and being qualified with obscuration, *ānanda* becomes *Śiva*. Since there is no damage when *ānanda* is combined with revelation (*sattva*), *Viṣṇu* is worthy of worship.

Because one can realize fire through wood but not through smoke, *tamas* should be considered superior to *rajas*. In deep sleep (*tamas*) one has realization of oneness with *ātmā*. Thus some persons argue that between *Brahmā* and *Śiva*, *Śiva* is better.

These three are equal in that they are all *avatāras* of the Lord. They are unequal in that *Viṣṇu* is not covered by the *guṇas*, whereas *Brahmā* and *Śiva* are. This is how the contrary statements of difference and non-difference of the *Purāṇas* can be harmonized.

The *śruti* says *asaṅgo hy ayam puruṣaḥ*: the *ātmā* is not contaminated by the *guṇas*. (*Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.3.15) Though both *Paramātmā* and *jīvātmā* are by

their constitution devoid of the *guṇas*, because Paramātmā is the supreme lord, an ocean of *cit*, because he is independent in his actions, he remains *ātmārāma*, self enjoying, not subject to birth in the world, without diminution of his knowledge of himself, even though, by his will, he contacts the *guṇas* and thus is in possession the effects of the *guṇas* such as anger. However the *jīva*, because he is only a particle of *cit*, having very little ability of knowledge and because he is controlled by the Lord and not independent, and has very little power, he loses his knowledge of his real nature and takes birth in this world by contacting the *guṇas* where the *guṇas* act upon him.

|| 1.2.25 ||

*bhejire munayo 'thāgre bhagavantam adhokṣajam |
sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ kṣemāya kalpante ye 'nu tān iha ||*

TRANSLATION

Therefore the ancient sages worshipped Supreme Lord, beyond the material senses, composed of *viśuddha-sattva*. Those who follow the sages attain liberation in this world.

COMMENTARY

Thus (*ataḥ*), the sages in ancient times worshipped the Supreme Lord, who is *viśuddha-sattva*. *Viśuddha-sattva* means having a body composed of the *cit-śakti* arising from his *svarūpa* (not material *sattva*), because the *śruti* says *vidyāvidyābhyām bhinnam*: the Lord is neither material knowledge (*sattva*) nor ignorance. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.20) Furthermore the *smṛti* says *chāyātapau yatra na ṅṛdhra-pakṣau*: in the Lord there is no ignorance or knowledge which causes prejudice towards the *jīva*. (SB 8.5.27) *satya-jñānānantānanda-mātraikarasa-mūrtayaḥ*: the *viṣṇu-mūrtis* all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. (SB 10.13.54) Because the body of Viṣṇu is beyond *māyā*, one cannot say that *viśuddha-sattva* means the *vidyā* arising from *māyā-śakti*. The persons who follow after (*anu*) these sages are qualified for liberation (*kṣemāya*) in this world (*iha*).

|| 1.2.26 ||

*mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān hitvā bhūta-patīn atha |
nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Rejecting the frightful forms Śiva or others *devatās*, persons desirous of liberation (what to speak of the devotees), without criticizing those *devatās*, worship the *avatāras* of Nārāyaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Bhūta-patīn as well as meaning forms of Śiva, also indicates Piṭṛs, Brahmā and

others. *Anasūyavaḥ* means they do not criticize those *devatās*.

|| 1.2.27 ||

rajas-tamaḥ-prakṛtayaḥ sama-śīlā bhajanti vai |
pitṛ-bhūta-prajeshādīn śriyaiśvarya-prajepsavaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Desirers of progeny and power along with wealth, having natures of *rajas* and *tamas*, corresponding to the natures their deities, worship the Pitṛs, Śiva, Brahmā and others.

COMMENTARY

Prakṛtayaḥ means (having the nature of). These natures are similar to those of the Pitṛs, Śiva and other *devatās*. *Śriyā*, in the instrumental case, means “along with wealth.”

|| 1.2.28-29 ||

vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ |
vāsudeva-parā yoga vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ ||
vāsudeva-param jñānam vāsudeva-param tapaḥ |
vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatiḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Vāsudeva is the purport of the Vedas. Vāsudeva is the object of all sacrifices. Yoga, *varṇāśrama*, knowledge and austerities are all dependent on Vāsudeva. *Bhakti* is dependent on Vāsudeva. *Prema* and liberation are dependent on Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

“But Pitṛs and *devatās* are said to be worshippable by the Vedas. What is wrong with them?”

The Vedas have as their purport Vāsudeva.

ālena naṣṭā pralaye vāṇīyam veda-samjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ

By the influence of time, the Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke to Brahmā the Vedic knowledge in which *bhakti* is the essence. SB 11.14.3

kiṁ vidhatte kim ācaṣṭe kim anūdyā vikalpayet
ity asyā hṛdayam loke nānyo mad veda kaścana

What do the Vedas instruct as action? What is the final meaning of the Vedas? What alternatives do the Vedas raise? No one except me or my dear devotee knows the intended meaning of the Vedas. SB 11.21.42

*mām vidhatte bhidhatte mām vikalpyāpohyate tv aham
etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ śabda āsthāya mām bhidām
māyā-mātram anūdyānte pratiśidhya prasīdati*

The Vedas indicate bhakti as the action, and indicate me as the meaning. I am the meaning of all the Vedas. I, as karma and jñāna, am proposed and rejected as alternatives. The Vedas, taking shelter of me, proposing karma and jñāna and then rejecting them as māyā, become happy by giving the devotees bliss. SB 11.21.43

Thus these people, not knowing the purport of the Vedas, worship the Pitṛs and others.

“But it is clearly seen that the Vedas are concerned with sacrifice and *yoga*.” That is true.

*svam lokam na vidus te vai yatra devo janārdanaḥ
āhur dhūmra-dhiyo vedam sakarmakam atad-vidaḥ*

Those who are less intelligent accept the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies as all in all. They do not know that the purpose of the Vedas is to understand one’s own home, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead lives. Not being interested in their real home, they are illusioned and search after other homes. SB 4.29.48

Thus according to the words of Nārada, sacrifice and *yoga* are not meaning of the Vedas. The Lord himself says *dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ*: I Myself am the religious principles enunciated in the Vedas. (SB 11.14.3) Devahūti says

*aho bata śva-paco ’to garīyān yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā brahmānūcur nāma grṇanti ye te*

How astonishing! The outcaste on the tip of whose tongue is your name is the guru! All those who chant your name, most respectable, have completed all austerities, all sacrifices, all bathing and all study of the Vedas. SB 3.33.7

Nārada, in saying *yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena* (SB 4.31.14), has indicated that Vāsudeva is the conclusion of the Vedas. Thus it is clear that the meaning of all the Vedas is simply devotion to Bhagavān alone.

Or, all sacrifices are dedicated to Vāsudeva can mean that the sacrifices worship

Indra and others as the limbs of Vāsudeva. This is well known in the story of Bharata.¹⁴ Yoga is dedicated to meditation of the Lord. This is well known from the story of Kapila. All *karmas* are dependent on the Lord since they cannot bestow results without including worship of the Lord. *Jñāna* and *tapas* are also dependent on the Lord for results. Since *karma-yoga* has already been mentioned by the words *vāsudeva-parā kriyaḥ*, *vāsudeva-paro dharmah* means *parama-dharma*, the actions of *bhakti* such as hearing and chanting. These are all dedicated to Vāsudeva. *Paro dharma* and the goal (*gati*), *prema* and liberation, are dependent on Vāsudeva alone for results.

|| 1.2.30 ||

sa evedaṁ sasarjāgre bhagavān ātma-māyayā |
sad-asad-rūpayā cāsau guṇamayāguṇo vibhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The powerful Lord alone, devoid of material *guṇas*, previously created this universe by his material energy composed of material *guṇas* and endowed with cause and effect.

COMMENTARY

The creator of all those who are recommended for worship such as Piṭṛs, Śiva and Brahmā is Vāsudeva alone. Thus he is worthy of worship. The Lord is without *guṇas*, but he creates the universe using matter composed of *guṇas* and material cause and effect (*sad-asad-rūpayā*).

|| 1.2.31 ||

tayā vilasiteṣv eṣu guṇeṣu guṇavān iva |
antaḥ-praviṣṭa ābhāti vijñānena vijṛmbhitaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord entered into the *jīvas* covered by the *guṇas*, manifested by material *māyā*. He appears to be in contact with the *guṇas*, but he is strengthened by his spiritual potency.

COMMENTARY

The Lord is the inner soul of all that he created. This is explained in three verses. The Lord entered the *jīvas* covered with *guṇas* (*guṇeṣu*), made to manifest (*vilasiteṣu*) by *māyā* (*tayā*). The Lord appears to be associating with the *guṇas* (*guṇavān*). But this is not actually so, because he excels in power by his *cit-śakti* (*vijñānena*).

¹⁴ Mahārāja Bharata expertly understood how the offering made to different demigods was simply an offering to the different limbs of the Lord. For instance, Indra is the arm of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Sūrya [the sun] is His eye. Thus Mahārāja Bharata considered that the oblations offered to different demigods were actually offered unto the different limbs of Lord Vāsudeva. (SB 5 7.6)

|| 1.2.32 ||

*yathā hy avahito vahnir dāruṣv ekaḥ sva-yoniṣu |
nāneva bhāti viśvātmā bhūteṣu ca tathā pumān ||*

TRANSLATION

Just as one fire, situated in pieces of wood as its natural place of manifestation, blazes forth as many fires, the one Supreme Lord, the soul of the universe, Paramātmā, situated in all living beings, manifests as many.

COMMENTARY

Just as fire is always situated (*avahitaḥ*) in pieces of wood, so the soul of the universe, antaryāmī Viṣṇu, is situated in all living entities (*bhūteṣu*). If fire is made to appear in pieces of wood by friction, it burns up those pieces of wood. Similarly by practices of hearing and chanting Paramātmā is made to appear and removes the covering of *māyā* on the *jīva*. This is indicated by the example.

|| 1.2.33 ||

*asau guṇamayair bhāvair bhūta-sūkṣmendriyātmabhiḥ |
sva-nirmiteṣu nirviṣṭo bhunkte bhūteṣu tad-guṇān ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord as Paramātmā, having entered all the bodies with material sense objects, senses and mind, which have been created by the Lord, makes the *jīvas* enjoy the sense objects colored by the *guṇas*.

COMMENTARY

That soul of the universe, Paramātmā, with conditions made of the *guṇas* in the form of sense objects (*bhūta-sukṣma*), senses and mind (*ātmā*), having entered into the bodies of living entities such as *devatās* and animals created by himself, enjoys those sense objects which correspond to the *guṇas* (*tad-guṇān*). The Lord does not enjoy happiness of material sense objects. Thus the sentence means that, without the Paramātmā, the *jīvas* cannot act as enjoyers. Or it means that the Paramātmā enjoys through the *jīva*, because the *jīva* is the *tatastha-śakti* of the Lord. Or the verb enjoys may be taken in a causal sense. Thus it means that the Paramātmā lets the *jīvas* enjoy the sense objects.

|| 1.2.34 ||

*bhāvayaty eṣa sattvena lokān vai loka-bhāvanaḥ |
līlāvatārānurato deva-tiryak-narādiṣu ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, creator of the universe, absorbing himself in the forms of various *līlāvatāras* as *devatās*, animals and humans, protects the worlds through his role

as the controller of *sattva-guṇa*.

COMMENTARY

It has been described that the Lord appears as many forms when he enters all the living beings. However the lord is without limitation or material contamination in all his forms. He appears in many forms with his *svarūpa* in his eternal pastimes. *Bhāvayati* means “he protects.” Or it means “he bestows them with *prema* (*bhāva*).” This verse describes the normal goal of all *avatāras*.¹⁵ *Loka-bhāvanāḥ* here means “creator of the universe” instead of “protector of the worlds,” to avoid redundant meaning, since *bhāvayati lokan* already means “he protects the worlds.”

Chapter Three

List of the Avatāras

|| 1.3.1 ||

sūta uvāca

jaḡrhe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ |
sambhūtaṁ ṣoḍaśa-kalam ādau loka-sisṛkṣayā ||

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: First of all, the Supreme Lord accepted the form of the eternal first *puruṣa* full like the moon for creating the universes from *mahā-tattva* and other elements.

COMMENTARY

The third chapter is an answer to the request (by the sages) to describe the various *avatāras*. This chapter explains that the Lord in one form alone makes his appearances and performs activities.

At the end of the previous chapter it was said that the Lord was absorbed in various *līlavatāras*. What pastimes and what *avatāras* are these? Sūta begins by describing the *puruṣāvatāras* in five verses. *Pauruṣam* means with the form of a man, or defined as a *puruṣa*. “By saying that the Lord accepts this form, it means that it did not exist before. That means it is a temporary form.” Therefore the form is described as *sambhūtam*, *samyag bhūtam*: existing continuously. It is always situated in its *svarūpa* which is the highest truth, *param satyam*. The Lord accepted this form of the *puruṣa* who eternally exists for creating the universes. He accepts a form which already exists. One never sees a sentence such as “He accepted the pot” where the pot did not previously exist. Similarly we say, “The king accepted the general because he desired victory.” *Amara-koṣa* says *yukte kṣmād āvṛte bhūtaṁ prāṇy-atīte same triṣv*: *bhūta* means joined with, elements like earth, composed of,

¹⁵ Çrédhara N̄vámé says this verse answers the question about the purpose of the *avatāras*.

a living being, in the past, in all three genders.

The same word *sambhūta* should be applied to the person described in verse 6 with *sa eva prathamam deva* and other places as well. With a desire for creating the worlds collectively and individually by *mahat-tattva*, *ahaṅkara* and other elements, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha accepted the form of the *puruṣa* who is like the full moon with sixteen digits (*ṣoḍāsa-kalam*), being full of forms like Matsya and Kūrma. *Kalā* means a sixteenth part according to the dictionary and *ṣoḍāsa-kala* means having sixteen parts. This refers to the form of Mahā-viṣṇu, the first *puruṣa*, a portion of Saṅkarṣaṇa, lying on the Kāraṇa Ocean, who glances over *prakṛti*. This is confirmed by the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.5.121).

|| 1.3.2-3 ||

yasyāmbhasi śayānasya yoga-nidrām vitanvataḥ |
nābhi-hradāmbujād āsīd brahmā viśva-sṛjām patiḥ ||
yasyāvayava-saṁsthānaiḥ kalpito loka-vistarāḥ |
tad vai bhagavato rūpaṁ viśuddham sattvam ūrjitam ||

TRANSLATION

After Garbhodakaśāyī-viṣṇu lay on the water and went into trance, Brahmā, lord of the universal creation, appeared from the lotus in the water of his navel.

The expanse of planets is imagined to be situated at various places on his limbs. This form of the Lord is pure *sattva*, unmixed with *rajas* and *tamas*, and is composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

COMMENTARY

That *puruṣa* entering into each universe situated in his hair holes, lay down on the Garbhodaka water which he created there and went into a state of trance (*yoga-nidrām*). The planets from Pāṭala to Satya-loka (*loka-vistarāḥ*) are imagined to be situated at particular places on his limbs (*avayava-saṁsthānaiḥ*). This form is Padmanābha, Garbhodakaśāyī-viṣṇu, a portion of Pradyumna. The form mentioned in the previous chapter *hari-viriṅca-hareti saṁjñā* (SB 1.2.23) refers to the third *puruṣa* Kṣīrodakaśāyī, an expansion of Aniruddha.

The first form Mahā-viṣṇu is the inner soul of *prakṛti*. The second form Garbhodakaśāyī is the inner soul of the collective *jīvas* in each universe. The third form, Kṣīrodakaśāyī, is the inner soul of each *jīva*. The three acting as inner souls are expansions of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. It is said:

ekam tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ dvitīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitam |
ṭṛtīyaṁ sarva-bhūtastham tāni jñātvā vimucyate ||

The first is the creator of *mahat-tattva*. The second form is situated in the universe. The third form is situated in all living entities. One who knows

these forms is liberated. *Sātvata Tantra*

This is the order of the activities of Mahā-*viṣṇu* related to this topic. When he developed the desire to lie down again in a particular place, he lay down in the Kāraṇa ocean. He then glanced at his energy *prakṛti* as soon as it came out with his breathing. By that glance, making his intention known, accomplishing merely by the power of his desire, he produced the *mahat-tattva* and other elements spontaneously, and after creating the universe out of the elements, Garbhodakaśāyī master of the universe, was informed, “O master enter it and go to sleep.” Entering into the universe, Garbhodakaśāyī went to sleep for a second. After he again entered the universe, he then rejected the universe as a useless sleeping place, since it is material. Then again, Garbhodakaśāyī is made to sleep in a new universe for the life time of Brahmā. It is said in the Third Canto:

*kālo 'yam dvi-parārdhākhyo nimeṣa upacaryate
avyākṛtasyānantasya hy anāder jagad-ātmanah*

The duration of the two parts of Brahmā's life, as above mentioned, is calculated to be equal to one *nimeṣa* [less than a second] for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is unchanging and unlimited and is the cause of all causes of the universe. SB 3.11.38

These forms are all spiritual. This form is pure *sattva*, devoid of *rajas* and *tamas* (*viśuddham sattvam*) and excellent (*ūrjitam*), completely spiritual, made of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

|| 1.3.4 ||

*paśyanty ado rūpam adabhra-cakṣuṣā
sahasra-pādorū-bhujānanādbhutam |
sahasra-mūrdha-śravaṇākṣi-nāsikam
sahasra-mauly-ambara-kunḍalollasat ||*

TRANSLATION

With spiritual eyes, the devotees see this amazing form with thousands of legs and arms, thousands of heads, ears, eyes and noses, shining with thousands of crowns, earrings and clothes.

COMMENTARY

Those who have reached perfection by *bhakti* see this form. *Adabhra* means “not scant,” spiritual.

|| 1.3.5 ||

*etan nānāvatārāṇām nidhānam bījam avyayam |
yasyāmśmāśena sṛjyante deva-tiryak-narādayah ||*

TRANSLATION

He is the indestructible source of various *avatāras*. His expansion is Brahmā and Brahmā's expansions are Marīci and others. Through them the Lord creates the *devatās*, animals and human beings.

COMMENTARY

Previously it was said that the Lord was complete with sixteen parts. This verse shows that. Though he acts as the source (*bījam*), he is equal to many seeds. Therefore he is called a storeroom or treasure (*nidhānam*). He is the *amśī*, the source of the *avatāras* who will be discussed in this chapter. And he is eternal (*avyayam*). His part is Brahmā and Brahmā's parts are Marīci and others. By them, the Lord creates the *devatās* and others. The *devatās* are considered the Lord's *vibhūtis*.

|| 1.3.6 ||

*sa eva prathamam devaḥ kaumāram sargam āśritaḥ |
cacāra duścaram brahmā brahmacaryam akhaṇḍitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Garbhodakaśāyī first made his appearance in the Kumāras. Becoming *brāhmaṇas*, they undertook continuous, severe vows of *brahmacarya*.

COMMENTARY

Now the *avatāras* starting with the Kumāras are described. Padmanābha, Garbhodakaśāyī, who carries out creation of the *devatās* and others through portions of his portion, Brahmā, made his appearance in the Kumāras (*kaumāram sargam āśritaḥ*). Becoming *brāhmaṇas* (*brahmā*) they undertook vows of abstinence (*brahmacaryam cacāra*). This means that they preached this by their conduct to the world. The words first, second, etc. are only enumerating the *avatāras* and not indicating the exact chronology of the *avatāras*' appearances.

|| 1.3.7 ||

*dvitīyam tu bhavāyāsya rasātala-gatām mahīm |
uddhariṣyann upādatta yajñeśaḥ saukaram vapuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Secondly the Lord of sacrifice, lifting up the earth from Rasātala, for its welfare, took the form of the boar.

COMMENTARY

His activity is described by the words “he lifted up the earth for its welfare.” In each case the *avatāra* and his activity has been mentioned.

|| 1.3.8 ||

*tṛtīyam ṛṣi-sargaṁ vai devarṣitvam upetya saḥ |
tantram sātvatam ācaṣṭa naiṣkarmyam karmaṇām yataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, making his appearance among the sages as Nārada, produced the Pañcarātra scriptures from which one learns how devotional activities free one from the bondage of *karma*.

COMMENTARY

The Lord making his appearance among the sages as Nārada, made the Pañcarātra texts (*tantram sātvatam*). From these one can learn that devotional activities (*karmaṇām*) will liberate one from the bondage of *karma* (*naiṣkarmyam*).

|| 1.3.9 ||

*turye dharmakalā-sarge nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣi |
bhūtvātmopāśamopetam akarod duṣcaram tapaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Fourth, appearing in the wife of Dharma, he became Nara-nārāyaṇa, and performed severe austerities which give peace to the soul.

COMMENTARY

Turye means fourth. *Dharma-kalā*, part of Dharma, refers to the wife of Dharma, since the *śruti* says *ardho vā eṣa ātmano yat patnī*: the wife is half of oneself. Appearing in her (*sarge*) he became the two sages. They are considered one *avatāra*.

|| 1.3.10 ||

*pañcamaḥ kapilo nāma siddheśaḥ kālaviplutam |
provācāsuraye sāṅkhyam tattva-grāma-vinirṇayam ||*

TRANSLATION

Fifth, he became Kapila, best of the perfected beings, and spoke to Āsuri *brāhmaṇa* the philosophy of Sāṅkhya, which defines the various principles of existence, which had become lost with time.

COMMENTARY

Āsuri is the name of a *brāhmaṇa*.

|| 1.3.11 ||

ṣaṣṭham atrer apatyatvam vṛtaḥ prāpto 'nasūyayā |

ānvīkṣikīm alarkāya prahlādādibhya ūcivān ||

TRANSLATION

Being requested by Anasūyā, the wife of Atri, the Lord became her son as Dattātreyā and taught knowledge of the soul to Alarka, Prahlāda and others.

COMMENTARY

Being selected by Anasūyā, the wife of Atri, he became her son. This is described in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* in the story of the *pativrata*:

*anasūyābravīn natvā devān brahmeṣa-keśavān |
yūyam yadi prasannā me varārḥā yadi vāpy aham |
prasādābhimukho bhūtvā mama putratvam eṣyatha ||*

Offering respects, Anasūyā spoke to the Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu. If you are pleased with me, and consider me worthy of blessing, being merciful, you should become my son.

Ānvīkṣikīm means knowledge of the *ātmā*.

|| 1.3.12 ||

*tataḥ saptama ākūtyām rucer yajño 'bhyajāyata |
sa yāmādyaiḥ sura-gaṇair apāt svāyambhuvāntaram ||*

TRANSLATION

Seventh, Yajña appeared as the son of Ruci in his wife Akūtī. He protected the reign of Svāyambhuva-manu with the *devatās* called Yamas.

COMMENTARY

The Yamas were Yajña's sons. With the assistance of the *devatās* named the Yamas, he gave protection during the reign of Svāyambhuva. At that time he became Indra.

|| 1.3.13 ||

*aṣṭame meru-devyām tu nābher jāta urukramah |
darśayan vartma dhīrāṇām sarvāśrama-namaskṛtam ||*

TRANSLATION

Eighth, the Lord was born to Nābhi and his wife Merudevī as Ṛṣabha. He shows the path of the wise worshipped by all *āśramas*.

COMMENTARY

Ṛṣabha was born from the son of Āgnīdhra named Nābhi.

|| 1.3.14 ||

ṛṣibhir yācito bheje navamaṁ pāṛthivaṁ vapuḥ |
dugdhemām oṣadhīr viprās tenāyaṁ sa uśattamaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Ninth, requested by the sages the Lord took the form of King Pṛthu. Because he milked herbs from the earth, he is considered the most desirable of the *avatāras*.

COMMENTARY

Pārthivam vapuḥ means the body of a king, Pṛthu. *Pārthavam* is another version, which means relating to Pṛthu. “Herbs” is representative of other things also. He milked all things from the earth. *Dugdha* should actually be *adugdha*. This form is poetic license. Because of that he is considered the most desirable of the *avatāras* (*uśattamaḥ*). *Uśa* means desired or dear.

|| 1.3.15 ||

rūpaṁ sa jagṛhe mātsyaṁ cākṣuṣodadhi-samplave |
nāvya āropya mahī-mayyām apād vaivasvataṁ manum ||

TRANSLATION

When there was an inundation after the period of the Cākṣuṣa Manu the Lord accepted the form of a fish and protected Vaivasvata Manu, placing him on a boat formed from the earth.

COMMENTARY

During Cākṣuṣa *manvantara* there was a flood of water. Another version has *cākṣuṣāntara-samplave*. The earth acted as a boat (*nāvi mahī-mayyām*). Matsya protected (*apād*) the person who would be Vaivasvata-manu. Śrīdhara Svāmī says though there is not a flood at the end of this *manvantara*, an illusory flood was shown to Satyavrata for fun. However in *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*, Vajra asks Mārkaṇḍeya, “What happens at the end of the *manvantara*?” Mārkaṇḍeya says:

ūrmi-mālī mahā-vegaḥ sarvaṁ āvṛtya tiṣṭhati |
bhūrlōkam āśritaṁ sarvaṁ tadā naśyati yādava ||
na vinaśyanti rājendra viśrutāḥ kula-parvatāḥ |
naur bhūtvā tu mahā-devī yadu-kulodvaha |
dhārayaty atha bijāni sarvāṇy evāviśeṣataḥ || [1.75.5-6, 9 |

O Vajra, the great Lord, in the form of water, greatly agitated with countless waves, covers the earth and the lower planets with water. O Yādava! All things on the earth planet are destroyed at that time. Only the famous mountains are not destroyed, O best of kings! At that time, the earth personified, taking the form of a boat, protects all the seeds without discrimination, O offspring of the Yadu family!

This explains that there is destruction at the end of the *manvantara*. In *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Rūpa Gosvāmī also states that there is a devastation by water after every *manvantara*. In his comments on some verses of *Hari-vamśa* as well he says the same. The verse mentions the Cākṣuṣa-*manvantara*. Because Satyavrata was a great devotee of Matsya, and Matsya was attracted to his devotee, Matsya appeared at this time. The following verse illustrates how the Lord is controlled by his devotee.

*svacchandopātta-dehāya viśuddha-jñāna-mūrtaye
sarvasmai sarva-bijāya sarva-bhūtātmane namaḥ*

Unto Him who assumes transcendental bodies according to the desires of His devotees, unto Him whose form is itself pure consciousness, unto Him who is everything, who is the seed of everything and who is the Soul of all creatures, I offer my obeisances. SB 10.27.11

Therefore this particular narration is representative of events that take place after every *manvantara*.

|| 1.3.16 ||

*surāsurāṅām udadhiṁ mathnatām mandarācalam |
dadhre kamaṭha-rūpeṇa pṛṣṭha ekādaśe vibhuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

In the eleventh appearance, the Lord, in the form of a tortoise, held up on his back Mandara Mountain for the *devatās* and demons churning the ocean.

COMMENTARY

The *devatās* and demons churned the ocean to receive nectar. *Kamaṭha* means turtle.

|| 1.3.17 ||

*dhānvantaram dvādaśamam trayodaśamam eva ca |
apāyayat surān anyān mohinyā mohayan striyā ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord took the form of Dhanvantari as the twelfth *avatāra* and taking the thirteenth form as the woman Mohinī he let the *devatās* drink nectar and bewildered the demons.

COMMENTARY

Dhānvantaram dvādaśamam means that the form of Dhanvantari is the twelfth *avatāra*. His activity was bringing a pot of nectar. The use of *dvādaśamam* instead

of *dvādaśam* is poetic license. Taking the thirteenth form, he let the *devatās* drink nectar. What was his form? As the woman Mohinī, he bewildered the demons (*anyān*).

|| 1.3.18 ||

caturdaśam nārasimham bibhrad daityendram ūrjitam |
dadāra karajair ūrāv erakām kaṭa-kṛd yathā ||

TRANSLATION

Taking the form of Narasimha as the fourteenth *avatāra*, he pierced the chest of the strong king of the demons with his nails just as a wood cutter breaks *erakā* grass.

COMMENTARY

Erakā is a type of grass without joints.

|| 1.3.19 ||

pañcadaśam vāmanakam kṛtvāgād adhvaram baleḥ |
pada-trayam yācamānaḥ pratyāditsus tri-piṣṭapam ||

TRANSLATION

Taking the form of Vāmana as fifteenth *avatāra*, the Lord went to sacrifice of Bali, begging three steps of land, but desiring to steal the heavenly kingdom from him.

COMMENTARY

Pratyāditsuh means “he desired to snatch away.”

|| 1.3.20 ||

avatāre ṣoḍaśame paśyan brahma-druho nṛpān |
triḥ-sapta-kṛtvaḥ kupito niḥ-kṣatrām akaron mahīm ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord, appearing as Parāśurāma, the sixteenth *avatāra*, seeing the kings harassing the *brāhamaṇas*, became angry and twenty-one times annihilated the *kṣatriyas* from the earth.

COMMENTARY

Triḥ-sapta-kṛtvaḥ means twenty-one times (3x7). *Kṛtvaḥ* is used as a suffix after numerals to indicate counting of repeated actions. Also numerals with the suffix *suc* such as *triḥ* indicate repeated actions. (Pāṇini 5.4.17-18)

|| 1.3.21 ||

*tataḥ saptadaśe jātaḥ satyavatyām parāśarāt |
cakre veda-taroḥ śākhā dṛṣṭvā puṁso 'lpa-medhasaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, born from Parāśara in the womb of Satyavatī as the seventeenth *avatāra*, seeing the meager intelligence of the people, divided up the tree of the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

Alpa-medhasaḥ means “having small knowledge.”

|| 1.3.22 ||

*nara-devatvam āpannaḥ sura-kārya-cikīrṣayā |
samudra-nigrahādīni cakre vīryāṇy ataḥ param ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, taking the divine human form of Rāma, performed brave actions such as controlling the ocean with a desire to help the *devatās*.

COMMENTARY

Nara-devatvam refers to Rāma. Taking the form of Rāma, he performed actions such as controlling the ocean. Since this can be seen even today at Setubandha, it indicates his show of great power. Thus it is mentioned here as the chief among all his activities.

|| 1.3.23 ||

*ekonaviṁśe viṁśatime vṛṣṇiṣu prāpya janmanī |
rāma-kṛṣṇāv iti bhuvo bhagavān aharad bharam ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord appeared in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty in the two forms of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa as the nineteenth and twentieth *avatāras* and relieved the burden of the earth.

COMMENTARY

The word should be *viṁśatitame* instead of *viṁśatime*, but the syllable *ta* is dropped for metrical reasons. The Lord, appearing in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty as the nineteenth and twentieth *avatāras*, named Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa (*rāma-kṛṣṇau*), relieved the burden of the earth.

|| 1.3.24 ||

*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte sammohāya sura-dviṣām |
buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati ||*

TRANSLATION

Then when Kali-yuga starts Buddha, the son of Añjanā, will appear in the province of Gayā for bewildering the demons.

COMMENTARY

Ajina-sūtaḥ is another version. *Kīkaṭeṣu* means “in the area of Gayā.”

|| 1.3.25 ||

athāsau yuga-sandhyāyām dasyu-prāyeṣu rājasu |
janitā viṣṇu-yaśaso nāmnā kalkir jagat-patiḥ ||

TRANSLATION

At the junction of the *yugas* when the kings are almost criminal, the Lord of the universe Kalki will be born as the son of Viṣṇu-yaśas.

COMMENTARY

Kalki will appear from the *brāhmaṇa* named Viṣṇu-yaśas.

|| 1.3.26 ||

avatārā hy asaṅkhyeyā hareḥ sattva-nidher dvijāḥ |
yathāvidāsināḥ kulyāḥ sarasaḥ syuḥ sahasraśaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Unlimited *avatāras* arise from the Lord, the treasure house of pure goodness, just as thousands of small rivers flow from an inexhaustible lake.

COMMENTARY

This verse summarizes all the *avatāras* since some like Hayagrīva and Hamsa were not mentioned in this list. A comparison is made with a treasure house (*sattva-nidheḥ*) or an ocean of pure *śuddha-sattva* forms of eternity, knowledge and bliss, because the forms cannot be counted. *Avidāsināḥ* means inexhaustible. Normally by giving out water, a lake becomes exhausted. Countless *avatāras* arise from the Lord like thousands of small streams (*kulyāḥ*), natural torrents, flowing from an inexhaustible lake. *Asaṅkhyeyā* means not countable. However there is another meaning: not well known (*asamyak khyāta*). Some like the *puruṣāvatāras* are well known. Others are not so well known. Prahlāda has said:

ittham nṛ-tiryag-ṛṣi-deva-jhaṣāvatārair
lokān vibhāvayasi hamsi jagat pratīpān |
dharmam mahā-puruṣa pāsi yugānuvṛttam
channaḥ kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam ||

In this way, by appearing in various incarnations as a human being, an animal, a great saint, a demigod, a fish or a tortoise, you maintain the

worlds, kill those who cause disturbance and protect dharma in all the yugas. Great Lord! Since you will appear covered in Kali-yuga, you are called Tri-yuga. SB 7.9.38

Channah indicates that the *avatāra* is not well known.

|| 1.3.27 ||

*ṛṣayo manavo devā manu-putrā mahaujasah |
kalāḥ sarve harer eva saprajāpatayah smṛtāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

All sages, Manus, *devatās*, powerful humans (sons of Manu), along with Brahmā's sons, are also considered to be *vibhūtis* of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Having described the *avatāras*, now the *vibhūtis* are described.

|| 1.3.28 ||

*ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsah kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam |
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ mṛḍayanti yuge yuge ||*

TRANSLATION

All *avatāras* mentioned and not mentioned here, who are portions of Mahāviṣṇu or empowered *jīvas*, create happiness in the world whenever it is afflicted by the demons and their ideas. But Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate form of Bhagavān.

COMMENTARY

Are all these *avatāras* equal or are they graded? This verse answers. Those *avatāras* previously described (*ete*) and those not described (*ca*), are *aṁśas* (Matsya, Kūrma etc.) and some of whom are *kalā* (Kumāras, Nārada, etc., *āveśāvatāras*) of the first *puruṣa* described (Mahā-viṣṇu). Thus it is said in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*

*jñāna-śakty-ādi-kalayā yatrāviṣṭo janārdanaḥ |
ta āveśā nigadyante jīvā eva mahattamāḥ ||
vaikuṅṭhe'pi yathā śeṣo nāradaḥ sanakādayaḥ |:*

Exalted *jīvas* empowered by the Lord with portions of his powers such as knowledge are called *āveśa* forms. Examples existing even in Vaikuṅṭha are Śeṣa, Nārada and the Kumāras. (*Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.1.18-19)

Padma Purāṇa says:

Āviṣṭo bhūt kumāreṣu nārade ca harir vibhuḥ |

The Supreme Lord invested his powers in the Kumāras and Nārada.

*āviveśa pṛthum devaḥ śaṅkhī cakrī caturbhujah ||
etat te kathitaṁ devi jāmadaḅner mahātmanaḅ |
śaktyāveśāvatārasya caritaṁ śārṅgiṅaḅ prabhoḅ ||
kaler ante ca samprāpte kalkinaṁ brahma-vādinam |
anupraviśya kurute vāsudevo jagat-sthitim ||*

The Lord with four hands holding the conch and cakra entered into Pṛthu, O goddess! The activities of the great soul Parāsurāma, a śaktyāveśāvatāra of the Supreme Lord, holder of the bow, has been described.

At the end of Kali-yuga, Vāsudeva enters into Kalki, a teacher of spiritual matters, and protects the world. Entering in Kali-yuga into those jīvas who have previously appeared, the Lord carries out his desired activities. *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.4.37, 39, 42

The Kumāras and Nārada are invested with śakti of jñāna and bhakti. Pṛthu and others are invested with kriyā-śakti--action. Some are invested with great powers and others with little power. Included in the first type with great powers are Kumāras and Nārada. They are called avatāras. Others with less power such as Marīci, and the Manus, are called vibhūtis. But he who was called the twentieth avatāra, Kṛṣṇa is bhagavān, not an aṁśa. Nor is he an aṁśī puruṣāvatāra. He is bhagavān. The avatārī, bhagavān is the source of the puruṣa was already stated in the verse *jagrhe pauraṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ: Bhagavān* accepted the form of the puruṣa. (SB 1.3.1) Thus bhagavān is different from the puruṣa. It is said:

*anuvādam anuktvā tu na vidheyam udīrayet
na hy alabdḅāspadaṁ kiñcit kutracit pratitiṣṭhati*

One should not state a predicate before its subject, for it cannot thus stand without proper support. *Ekādaśī-tattva*

Thus *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān* means that Kṛṣṇa (the subject) fulfills completely the qualities inherent in bhagavān, the predicate. It does not mean that Kṛṣṇa is another form of bhagavān. Thus it means that Kṛṣṇa alone is bhagavān, the basis of every other form. This is made clear by the word *svayam*. This means that Kṛṣṇa is superior to the puruṣāvatāra called bhagavān and even to Mahā-nārāyaṇa. Thus in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* it is said *jyāyāṁś ca pūruṣaḅ: the puruṣa* is greater than that; *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma: everything is brahman; yat prāṅā ādityā: the prāṅas* are the Ādityas. Having said this, everything is summarized by saying *kṛṣṇāya devakī-putrāya: this puruṣa* sacrifice is subservient to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.17.6) By this it is understood that Kṛṣṇa is superior to the puruṣa.

But Kṛṣṇa is counted among the *avatāras*, because he appears in Mathurā and other places situated on the earth planet, performs pastimes like a human, shows mercy to the people of the material world, and appears and disappears. *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* thus says:

sa hovācābja-yonir yo 'vatārānām madhye śreṣṭho 'vatāraḥ ko bhavati yena lokās tuṣṭā bhavanti, yaṁ smṛtvā muktā asmāt saṁsārāt taranti | katham āsyāvatārasya brahmatā bhavati

Brahmā said: who is the best among all the *avatāras*, by which all the people are satisfied, whom remembering, they become liberated from this world? How is this *avatāra* the supreme *brahman*?

“But how can you establish that Kṛṣṇa is the complete form of God on the basis of this one statement, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*? There are countless statements which refute this such as the following:

*yadoś ca dharmā-sīlasya nitarām muni-sattama
tatrāmśenāvatīrṇasya viṣṇor vīryāṇi śaṁsa naḥ*

O best of *munis*, you have also described the descendants of Yadu, who were very pious and strictly adherent to religious principles. Now, if you will, kindly describe the wonderful, glorious activities of the expansion of Lord Viṣṇu, who appeared in that Yadu dynasty. SB 10.1.2

*diṣṭyāmba te kukṣi-gataḥ paraḥ pumān
amśena sāksād bhagavān bhavāya naḥ
mābhūd bhayaṁ bhoja-pater mumūrṣor
goptā yadūnām bhavitā tavātmajaḥ*

O mother Devakī, by your good fortune and ours, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, as an expansion, is now within your womb. Therefore you need not fear Kaṁsa, who has decided to be killed by the Lord. Your eternal son, Kṛṣṇa, will be the protector of the entire Yadu dynasty. SB 10.2.41

*tāv imau vai bhagavato harer amśāv ihāgatau
bhāra-vyayāya ca bhuvah kṛṣṇau yadu-kurūdvahau*

That Nara-Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, whose a partial expansion is Kṛṣṇa, has now appeared in the dynasties of Yadu and Kuru, in the forms of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna respectively, to mitigate the burden of the world. SB 4.1.59

At t In the beginning of *Bhāgavatam*, this chapter concerning the mysterious appearance of the Lord (*janma guhyam bhagavato*, SB 1.3.29) is called a *sūtra*, since it threads together (*sūc*) statements concerning all the *avatāras*. And in this

chapter, *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁśaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* is a *paribhāṣā-sūtra*, which supplies a general definition for the whole work. Thus, wherever *avatāras* are described in the *Bhāgavatam*, others should be known as expansions of the *puruṣāvatāra*, but Kṛṣṇa should be known as *svayam bhagavān*. This conclusion is prevalent everywhere in the *Bhāgavatam*. It has been said:

paribhāṣā hy eka-deśasthā sakalaṁ śāstram abhiprakāśayati yathā veśma-pradīpa

The *paribhāṣā* statement, situated in one place, lights up the whole scripture, just as a lamp lights up the whole house.

This *sūtra* appears once in the work and is not continually repeated. Though there are millions of statements in the scripture, this *sūtra* controls them all like a king. Thus statements which contradict the *sūtra* must be explained so that they agree with the *sūtra*. That is because these contrary statements are weak, since they belong to secondary subjects in the work, and because the *sūtra*'s statement is strong, being supported by *śruti*. Thus these statements should be harmonized with the *sūtra* by giving them another meaning, according to the rule *śruti-liṅga-vākya-prakarāṇa-sthāna-samākhyānām samavāye pāradaurbalyam artha-viprakarṣād*; where there is a combination of direct statements, inference, rules, discussion, philosophical stances, and interpretations, the later statements are considered progressively weaker in authority, because of their possibility of contrary meaning. (*Jaiminī-sūtra* 3.3.14) This is not just deference to a rule. Śrīdhara Svāmī has reconciled things in this way in many places.

Since there are many different *avatāras* such as Matsya and Kūrma, and Kṛṣṇa himself has two-armed and four-armed forms, and as well displays ages such as *kaumāra* and *kaiśora*, and they are all said to be eternal, does that mean that there are many Gods? No. The Tenth Canto says *bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*: he is one God manifested as many. (SB 10.40.7) The *jīva* at different times shows different temporary forms with less or more power, but the one Supreme Lord who pervades everything, by his inconceivable energy, can simultaneously have infinite eternal forms which are not different from him. The *jīvas* show infinite variety simply because there are infinite *jīvas*. The Lord shows infinite variety of forms by being one person. Thus when the *jīva* sees the Lord he perceives the Lord as if there are many Lords, like *jīvas*.

The supreme lord, bliss alone, knowledge alone, and all pervading, manifests *aṁśī* and *aṁśa*. Is it possible for the indivisible Lord to be divided and subdivided? *Mahā-varāha Purāṇa* says:

sarve nityāḥ śāśvatās ca dahās tasya parātmanah |
hānopādāna-rahitā naiva prakṛtijāḥ kvacit ||
paramānanda-sandohā jñāna-mātrās ca sarvataḥ |
sarve sarva-guṇaiḥ pūrṇā sarva-doṣa-vivarjitāḥ ||

All the forms of the Lord are eternal, appearing constantly within the material world with bodies of Paramātmā, without any destructible elements made of *prakṛti*. They are completely filled with the highest bliss and knowledge, full of all good qualities and devoid of all faults.

This is true, but though the *aṁśa* forms are perfect and complete, they are called *aṁśa* because they display only various degrees of the lord's qualities such as sweetness, power, and mercy. According to the particular goal, lesser powers are shown, in the forms known as *aṁśa*. Real completeness means fully displaying all the powers in full. This takes place in the *aṁśī*. In *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* it is said:

śakter vyaktis tathāvyaktis tāratamyasya kāraṇam ||
śaktiḥ samāpi pūryādi-dāhe dīpāgni-puñjayoḥ |
śītādy-ārti-kṣayenāgni-puñjād eva sukhaṁ bhavet ||

The manifestation and non-manifestation of *śakti* is the cause of grading the *aṁśī* and the *aṁśa*. Though the *śakti* of the lamp and the bonfire is the same in that both can burn down a town, only from the bonfire one obtains comfort because it destroys cold and other types of suffering.

Thus the difference between different forms because of display of complete or partial features has been experienced by the great realized devotees.

āsīnam urvyāṁ bhagavantam ādyaṁ
saṅkarṣaṇam devam akunṭha-sattvam |
vivitsavas tattvam ataḥ parasya
kumāra-mukhyā munayo 'nvapṛcchan ||

svam eva dhiṣṇyaṁ bahu mānayaṅtaṁ
yad vāsudevābhidham āmananti ||

Some time ago, being inquisitive to know, Sanat-kumāra, the chief of the boy-saints, accompanied by other great sages, inquired exactly like you about the truths regarding Vāsudeva, the Supreme, from Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, who is seated at the bottom of the universe. At that time Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa was meditating upon His Supreme Lord, whom the learned esteem as Lord Vāsudeva. SB 3.8.3-4

There is nothing contradictory if there are differences between the *aṁśī* and *aṁśa*, since the Lord is spiritual substance. *Varāha Purāṇa* says *svāṁśaś cātha vibhinnāṁśa iti dvedhāṁśa iṣyate*: there are two types of *aṁśas*, the expansions of the Lord and the *jīvas*. Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “Though the forms such as Matsya possess all powers and all knowledge since they are *avatāras*, according to the circumstances they display certain amounts of knowledge and action, and the Lord enters into the Kumāras, Nārada and others by his expansions or parts of his

expansions. There is an ancient explanatory verse:

*nṛsimho jāmādagnyaś ca kalkiḥ puruṣa eva ca |
bhagavattve ca tatrāder aiśvaryaśya prakāśakāḥ ||
nārādo 'tha tathā vyāso varāho buddha eva ca |
dharmāṇām eva vaividhyād amī dharmā-pradarśakāḥ ||
rāmo dhanvantarir yajñāḥ pṛthuḥ kīrti-pradarśināḥ |
balarāmo mohinī ca vāmanaḥ śrī-pradhānakāḥ ||
dattātreyāś ca matsyaś ca kumāraḥ kapilas tathā |
jñāna-pradarśakā ete vijñātavyā manīṣibhiḥ ||
nārāyaṇo naraś ceti kūrmaś ca ṛṣabhas tathā |
vairāgya-darśino jñeyāś tat-tat-karmānusārataḥ ||
kṛṣṇaḥ pūrṇa-ṣaḍ-aiśvarya-mādhuryāṇām mahodadhīḥ |
antarbhūta-samastāvātāro nikhila-śaktimān ||*

Nṛsimha, Parāśurāma, Kalki, and the *puruṣāvatāras* show the power of the Lord. Nārada, Vyāsa, Varāha, and Buddha show dharma, because they preach various paths of dharma. Rāma, Dhanvantari, Yajña and Pṛthu display fame. Balarāma, Mohinī and Vāmana display beauty. Dattātreyā, Matsya, the Kumāras and Kapila display knowledge which should be known by the wise. Nara-nārāyaṇa, Kūrma and Ṛṣabha display detachment by their respective actions. Kṛṣṇa is the great ocean of complete sweetness and complete display of the six *aiśvaryas* mentioned in the other forms above. He contains all *avatāras* within himself, and is the possessor of all *śaktis*.

The verse mentions the goal common to all the *avatāras*. The *avatāras* create happiness (*mṛḍayanti*) in the world whenever (*yuge yuge*) it is afflicted (*vyākulam*) by the demons (*indrāri*) and their ideas.

|| 1.3.29 ||

*janma guhyam bhagavato ya etat prayato naraḥ |
sāyam prātar gṛṇan bhaktyā duḥkha-grāmād vimucyate ||*

TRANSLATION

The pure person who chants with devotion the glories of the Lord's appearance, which is mysterious, becomes free from all sorrows.

COMMENTARY

This describes the results of glorifying the *avatāras*. *Guhyam* means very concealed or mysterious. *Gṛṇan* means "glorifying."

|| 1.3.30 ||

*etat rūpam bhagavato hy arūpasya cid-ātmanaḥ |
māyā-guṇair viracitam mahadādibhir ātmani ||*

TRANSLATION

This material realm, composed of the material *guṇas* and the elements from *mahat-tattva* to earth and with the *Paramātmā* as its basis, is a material form of the Lord who has a spiritual form of consciousness and is devoid of a material form.

COMMENTARY

“The universal form of the Lord has been recommended as the first type of worship in the Second Canto and other places with such verses as *pātālam etasya hi pāda-mūlam*: *Pātāla* is the base of his feet. (SB 2.1.26) Why is this not considered an *avatāra* of the Lord?” This verse answers.

This material realm, composed of collective and individual universes, is a material form of the Lord who has a spiritual form of consciousness (*cid-ātmanah*), and is devoid of a material form (*arūpasya*). This material form is composed of the material *guṇas* and the elements from *mahat-tattva* to earth (*mahadādibhiḥ*) situated on the *paramātmā* as its basis (*ātmani*). In other words this universal form composed of matter is not counted among the *avatāras* such as *Matsya* and *Kūrma* composed of *viśuddha-sattva*.

|| 1.3.31 ||

*yathā nabhasi meghaugho reṇur vā pārthivo'nile |
evam draṣṭari dṛśyatvam āropitam abuddhibhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Just as unintelligent people attribute clouds to be the sky and particles of dust are attributed to be the air, so unintelligent people see the universe, the visible form of the Lord as the Lord.

COMMENTARY

To what can this be compared? Just as a group of clouds are attributed to the sky or particles of dust are attributed to the air, so this universal form is attributed to the Lord. It is like a man on a pedestal being called “the pedestal.” The universal form, situated in the Lord is called the Lord. This is the meaning. What is seen (*dṛśyatvam*), what is controlled by the Lord, is attributed to be the seer or the controller, the Lord (*draṣṭari*) who is actually invisible, by foolish people (*abuddhibhiḥ*). Though sky and air are invisible, we see the sky because it is blue or the air because it is dusty. The adventitious qualities of cloud and dust which are visible are attributed to be the sky and air which are actually invisible, because they become visible through the clouds and dust. Thus the meaning here is that the Lord, visible as the universe, is thus worshipped by the *yogīs* situated at the beginning stage of practice.

|| 1.3.32 ||

*ataḥ param yad avyaktam avyūḍha-guṇa-vyūhitam¹⁶ |
adr̥ṣṭāśruta-vastutvāt sa jīvo yat punar-bhavaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Superior to the gross universal form is that form which is invisible, devoid of the specific bodily parts, since it cannot be seen or heard. This is like the subtle body of the *jīva*, which in the instrument of rebirth for the *jīva*.

COMMENTARY

Just as *yogīs* worship the visible form of the universe as the Lord, even though it is material, other *yogīs* worship a subtle form of the universe as the Lord, even though it is also material. These forms are described later:

*amunī bhagavad-rūpe mayā te hy anuvarṇite
ubhe api na gr̥hṇanti māyā-sṛṣṭe vipāścitaḥ*

The wise do not accept these two forms of the Lord described by me since they are composed of matter. SB 2.10.35

*indrādayo bāhava āhur usrāḥ karṇau diśaḥ śrotram amuṣya śabdaḥ
nāsatya-dasrau paramasya nāse ghr̥ṇo 'sya gandho mukham agnir iddhaḥ*

The *devatās* such as Indra are his arms. The *devatās* of the directions and the organ for hearing arise from his ears. Sound arises from his organ of hearing. The *Aśvinis* and the organ for smelling arise from his nostrils. Fragrance arises from his organ of smelling. Flaming fire is his mouth. SB 2.1.29

*vijñāna-śaktim mahim āmananti sarvātmano 'ntaḥ-karaṇam giritram
aśvāsvatary-uṣṭra-gajā nakhāni sarve mṛgāḥ paśavaḥ śroṇi-deśe*

They say that *mahat-tattva* is his citta. Rudra is his false ego. Horses, mules, camels and elephants are his nails. All animals are his hips. SB 2.1.35

The subtle form is different from the gross form of the universe. It is actually invisible or subtle (*avyaktam*) because it is devoid of specific forms (*avyūḍha-guṇa-bṛmhitam*); it does not have evolved hands and feet. Why? It is not like things with form, like you, I or Indra who can be seen and heard (*adr̥ṣṭāśruta-vastutvāt*). What is the proof of its existence? The subtle body is the proof. The word *jīva* should be understood to mean the imposition on the *jīva* of the subtle body.

“The gross body of the *jīva* is his false designation for enjoyment in this world. Why do we need to make another false designation?” Because by this subtle body the *jīva* takes repeated births, involving leaving a body, entering a body and

¹⁶ 'guḍa-bāhitam' iti pāho mūle oḍkayā cāsti | ayam eva samécénaù |

remaining in a body. This would be impossible without the subtle body.

These forms are attributed to be the Lord, but are not actually the Lord, because both the gross and subtle bodies are material and their souls are the *jīvas* individually and collectively. It is said:

virāḍ hiranyagarbhaś ca kāraṇaṁ cety upādhayaḥ |
īśasya yantribhir hīnaṁ turīyaṁ tat pracakṣate ||

The universal form of matter, Hiranyagarbha (the form of the collective *jīvas*), as the cause of the universe, is false. The state of the Supreme Lord is said to be devoid of such limitations

And the *Bhāgavatam* says that both these forms should not be worshipped as quoted above with *amuni bhagavad-rūpe*. (SB 2.10.35)

|| 1.3.33 ||

yatreṁ sad-asad-rūpe pratiśiddhe sva-saṁvidā |
avidyayātmani kṛte iti tad brahma-darśanam ||

TRANSLATION

When the gross and subtle material forms, which are impositions on the soul in ignorance, are removed by the realization of the devotees, one can realize *brahman*.

COMMENTARY

If this is actually all material how can we see *brahman*? This verse answers. These two material forms gross and subtle are removed. This means that the non-material form of the lord is not removed. These forms are removed by the realization (*saṁvidā*) of the Lord's devotees (*sva*). Why are these two forms not situated in the Lord? These forms are imposed on the *jīva* by ignorance, and are not situated in the Lord. It is said:

dehāhaṅkāraṇād dehādhyāso jīve hy avidyayā |
na tathā jagad-adhyāsaḥ paramātmāni yujyate ||

The imposition of body exists in the *jīva* by ignorance, by identifying with the body.

In this manner, the universe is not imposed upon the Paramātmā. With the removal of these two material forms, one can see *brahman*.

|| 1.3.34 ||

*yady eṣoparatā devī māyā vaiśārādī matiḥ |
sampanna eveti vidur mahimni sve mahīyate ||*

TRANSLATION

When *māya* or ignorance weakens, the Lord bestows his mercy on the *jīva*. The *jīva* becomes endowed with this treasure. The wise understand that, being situated in this glorious position, this person is worthy of worship.

COMMENTARY

Vaiśārādī refers to the Lord who is skilful (*viśārada*) at understanding what is beneficial for his devotees. He thinks, “Let this *jīva* see me.” If the merciful desire of the Lord arises, then he acts in this way. There is no other way. *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*: the Lord reveals himself unto that person whom he alone chooses. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.3) Or *vaiśārādī matiḥ* can mean “the person who thinks of the Lord.” Thus the first line means “If *Māyā-devī* withdraws her influence, then the Lord favors the devotee” or “When *Māyā* withdraws her influence, the *jīva* thinks of the Lord.” The person, thinking in this way or endowed with the Lord’s mercy, is well furnished (*sampannaḥ*), whereas others are poor. The wise understand that he who is situated in this glorious position (*sve mahimni*) is worthy of worship (*mahīyate*).

|| 1.3.35 ||

*evam ca janmāni karmāṇi hy akartur ajanasya ca |
varṇayanti sma kavayo veda-guhyāni hṛt-pateḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Thus, rejecting the two versions of the universal form, the wise glorify the highest subject of the Vedas--the birth and activities of the Supreme Lord, who resides in the hearts of all beings (unlike the universal form), who has no material birth and no material activities (unlike the *jīva*).

COMMENTARY

Evam means “thus rejecting these two material forms.” Although the Lord is not born he is also born, according to the *śruti text ajāyamāno bahudhābhijāyate*: not being born, the Lord appears as many. (*Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*) The Lord is not the doer, but performs actions. According to *śruti text na cāsya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate*: the Lord has no senses and no body. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8) And as well *śruti* says *svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*: by his nature the Lord’s actions are endowed with knowledge and strength. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8)

“But one also sees birth and actions of the *jīva*, who actually has no birth and no material actions.” That is true. But the *jīva*’s birth and actions are related to matter, and the Lord’s birth and actions are without relation to matter at all. This is the difference. These facts about the Lord’s birth and actions are established in the all Vedas because they are the highest, most excellent truths (*veda-guhyāni*.) This

means that the facts about the *jīva* are different, being inferior, because his birth and actions are related to matter. The Gītā also says *janma-karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo veti tattvataḥ*: he who remembers my birth and actions as non-material does not take birth. (BG 4.9) Referring to the Lord as *hṛt-pateḥ* (Lord in the heart, Paramātmā) indicates that the universal form is not considered among the *avatāras*, since it does not reside in the heart.

|| 1.3.36 ||

*sa vā idaṁ viśvam amogha-līlaḥ
sṛjaty avaty atti na sajjate'smin |
bhūteṣu cāntarhita ātma-tantraḥ
ṣaḍ-vargikaṁ jighrati ṣaḍ-guṇeśaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The independent Lord, who has spotless pastimes, who has entered into all beings, creates, maintains and destroys this universe. Being the master of the six senses, he contacts the six sense objects ((sound, touch, form, taste, smell and thought) without being affected.

COMMENTARY

There are many other remarkable qualities of the Lord. First his unlimited power is described. From far off, the Lord senses the six sense objects (*ṣaḍ-vargikaṁ*), but is not attached to them. Why? He is the master of the six senses (*ṣaḍ-guṇeśaḥ*). Or he is the master of the six auspicious qualities (*aiśvarya, vīrya, yaśas* etc.) Thus he experiences happiness arising from these six qualities.

|| 1.3.37 ||

*na cāsya kaścīn nipuṇena dhātur
avaiti jantuḥ kumanīṣa ūtīḥ |
nāmāni rūpāṇi mano-vacobhiḥ
santanvato naṭa-caryām ivājñāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The falsely intelligent person, with skill in *jñāna* or *yoga* cannot understand using their mind and words the pastimes, names and forms of the Lord who distributes these whenever he descends, just as an ignorant person cannot appreciate the performance of an actor.

COMMENTARY

The Lord cannot be understood by material knowledge. By skill in *jñāna* or *yoga* (*nipuṇena*) no ignorant person (*kumanīṣa jantuḥ*) can understand the pastimes (*ūtīḥ*), names and forms of the Lord through material mind and speech, since the lord is beyond mind and words. He who is devoid of *bhakti*, the *jñānī*, says that any object with the name and form is illusory. That notion is indicated by the

word *kumanīṣa* (person with bad intelligence). The Lord broadcasts (*santanvataḥ*) these names and forms when he repeatedly appears in the world by his mercy. An example of ignorance is given. The person ignorant of drama cannot understand the names and forms indicated by the actor through theatrical gestures of the hands and poetic words indicating the moon or the lotus. Thus he does not appreciate the drama and says there is no *rasa*. The person in knowledge directly experiences the *rasa*, which pervades all his senses and heart.

|| 1.3.38 ||

*sa veda dhātuḥ padavīm parasya
duranta-vīryasya rathāṅga-pāṇeḥ |
yo 'māyayā santatayānuvṛtṭyā
bhajeta tat-pāda-saroja-gandham ||*

TRANSLATION

He who worships the scent of the lotus feet of the Lord, sincerely, continuously, and with favorable attitude, knows the greatness of the holder of the *cakra*, the possessor of infinite prowess.

COMMENTARY

The Lord is understood by *bhakti*.

|| 1.3.39 ||

*atheha dhanyā bhagavanta ittham
yad vāsudeve 'khila-loka-nāthe |
kurvanti sarvātmakam ātma-bhāvaṁ
na yatra bhūyaḥ parivarta ugraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O men of knowledge! You are the most fortunate in this world, because when people concentrate their minds exclusively on Kṛṣṇa, the lord of all the worlds, by asking such questions, they cease painful repetition of birth.

COMMENTARY

Sūta speaks to Śaunaka and the sages, who were lamenting, “Since we are without *bhakti*, let us become the object of criticism!” According to *Vaiṣṇava-nirukti*, *sarvajñāḥ vetti vidyām avidyām ca sa vācya bhagavān*: the word *bhagavān* means he who knows knowledge and ignorance. Thus in this verse *bhagavantaḥ* means knowledgeable sages rather than great devotees, since they were not so advanced. When persons concentrate their minds completely (*sarvātmakam ātmabhāvam*) on Vāsudeva, there is no more repetition of birth and death (*parivarta*).

|| 1.3.40 ||

*idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam |
uttama-śloka-caritam cakāra bhagavān ṛṣiḥ |
niḥśreyasāya lokasya dhanyam svasty-ayanam mahat ||*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Vyāsa wrote the greatest, most auspicious Purāṇa called *Bhāgavatam*, which bestows all human goals, is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, and describes the activities and qualities of the Lord, for the highest benefit of the world.

COMMENTARY

“O Sūta! What novel scripture, unheard before this time, are you reciting?” To this, Suta replies in this verse. *Brahma* means equal to Kṛṣṇa. *Ṛṣiḥ* refers to Vyāsa.

|| 1.3.41 ||

*tad idaṁ grāhayām āsa sutam ātmavatām varam |
sarva-vedetiḥāsānām saram saram samuddhṛtam ||*

TRANSLATION

Vyāsa had his son Śukadeva, best of the self-controlled, study this scripture, which is the very essence of all the Vedas and histories.

COMMENTARY

Vyāsa affectionately fed the *Bhāgavatam*, the essence of the essence of the Vedas, like butter appearing from churning yogurt, to his son Śukadeva. This indicates that his effort of churning the Vedas was successful. And Śukadeva, though the best of the self-realized souls (*ātmavatām varam*), took it with greed, because of its wonderful taste.

|| 1.3.42 ||

*sa tu saṁśrāvayām āsa mahārājam parikṣitam |
prāyopaviṣtam gaṅgāyām paritam paramarṣibhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva spoke it (the *Bhāgavatam*) to King Parikṣit, who was surrounded by great sages, as he sat fasting till death on the bank of the Gaṅgā.

COMMENTARY

Prāyopaviṣtam (literally “sitting till death”) means “sitting down while fasting till death.” It is like the expression *go-dohanam āste*; he sits until the milking of the cow is finished. Medinī says *prāyo maraṇānaśane mṛtyau bāhulyayor: prāyo* means fasting till death, death, majority and similar.

|| 1.3.43 ||

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmapagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha |
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Though Kṛṣṇa left Dvārakā, arrived at Prabhāsa, and then disappeared along with his six great qualities, this Purāṇa, another form of the sun, has now risen in Kali-yuga for those who have lost their knowledge.

COMMENTARY

What more can be said? You asked where *dharma* has taken shelter (SB 1.1.23) Please understand the answer now. Kṛṣṇa having departed from his abode Dvārakā (*sva-dhāma*), arrived at (*upagate*) Prabhāsa, and then disappeared along with his six powers such as *dharma* and *jñāna*. The details are not mentioned clearly because the pastime of Kṛṣṇa's disappearance causes disturbance to the devotee. *Naṣṭa-dṛśām* refers to persons who have lost knowledge. The word *dṛk* (sight) suggests a verse at the end of the Eleventh Canto:

*apaśyatas tvac-caraṇāmbujam prabho dṛṣṭiḥ pranaṣṭā tamasi praviṣṭā
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śāntim yathā niśāyām uḍupe pranaṣṭe*

Just as on a moonless night people are merged into darkness and cannot find their way, now that I have lost sight of Your lotus feet, my Lord, I have lost my vision and am wandering blindly in darkness. I cannot tell my direction, nor can I find any peace. SB 11.30.43

From that, the following inference can be made. Kṛṣṇa is the sun, and Mathurā is like the Sunrise Mountain. Prabhāsa is the Sunset Mountain. The righteous persons are like *cakravāka* birds which mourn in the night and rejoice in the day. The evil persons are like fog. Darkness is the totality of sins. The devotees are like a grove of lotuses. Kṛṣṇa is clearly compared to the sun in the following verse:

*kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi nimloce gīrṇeṣv ajagareṇa ha
kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalam brūyām gata-śrīṣu grṇeṣv aham*

My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare? SB 3.2.7

Though the sun of Kṛṣṇa has set, the sun of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has risen. A form corresponding to the sun becomes the sun.

|| 1.3.44 ||

*tatra kīrtayato viprā viprarṣer bhūri-tejasaḥ |
aham cādhyagamaṁ tatra niviṣṭas tad-anugrahāt |
so 'ham vaḥ śrāvayiṣyāmi yathādhītaṁ yathā-mati ||*

TRANSLATION

Seated in the assembly, out of his great mercy, I learned this scripture from the powerful Śukadeva, who recited it there. I will teach you this scripture as I learned it, according to Śukadeva's realization.

COMMENTARY

Sitting at one place in the assembly (*tatra nivīṣṭaḥ*), getting his mercy, I learned (*adhyāgamam*) this scripture from Śukadeva (*viprarṣeḥ*), who recited it in the assembly (*tatra*). That Sūta was present there is understood from the following:

*imām vakṣyaty asau sūta ṛṣibhyo naimiṣālaye
dīrgha-satre kuru-śreṣṭha samprṣṭaḥ śaunakādibhiḥ*

O best of the Kurus, the same Sūta Gosvāmī who is sitting before us will speak this *Bhāgavatam* to the sages assembled in the great sacrifice at Naimiṣāraṇya. This he will do when questioned by the members of the assembly, headed by Śaunaka. SB 12.4.43

I do not concoct anything (*yathādhītam*) but follow Śukadeva who understood everything, grasping its full extent with his intelligence (*yathā matih*).

Chapter Four The appearance of Nārada to Vyāsa

|| 1.4.1 ||

*vyāsa uvāca—
iti bruvāṇam samstūya munīnām dīrgha-satriṇām |
vṛddhaḥ kula-patiḥ sūtam bahvrcaḥ śaunako 'bravīt ||*

TRANSLATION

Vyāsa said: Among the sages gathered for the long sacrifice, Śaunaka, eldest by age, of high parentage and superior in Vedic knowledge, praising Sūta who had just spoken, began speaking.

COMMENTARY

In the Fourth chapter the excellence of the speaker and the hearer of the *Bhāgavatam* are declared. Also, the mercy that Vyāsa received and its previous absence are described.

Because he was the eldest by age (*vṛddhaḥ*), superior by family lineage (*kula-pati*) and superior by knowledge acquired through studying the Veda (*bahvrcaḥ*), Śaunaka was chosen by the sages to ask the questions.

|| 1.4.2 ||

*śaunaka uvāca—
sūta sūta mahā-bhāga vada no vadatām vara |
kathām bhāgavatīm puṇyām yad āha bhagavān chukaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: O Sūta! O Sūta! Fortunate soul! Best of speakers! Please tell us the pure stories related to the Lord which the glorious Śuka spoke at the assembly of Parīkṣit.

COMMENTARY

He addresses Sūta twice out of joy. *Yat* stands for *yam*.

|| 1.4.3 ||

*kasmin yuge pravṛtteyaṁ sthāne vā kena hetunā |
kutaḥ sañcoditaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛtavān saṁhitām munih ||*

TRANSLATION

In which *yuga*, in what place, and for what reason did the sage Vyāsa write this work? Who inspired him to write this work?

COMMENTARY

Kutaḥ here is a *sārva-vibhakti* (applicable to all cases of nouns). The suffix *taḥ* indicates “from.” It means “by whom.” Kṛṣṇa refers to Vyāsa.

|| 1.4.4 ||

*tasya putro mahā-yogī sama-dṛṅ nirvikalpakah |
ekānta-matir unnidro gūḍho mūḍha iveyate ||*

TRANSLATION

His son, a great *yogī*, seeing all things equally, fully realized in *brahman*, with mind concentrated on one goal, having dispelled ignorance, hid himself from the public and appeared to be a fool.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva was realized in impersonal knowledge (*nirvikalpakah*) and his attention ended in one point (*ekānta-matiḥ*). He had dispelled all ignorance (*unnidraḥ*). *Nidrā* is equated with ignorance as in *yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī*: the man of knowledge is awake in what is night for all beings (BG 2.69). He appeared to be (*iyate*) a fool.

|| 1.4.5 ||

*dr̥ṣṭvānuyāntam ṛṣim ātmajam apy anagnam
devyo hriyā paridadhur na sutasya citram |
tad vīkṣya pṛcchati munau jagadus tavāsti
strī-pum-bhidā na tu sutasya vivikta-dr̥ṣṭeḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The young women playing in the water, on seeing the clothed Vyāsa, pursuing his naked son who had left home, became bashful and put on their clothing. Vyāsa was astonished that they were not embarrassed when his naked son passed by. When Vyāsa asked them the reason, they replied, “You make distinctions of male and female and he does not. He has pure eyes.”

COMMENTARY

This verse shows Śukadeva’s absorption in *brahman* (*nirvikalpakaḥ*). Seeing Vyāsa with clothing on, who was following his son as he left home, the women, who were playing in the water, became bashful, and put their clothing on. They did not do so on seeing Śukadeva, his son. That is astonishing. “Aah! The women were not bashful on seeing my naked, young son looking everywhere. On the other hand, seeing me, an old man wearing clothes, who did not even look at them, since I understood that women were playing in the water, they became bashful. I will ask them the reason.” When he asked, they said, “You make distinctions, thinking ‘this is a man, or this is a woman.’ Your son does not do this.” How did this situation arise? Your son has pure eyes (*vivikta-dr̥ṣṭeḥ*). We young women, skilful in the arts, have the power to know the inner truth of men and women just by looking at their eyes.”

|| 1.4.6 ||

*katham ālakṣitaḥ pauraiḥ samprāptaḥ kuru-jāṅgalān |
unmatta-mūka-jaḍavad vicaran gaja-sāhvaye ||*

TRANSLATION

After coming to the province of Kuru-jāṅgala, Śukadeva wandered in Hastināpura (the capital), like a madman, a mute or a fool. How did the people of the city recognize him?

COMMENTARY

Kuru-jāṅgala is the name of a province. *Gaja-sāhvaye* means “in the place named after the elephant — Hastināpura.”

|| 1.4.7 ||

*katham vā pāṇḍaveyasya rājarṣer muninā saha |
samvādaḥ samabhūt tāta yatraiṣā sātvatī śrutih ||*

TRANSLATION

How did the conversation of Parīkṣit with Śukadeva arise, through which this Vaiṣṇava scripture appeared?

COMMENTARY

Pāṇḍaveyasya refers to Parīkṣit. *Muninā* refers to Śukadeva. *Śrutiḥ* refers to the scripture.

|| 1.4.8 ||

*sa go-dohana-mātram hi gr̥heṣu gr̥ha-medhinām |
avekṣate mahā-bhāgas tīrthī-kurvaṁs tad āśramam ||*

TRANSLATION

The great devotee would wait in the houses of married couples only as long as it took to milk a cow, purifying the inhabitants by giving spiritual benefit.

COMMENTARY

Śukadeva must have remained a long time with Parīkṣit in order to explain this work. It could not be otherwise. On the pretext of begging alms, he would wait in a house for only the time it took to milk a cow. However, he actually purified their houses. He went there to give all the *jīvas* the spiritual goal of life.

|| 1.4.9 ||

*abhimanyu-sutaṁ sūta prāhur bhāgavatottamam |
tasya janma mahāścaryam karmāṇi ca gr̥ṇīhi naḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O Sūta! Parīkṣit is called the greatest of devotees. Please tell us about his astonishing birth and activities.

COMMENTARY

Gr̥ṇīhi means “please tell.”

|| 1.4.10 ||

*sa samrāt kasya vā hetoḥ pāṇḍūnām māna-vardhanaḥ |
prāyopaviṣṭo gaṅgāyām anādṛtyādhirāt-śriyam ||*

TRANSLATION

Why did this king, the glory of the Pāṇḍavas, neglect the wealth of kings and fast to death on the bank of the Gaṅgā?

COMMENTARY

Adhirāt means “ruling as the chief.” It refers to Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers. Parīkṣit inherited their wealth, but became disinterested in it.

|| 1.4.11 ||

*namanti yat-pāda-niketam ātmanah
śivāya hānīya dhanāni śatravaḥ |
katham sa vīraḥ śriyam aṅga dustyajām
yuvaiṣatotsraṣṭum aho sahāsubhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Why did this brave young man, to whose feet enemies brought wealth and clearly bowed down for their own benefit, desire to give up such wealth, which is difficult to give up, along with his life airs?

COMMENTARY

Pāda-niketam means “foot-stool.” *Ha* means “clearly.” Parīkṣit was young, not old but desired (*aiṣata*) to give up all the wealth, along with even his life airs (*asubhiḥ*).

|| 1.4.12 ||

*śivāya lokasya bhavāya bhūtaye
ya uttama-śloka-parāyanā janāḥ |
jīvanti nātmārtham asau parāśrayam
mumoca nirvidya kutaḥ kalevaram ||*

TRANSLATION

Persons who are surrendered to the Lord live for the auspiciousness of the world: extinguishing repeated birth and death and supplying material needs, and not for themselves. Why did Parīkṣit, becoming renounced, give up his body, which was meant as a shelter for others?

COMMENTARY

Those surrendered to the Lord live for the auspiciousness of the world (*lokasya śivāya*) in two ways: for extinguishing material life (*bhavāya*) and for giving material wealth (*bhūtaye*). *Bhavāya* literally means “for material life” but here it means “the devotees live for helping people give up their material life” in the manner that smoke is used to smother mosquitoes. Or the dative case *bhavāya* may express a missing infinite: *bhavāya samhartum* (they live to extinguish material life.)¹⁷

Parāśrayam means helping others. One should not give up something upon which others depend for life, even though one may be personally detached from it.

|| 1.4.13 ||

*tat sarvaṁ naḥ samācakṣva pṛṣṭo yad iha kiñcana |
manye tvām viṣaye vācām snātam anyatra chāndasāt ||*

¹⁷ *kṛiyārthopapadasya ca. (Aññādhyāyē, Pāeini 2.3.14)* Use of dative case with the verb indicates there is a hidden infinite which should be understood.

TRANSLATION

Please explain to us whatever I have asked you on this subject. I think that you are most capable of explaining all subjects, except some portions of the Veda.

COMMENTARY

Snatam vācām means “having full ability to say.” *Anyatra chāndasāt* means “other than the statements of the Vedas, since you are not qualified for that.” One should not worry that *Bhāgavatam* is therefore inferior to the Vedas, because of Sūta’s particular qualification. All persons are qualified for the final fruit of the tree of all the Vedas, the *Bhāgavatam*, and *Bhāgavatam*, being the fruit of the tree of the Vedas, is the essence of all *śrutis*.

|| 1.4.14 ||

sūta uvāca—

*dvāpare samanuprāpte tṛtīye yuga-paryaye |
jātaḥ parāsarād yogī vāsavyām kalayā hareḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said:

Vyāsa was born in the womb of Satyavatī as a portion of the Lord when the third part of Dvāpara-yuga arrived in the passing of *yugas*.

COMMENTARY

In answer to the questions mentioned in verse 3 “in which *yuga*, at what place” a short account of Vyāsa’s birth and activities is now presented. According to *Amara-koṣa*, *paryaya* means a lapse. With a lapse of many *yuga* cycles (*yuga-paryaye*), in Dvāpara-yuga, when Kṛṣṇa appeared, Vyāsa was born. It will be explained that Kṛṣṇa appeared in Dvāpara-yuga of the twenty-eighth cycle of *yugas* in Vaivasvata-manvantara. All *yugas* are divided into three parts: the beginning portion (*saṅdhyā-rūpa*), the middle portion (*yuga-rūpa*) and the end portion (*sandhyāṃśa-rūpa*). *Tṛtīye* refers to the third part of Dvāpara-yuga.¹⁸ Vyāsa was born from Satyavatī who was the daughter of Uparicara Vasu. Thus *vāsavyām* means “in the womb of Satyavatī.”

|| 1.4.15 ||

*sa kadācit sarasvatyā upaspr̥śya jalam śuciḥ |
vivikta eka āsīna udite ravi-maṅḍale ||*

TRANSLATION

At one time, Vyāsa, performing *ācamana* with water from the Sarasvatī River, being purified, sat alone in an isolated spot while the sun rose.

COMMENTARY

¹⁸ The proportions are .1 for the beginning portion, .8 for the middle portion and .1 for the concluding portion of the *yuga*.

Upaspr̥śya means “having sipped water (*ācamana*).” The verse is part of a sentence which ends in verse 18.

|| 1.4.16-18 ||

parāvara-jñāḥ sa ṛṣiḥ kālenāvyakta-ramhasā |
yuga-dharma-vyatikaram prāptam bhuvī yuge yuge ||
bhautikānām ca bhāvānām śakti-hrāsam ca tat-kṛtam |
āsraddadhānān niḥsattvān durmedhān hrasitāyusaḥ ||
durbhagāms ca janān vīkṣya munir divyena cakṣuṣā |
sarva-varṇāśramānām yad dadhyau hitam amogha-dr̥k ||

TRANSLATION

Vyāsa, who could see the past and the future, having pure vision, observed by his spiritual eye that the *dharmas* for the *yugas* had been destroyed on the earth, *yuga* after *yuga*, by the invisible force of time; that the bodies had decreased in ability; and that the people were devoid of faith, dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*, dull-witted, short-lived, and filled with misfortunes. He began to contemplate on what would be beneficial for all the *varṇas* and *āśramas*.

COMMENTARY

He knows the past and the future (*parāvara-jñāḥ*). He saw that there was destruction of the *dharmas* of the *yugas* with time (*yuga-dharma-vyatikaram*). There was decrease in strength of the body conditions (*bhautikānām bhāvānām*), caused by time (*tat-kṛtam*). The people were filled with *rajas* and *tamas* (*niḥsattvān*).

|| 1.4.19 ||

cātur-hotram karma śuddham prajānām vīkṣya vaidikam |
vyadadhād yajña-santatyai vedam ekam catur-vidham ||

TRANSLATION

Seeing the purifying power of Vedic rites performed by the four priests for the people at large who were not inclined for *jñāna*, *yoga* or *bhakti*, he divided the one Veda into four for continuation of sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Vyāsa considered that Vedic rites were purifying (*śuddham*) for all people who were not qualified for *jñāna*, *yoga* or *bhakti*. These sacrifices were accomplished by four priests, the *hotā* (reciter of Ṛg-veda, offerer of oblations), *udgātā* (reciter of Sāma-veda, corrector of irregularity), *adhvaryu* (reciter of Yajur-veda, preparer of items for sacrifice), and the *brahmā* (reciter of Atharva-Veda, knower of all Vedas, supervisor). *Santatyai* means “for continuation.”

|| 1.4.20 ||

*ṛg-yajuḥ-sāmātharvākhyā vedās catvāra uddhṛtāḥ |
itihāsa-purāṇam ca pañcamo veda ucyate ||*

TRANSLATION

He divided the Veda into the Ṛg, Yajus, Sāma and Atharvā. Histories and Purāṇas are called the fifth Veda.

|| 1.4.21-22 ||

*tatrarg-veda-dharaḥ pailaḥ sāmago jaiminiḥ kaviḥ |
vaiśampāyana evaiko niṣṇāto yajuśām uta ||
atharvāṅgirasām āsīt sumantur dāruṇo muniḥ |
itihāsa-purāṇānām pitā me romaharṣaṇaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

For the Vedas, Paila became responsible for the Ṛg-veda, wise Jaimini chanted the Sama-veda, Vaiśampāyana became learned in the Yajur-veda, the sage Sumantu, inclined to incantations, became learned in the Atharva-veda and my father Romaharṣaṇa became learned in the histories and Purāṇas.

COMMENTARY

Dāruṇaḥ means “inclined to incantations and magic.”

|| 1.4.23 ||

*ta eta ṛṣayo vedaṁ svaṁ svaṁ vyasyann anekadhā |
śiṣyaiḥ praśiṣyais tac-chiṣyair vedās te śākhino 'bhavan ||*

TRANSLATION

Each of these sages divided up his Veda into many divisions and these Vedas then developed branches as they were passed on to disciples, grand-disciples and great-grand-disciples.

COMMENTARY

Vyasyan means divided.

|| 1.4.24 ||

*ta eva vedā durmedhair dhāryante puruṣair yathā |
evaṁ cakāra bhagavān vyāsaḥ kṛpaṇa-vatsalaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord Vyāsa, merciful to the most fallen, thus divided the Vedas so that they could be understood by the foolish.

|| 1.4.25 ||

strī-śūdra-dvijabandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā |
karma-śreyasi mūḍhānām śreya evaṁ bhaved iha |
iti bhāratam ākhyānam kṛpayā muninā kṛtam ||

TRANSLATION

The women, śudras and dvija-bandhus were not qualified to hear the Vedas. Thinking what would be the best for the foolish in terms of the best sādhana, Vyāsa by his mercy wrote the Mahābhārata.

COMMENTARY

The dvija-bandhus do not belong to the three upper classes. Karma-śreyasi means “in the best sādhana.”

|| 1.4.26-27 ||

evaṁ pravṛttasya sadā bhūtānām śreyasi dvijāḥ |
sarvātmakenāpi yadā nātuṣyad dhṛdayam tataḥ |
nātiprasīdad dhṛdayaḥ sarasvatyās taṭe śucau |
vitarkayan vivikta-stha idaṁ covāca dharma-vit ||

TRANSLATION

O brāhmaṇas! Though he had engaged himself in this way for the welfare of all beings, his heart was not satisfied with all of that. Being not completely satisfied in heart, sitting in a solitary spot on the bank of the Sarasvatī River, the knower of dharma began to contemplate. He then spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY

Sarvātmakena means the same as sarvātmanā (by the whole). Na ati prasīdad hrḍayaḥ means “he whose heart was not completely pleased.” Because of dissatisfaction in his heart he began to conjecture (vitarkayan). He spoke to himself internally.

|| 1.4.28 ||

dhṛta-vratena hi mayā chandāmsi guravo 'gnayaḥ |
mānitā nirvyaḷikena gṛhītaṁ cānuśāsanam ||

TRANSLATION

I have respected the Vedas, the gurus and fire with sincerity and strict vows, and observed the rules.

|| 1.4.29-30 ||

bhārata-vyapadeśena hy āmnāyārthaś ca pradarsitaḥ |
dṛśyate yatra dharmādi strī-śūdrādibhir apy uta ||

*tathāpi bata me daihyo hy ātmā caivātmanā vibhuḥ |
asampanna ivābhāti brahma-varcasy asattamaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Through the *Mahābhārata*, in which *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* for the women, *śūdras*, what to speak of the higher castes, is seen, I have clearly shown the meaning of the Vedas. But still, my soul situated in the body, though powerful with austerity and knowledge by nature, appears incomplete and inferior, even though endowed with power arising from studying the Vedas.

COMMENTARY

My soul situated in the body (*daiyaḥ*), though complete with austerity and knowledge (*vibhuḥ*) by nature (*ātmanā*), feels incomplete (*asampanna*); and not only incomplete, but also inferior (*asattama*) even though endowed with power arising from the excellent results derived by hearing and studying the Vedas. Another version of the text has *uśattama* (most pleased with). In either case, as part of a compound, the suffix *vī* can be added with the meaning “possessing.”

|| 1.4.31 ||

*kiṁ vā bhāgavatā dharmā na prāyeṇa nirūpitāḥ |
priyāḥ paramahamsānām ta eva hy acyuta-priyāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Perhaps the path of *bhakti* pleasing to the most elevated devotees has not been sufficiently described. And the elevated devotees alone are dear to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Vyāsā begins to intuit the reason for his dissatisfaction. *Prāyana* means abundantly. The word *te* refers to the *paramahamsas*. It is not possible to explain the word *bhāgavatā dharmā* as *jñāna*. It is *bhakti* only for it is later said:

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavyaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat śṛṅvanti gāyanti gṛṅṅanti sādhaḥ*

The use of words in which, though not perfectly composed, there are the names of the Lord and descriptions of his glories which devotees hear, sing, and again receive, destroys the sins of all people. SB 1.5.11

And thus the word *paramahamsānām* refers only to the devotees, not to the *jñānīs*. *Bhāgavatam* should always be connected with the devotees who are called *paramahamsas*. It should never be taken as the property of the *jñānīs*.

*bhavatānūdita-prāyaṁ yaśo bhagavato 'malam
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta manye tad darśanam khilam*

You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless. SB 1.5.8

|| 1.4.32 ||

*tasyaivam khilam ātmānam manyamānasya khidyataḥ |
kṛṣṇasya nārado 'bhyāgād āsramam prāg udāhṛtam ||*

TRANSLATION

As Vyāsa was lamenting, considering himself most vile, Nārada approached the hermitage, which was previously described.

COMMENTARY

Khilam means “vile.” Vyāsa’s hermitage was on the bank of the Sarasvatī as previously described (*prāg udāhṛtam*). Lacking complete knowledge and being dissatisfied are impossible for Vyāsa, since he is an *avatāra* of the Lord. Therefore it should be understood that these conditions were strongly produced by Kṛṣṇa himself in order to manifest the *Bhāgavatam*, the crest jewel of all the scriptures, which is non-different from him. Similarly, even Balarāma’s knowledge became covered by Kṛṣṇa for the beauty of the pastimes in bewildering Brahmā. The *Bhāgavatam* became manifest by the instructions of Nārada; however it should be understood that the even the chief goal of human endeavor, liberation, is achieved only by *bhakti*, and not by any other method.

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair apisarvam
mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate ’ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Everything that can be achieved by *karma*, penance, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, mystic *yoga*, charity, *dharma* and all other auspicious means of perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through *bhakti*. If somehow or other my devotee desires Svarga, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.32-33

*kiṁ vā yogena sāṅkhyena nyāsa-svādhyāyayor api
kiṁ vā śreyobhir anyaiś ca na yatrātma-prado hariḥ*

What is the use of yoga, *sāṅkhya*, *sannyāsa*, study of the Vedas, other auspicious acts, in which the Lord does not give realization of himself?
SB 4.31.12

Thus the unique meaning of all the scriptures becomes visible to all people by *bhakti*.

|| 1.4.33 ||

*tam abhijñāya sahasā pratyutthāyāgataṁ munīḥ |
pūjayām āsa vidhivan nāradaṁ sura-pūjitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Understanding that Nārada, worshipped by the *devatās*, had suddenly arrived, Vyāsa worshipped him as if he were Brahmā.

COMMENTARY

Vidhivat means like Brahmā. *Vat* can mean “like” according to the dictionary. *Vat* is compounded with *vidhi*.

Chapter Five

Conversation Between Vyāsa and Nārada

|| 1.5.1 ||

sūta uvāca—

*atha taṁ sukham āsīna upāsīnaṁ bṛhac-chravāḥ |
devarṣiḥ prāha viprarṣiṁ vīṇā-pāṇiḥ smayann iva ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: The famous Nārada, with *vīṇā* in his hand, being seated comfortably, while slightly smiling, then spoke to Vyāsa, who was worshipping him.

COMMENTARY

In the Fifth chapter, showing the uselessness of *jñāna* and *karma*, Nārada teaches Vyāsa about *bhakti* with its chief component *kīrtana*.

Welcoming his guest, Vyāsa was worshipping (*upāsīnam*) him by offering *āsana*, *arghya*, *pādya* and other items. A slight smile appeared on Nārada’s lips, which shows that he, knowing everything, was internally pleased with Vyāsa. It was not possible for him to hide his smile by pretending something else, because of the interesting questions he would pose.

|| 1.5.2 ||

nārada uvāca

*pārāśarya mahā-bhāga bhavataḥ kaccid ātmanā |
parituṣyati śārīra ātmā mānasa eva vā ||*

TRANSLATION

Nārada said:

Great soul, son of Parāśara! If you think you are your body, is your body pleased with your body or not? Or if you think you are your mind, is your mind pleased with your mind or not?

COMMENTARY

Śārīraḥ ātmā here means “identifying oneself with the body.” Is this self satisfied with the body (*ātmanā*)? Is your self identifying with the mind (*mānasa ātmā*) satisfied with the mind (*ātmanā*)? *Kaccid* means “or not.” Addressing Vyāsa as the most fortunate son of Parāśara, Nārada suggests that if Vyāsa possesses such powerful ancestry, how could he lament? Thus he implies disappointment in Vyāsa.

|| 1.5.3 ||

*jijñāsitaṁ susampannam api te mahad-adbhutam |
kṛtavān bhārataṁ yas tvaṁ sarvārtha-paribṛmhitam ||*

TRANSLATION

You wrote the most astonishing *Mahābhārata*, complete with all instructions on *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. All that one desires to know is presented perfectly in this work.

COMMENTARY

You cannot say that the source of your dissatisfaction is lack of scriptural knowledge, because you wrote the *Mahābhārata*.

|| 1.5.4 ||

*jijñāsitaṁ adhītaṁ ca brahma yat tat sanātanam |
tathāpi śocasy ātmānam akṛtārtha iva prabho ||*

TRANSLATION

You have also investigated and realized the *brahman* which is eternal. Then why should you lament that you have been unsuccessful?

COMMENTARY

Nor can you say that the reason for lamentation is lack of realized knowledge, because you have investigated and made conclusions in the *Vedānta-sūtras* about the eternal *brahman* that spreads everywhere in impersonal form. Not only did you inquire about *brahman* (*jijñāsitaṁ*), but you have understood and realized (*adhītaṁ*) that *brahman*. Śrīdhara Svāmī says *adhītaṁ* means understood or attained.

|| 1.5.5 ||

vyāsa uvāca—
asty eva me sarvam idaṁ tvayoktam
tathāpi nātmā parituṣyate me |
tan-mūlam avyaktam agādha-bodham
pṛcchāma he tvātma-bhavātma-bhūtam ||

TRANSLATION

Vyāsa said: What you said about me is true. Yet my mind and body are not satisfied. I am asking the imperceptible reason for this from you because you were born from the body of self-born Brahmā and hence you possess great knowledge.

COMMENTARY

I ask you the cause (*tan-mūlam*) which is hard to understand (*me avyaktam*). The particle *he* indicates that he does not know. I ask you because you were born (*bhūtam*) from the body (*ātma*) of Brahmā (*ātma-bhava*). The power derived from the lineage of your father is the cause of your having great unfathomable knowledge (*agādha-bodham*).

|| 1.5.6 ||

sa vai bhavān veda samasta-guhyam
upāsito yat puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ |
parāvareṣo manasaiva viśvam
srjaty avaty atti guṇair asaṅgaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord is also you since you are an *avatāra* of the Lord. Certainly you know all secrets, because you worship the original person, the lord of cause and effect, who, remaining unaffected, creates, maintains and destroys the universe along with the *guṇas* by his will alone.

COMMENTARY

You have described me as the son of Parāśara, with a great lineage, with knowledge of the four Vedas and realization of *brahman*. But you are the son of Brahmā, omniscient (*agādha-bodham*), and worshipper of the Supreme Lord. In all ways you thus surpass me! That is understood when Vyāsa says “You worship the Supreme Lord (*purāṇaḥ puruṣaḥ upāsitaḥ*).” The words starting with *parāvareṣaḥ* (lord of cause and effect) further describe that Supreme Lord. That Lord (*saḥ*) is certainly (*vai*) you (*bhavān*), since you, Nārada, are an *avatāra* of the Lord. Therefore you know the whole secret and the secret behind all things (*samasta-guhyam*).

|| 1.5.7 ||

*tvaṁ paryatann arka iva tri-lokīm
antaś-carō vāyur ivātma-sākṣī |
parāvare brahmaṇi dharmato vrataiḥ
snātasya me nyūnam alam vicakṣva ||*

TRANSLATION

You wander like the sun throughout the three worlds seeing everything and wander like the life air throughout the body as the witness of everyone's intelligence. Though I have become very proficient in the Vedas and have realized the *brahman* by proper methods, it is not enough. Please consider this.

COMMENTARY

The original person, the supreme lord, has descended as you to give benefit to the world. Today, please help me. You wander throughout the three worlds like the sun, which sees everything and like the life air which moves within, knowing the actions of the intellect (*ātma-sākṣī*). I am well versed by proper method (*dharmataḥ*) in the supreme *brahman* (*para brahmaṇi*), and in the statements of the Veda (*avare brahmaṇi*) by rules of study (*vrataiḥ*). *Dharma* refers to “method” in this verse because Yājñavalkya says:

*ijyācāra-damāhimsā-dāna-svādhyāya-karmaṇām |
ayaṁ tu paramo dharmo yad-yogenātma-darśanam ||*

The supreme *dharma* by which method one can realize *ātma* consists of worship, proper conduct, control of the senses, non-violence, charity, and study. *Yājñavalkya-smṛti* 1.8

This is sufficient (*alam*), but it is still insufficient (*nyūnam*)! Please consider all this.

|| 1.5.8 ||

*śrī-nārada uvāca—
bhavatānudita-prāyaṁ yaśo bhagavato 'malam |
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta manye tad darśanam khilam ||*

TRANSLATION

Nārada said: You have not sufficiently described the glories of the spotless Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because your mind could never be satisfied with Vedānta, I think that writing the *Vedānta-sūtras* is insufficient.

COMMENTARY

You have not described much at all (*anudita-prāyaṁ*) about the spotless glories of the Lord—the superior position of *bhagavān*'s forms above all other forms, and the supreme attractiveness of his pastimes and *bhakti*.

“But I have produced the *brahma-mīmāṃsā* scripture, the *vedānta-darśana*.”

“I consider that *darśana* scripture to be deficient (*khilam*). You are the writer of Vedānta and if your mind is dissatisfied with this, then how will those who continually study this *darśana* be satisfied? You are the proof that this *darśana* is insufficient.”

|| 1.5.9 ||

*yathā dharmādayaś cārthā muni-varyānukīrtitāḥ |
na tathā vāsudevasya mahimā hy anuvarṇitāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O venerable sage! You have not repeatedly described the glories of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa to the extent that you have glorified *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*.

COMMENTARY

“But I have described the wonderful qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in the *Padma Purāṇa* and others as well.”

The word *ca* here means “though.” You have not described the glories of Vāsudeva as much as you have described *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* as the goals of human life (*arthā*) even though they are much inferior to the glories of Vāsudeva. Though Vāsudeva is the crest jewel of human goals, you have not described him as the goal of human endeavor. Though you have described the glories of Kṛṣṇa abundantly in many places, they have been described only as a means of getting *mokṣa*. How can your mind be satisfied when there is a lack of regard for that which should have been given the most regard?

“But I have described *bhakti* to be higher than liberation in many places in other scriptures.

*anyatra puṇya-tīrtheṣu muktir eva mahā-phalam |
muktaiḥ prārthyā harer bhaktir mathurāyām ca labhyata*

Liberation is the highest goal in visiting other holy places, but devotion to the Lord, prayed for by the liberated souls, can be obtained at Mathurā.
Padma Purāṇa

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktim labhate parām ||*

One who attains *brahman*, equal to all living entities, does not lament or desire. He then attains pure devotion to me. BG 18.54”

“But you have not done so repeatedly (*na anuvarṇitāḥ*). You must do so, because it

is said that the meaning of scriptures is revealed by repetition as in *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*: the *ānandamaya-puruṣa* is the supreme lord because of repetition of words to indicate this (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.13). Your mind will be satisfied only when you describe very clearly with repetition the glories of the Lord, since those glories alone are finally the most excellent.”

|| 1.5.10 ||

*na yad vacaś citra-padam harer yaśo
jagat-pavitram pragṛṇīta karhicit |
tad vāyasaṁ tīrtham uśanti mānasā
na yatra haṁsā niramanty uśik-kṣayāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Works whose attractive verses do not sing at all the glories of the Lord, which purify not only the author but the whole world, are considered by the devotees who have captured the mind of the Lord to be the place for crows, in which swans, living in pleasant lakes, take no enjoyment at all.

COMMENTARY

Even poetic works should be condemned if they are devoid of glorification of the Vāsudeva.

A work whose verses do not proclaim the glories of the Lord — which purify even the whole world composed of speakers and listeners, what to speak of the author — is actually like a dead body. It is very impure without describing the glories of the Lord which are like life itself, even though it may be endowed with qualities and poetic ornaments ((*citra-padam*) and is also a cause for surprise or dismay (another meaning of *citra*).

It is considered to be (*uśanti*) a place for crows, a hole filled with various left-over foods, which is desired by persons filled with lust, who are like crows. It is a place where the swans of Mānasa-sarovara (*mānasā haṁsā*) or the devotees situated in the mind of the Lord absolutely (*ni* for *nitarām*) never enjoy (*ramanti*).

*sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam sādḥūnām hṛdayam tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti nāham tebhyo manāg api*

Saints are my heart, and only I am their hearts. They do not know anyone but me, and therefore I do not recognize anyone besides them as mine. SB 9.4.68

Or *mānasāḥ* can mean “those who destroy (*sā*) respect (*māna*) for those words since they find no pleasure in them. Or *mānasāḥ* can mean the mental sons of Brahmā such as the Kumāras. The Kumāras proclaim (*mānasāḥ uśanti*) this. *Uśik* means pleasant and *kṣaya* means lake in the case of reference to the swans, or it

can mean abode. Thus *uśik-kṣayāḥ* means those possessing the abode of the Lord. This would refer to the Kumāras who were free to enter the Lord's abode.

The word *vacaḥ* means statements, what is spoken. Therefore statements like the following would appear to make *Bhāgavatam* a place for the crows.

*nābhāgo nabhagāpatyaṁ yaṁ tataṁ bhrātaraḥ kavim
yaviṣṭhaṁ vyabhajan dāyaṁ brahmacāriṇam āgatam*

The brothers gave to their youngest learned brother Nābhāga their father Nabhaga as his share of the property when he returned from *brahmacāri* life. SB 9.4.1

And it may be argued that none of the Purāṇas written by Vyāsa should be considered as a place of crows, since nothing there is completely devoid of the glories of the Lord. To this however it can be said:

*kali-mala-samhati-kālano 'khileśo
harir itaratra na gīyate hy abhīkṣṇam
iha tu punar bhagavān aśeṣa-mūrtiḥ
paripaṭhito 'nu-padaṁ kathā-prasaṅgaiḥ*

Nārāyaṇa, the soul of the universal form, who annihilates the accumulated sins of the Kali age, is not glorified much in other works. But Bhagavān, with unlimited forms, is abundantly and constantly described throughout the various narrations of this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. SB 12.12.66

Taking this verse and the next verse in the *Bhāgavatam* into consideration, the word *vacaḥ* should mean the general import of the discussion, rather than each sentence. That being the case, the chapters and stories of *Bhāgavatam* are all ornaments to the glories of the Lord. In other Purāṇas, however many of the stories are devoid of the glories of the lord and are therefore the place of the crows. Thus there is no contradiction.

|| 1.5.11 ||

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api |
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yac
chṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The use of words in which, though not perfectly composed, there are the names of the Lord and descriptions of his glories which devotees hear, sing, and again receive, destroys the sins of all people.

COMMENTARY

Having expressed the negative side, now the positive is expressed. The production and use of words or stories (*tad-vāg-visargaḥ*) which destroy the sins of all people, which are sometimes composed strictly and sometimes carelessly, but with sparse ornaments in the verses (*prati-ślokaṃ abaddhavati*), contain names and descriptions of the Lord's glories. The devotees hear, and having heard, sing, and having sung, again they hear, since they are not fully satiated.

Or if a speaker is present, they hear the glories. If a hearer is present they speak the glories (*grhanti*). And, otherwise, they spontaneously sing the glories. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that *abaddhavati* can also mean ungrammatical language.

|| 1.5.12 ||

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam |
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvare
na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

Even the stage of *jñāna* without the bondage of *karma* is not glorious if it is devoid of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What then to speak of *sakāma-karma* which causes suffering, both during practice and at the stage perfection, and *niškāma-karma*, when not offered to the Lord?

COMMENTARY

Not only are the words important. If there is no *bhakti*, the work is useless. The realization coming from the words of the Vedas is useless without *bhakti*, what to speak of mere scriptural knowledge, and what to speak of *niškāma-karma*. And so much more, *sakāma-karma* is useless without *bhakti*. Even knowledge devoid of fruitive intentions does not appear wonderful without *bhakti*, in which one thinks of the Lord who has a form of knowledge and bliss (*acyuta-bhāva*). Even if *bhakti* is present in *jñāna* and one thinks that the Lord and *bhakti* are mixed with *māyā*, then that does not produce liberation. Though devoid of ignorance (*nirañjanam*), though one has realized knowledge, what is the use of that knowledge (*alam*)? What then to speak of unrealized scriptural knowledge! One should not say that you can achieve liberation just by destroying ignorance. By the inconceivable energy of the Lord, the destroyed ignorance again arises. The *Parīṣṭā-vacanam* of the *Vāsanā-bhāṣya* says:

*jīvan-muktā api punar bandhanam yānti karmabhiḥ |
yady acintya-mahā-śaktau bhagavaty aparādhinaḥ |*

Even the liberated persons again get bound by *karma* if they commit offense

against the Lord, possessor of great, inconceivable powers.

There it also says:

*jīvan-muktā prapadyante kvacit saṁsāra-vāsanām |
yogino na vilipyante karmabhir bhagavat-parāḥ ||*

Liberated souls sometimes are subjected to birth and death, but the *yogīs* who surrender to the Lord are not touched by *karma*.

Thus the effect of *jñāna* is destruction of *karma*. *jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna: O Arjuna, by the fire of knowledge all karmas are burned to ashes. (BG 4.33)* But that is not so wonderful because it is also said concerning *rathayātrā* in *Viṣṇu-bhakti-candrodaya* of another Purāṇa:

*nānuvrajati yo mohād vrajantaṁ jagad-īśvaram |
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāpi sa bhaved brahma-rākṣasaḥ ||*

He who does not follow the Lord in his chariot when he moves becomes a *brahma-rakṣasa* even though he has destroyed all *karmas* with the fire of knowledge.

It will also be said later *āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ: after reaching the height of liberation with great difficulty, again they fall down because they do not worship the lotus feet of the Lord. (SB 10.2.32)*

Since *jñāna* is devoid of real *bhakti* to the Lord, the offense caused by thinking that the Lord is material is unavoidable. If such *jñāna* devoid of *bhakti* is useless, what then to speak of *karma* which is filled with desires for enjoyment and which causes suffering (*abhadram*) at all times (*śaśvat*)--during practice and at the time of receiving the result. And even if the *karma* is without the goal of enjoyment (*akāraṇam*), because it is not offered to the Lord it is not successful.

|| 1.5.13 ||

*atho mahā-bhāga bhavān amogha-dṛk
śuci-śravāḥ satya-rato dhṛta-vrataḥ |
urukramasyākhila-bandha-muktaye
samādhinānusmara tad-vi-ceṣṭitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Fortunate one! Therefore, since you have useful knowledge, spotless character, dedication to truth and determined vows, remember with attention the pastimes of the Lord which bring about liberation from all bondage.

COMMENTARY

Love for Acyuta is most cherished by you since it is topmost. That is attained by chanting and hearing his name, pastimes, etc. The names of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are famous. How are his pastimes attractive to you? Please teach the world about those pastimes. Your knowledge is useful (*amogha-dṛk*). Your character is pure (*śuci-sravāḥ*). You are devoted to truth (*satya-rataḥ*) and determined in your vows (*dhr̥ta-vrataḥ*). Remember with fixed attention (*samādhinā*) the various pastimes of the Lord which give liberation for all people or give liberation from all bondage. The word “remember” is used because the pastimes appear spontaneously in the pure mind filled with devotion, since they are all self-revealing, infinite, most confidential, and impossible to speak or receive by any other means. After recollecting the pastimes, please recite them to us. One must also have productive knowledge and pure character. It cannot be otherwise. Because you are a person with pure eyes (*amogha-dṛk*) and with pure ears (*śuci-sravāḥ*), you have seen some pastimes with your eyes and heard some with your ears. And by attached mind (*satya-rataḥ*) and determined intelligence (*dhr̥ta-vrataḥ*), you should remember with concentrated attention at this moment some very confidential pastimes which cannot be seen or heard but which you have observed. After remembering them, please tell them to us. *Anusmara* is in the second person instead of saying “one should remember” because of the distinctiveness of the statement.

|| 1.5.14 ||

*tato 'nyathā kiñcana yad vivakṣataḥ
pṛthag dṛśas tat-kṛta-rūpa-nāmabhiḥ |
na karhicit kvāpi ca duḥsthitā matir
labheta vātāhata-naur ivāspadam ||*

TRANSLATION

The intelligence of people desiring to speak on other subjects, who develop another vision, become disturbed by the words describing these other objects, and can never attain its proper object. It is like a boat attacked by the wind.

COMMENTARY

The positive statement having been made, the negative version is now expressed. Some people desire to speak about topics other than the pastimes of the Lord. Having desired, they speak, and having spoken someone hears from them. And this causes a different type of vision. For persons having a vision of objects other than the lord’s pastimes resulting from desire to speak about other things, the intelligence, disturbed by words (*nāmabhiḥ*) describing other objects (*rūpa*) produced by the different vision, at no time and at no place can attain its destination. It is like a boat beaten by the wind. Being turned about by the wind and going in various directions, struck by the wind, it sinks. Similarly the intelligence is destroyed because of skilful words, poetry, *karma* and *jñāna*.

|| 1.5.15 ||

*jugupsitaṁ dharmā-kṛte 'nuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramaḥ |
yad-vākyato dharmā itītarāḥ sthito
na manyate tasya nivāraṇaṁ janaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

You have created a great disturbance by teaching a s condemned subject to people attached to material enjoyment in order to make them accept *dharmā*. Thinking that what you have taught is real *dharmā*, they do not consider giving it up.

COMMENTARY

“I wrote the Mahābhārata and other works so that people could hear the glories of the Lord, but I have first presented material happiness in these works in order to promote scriptures to materialistic persons who do not want *bhakti*. But that is not my real intention. The proof is Vidura’s words:

*munir vivakṣur bhagavad-guṇānām sakhāpi te bhāratam āha kṛṣṇaḥ |
yasminn nṛṇām grāmya-sukhānuvādair matir gṛhītān hareḥ kathāyām ||*

O sage! Your friend Vedavyāsa desiring to describe the qualities of the Lord, wrote *Mahābhārata*. In that work he attracted men's attention to topics of the Lord through topics about material happiness. SB 3.5.12

That is true. As Vidura said, in order to make people accept worship of the Lord (*dharmā-kṛte*) you have taught what is condemned, *karma* (*jugupsitaṁ*). A great disturbance has come about for materialistic people who are attached to enjoy from impressions arising for sense objects (*svabhāva-raktasya*) because you have taught material *dharmā*. But though your intention was to help them, you have actually injured them. How? Because materially minded men (*prākṛtaḥ*) ascertaining what you explained to be the correct path (*dharmā iti*)—thinking that it is not a fault to offer meat to the *devatās* and *pitṛs*, do not consider giving up that path, and do not consider what is actually to be done: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. They think that this statement is not part of the path you have outlined for enjoyment. Bhaṭṭa has said the following in relation to a different topic:

*tatraivaṁ śakyate vaktuṁ ye'nye paṅgv-ādayo narāḥ |
gṛhasthatvaṁ na śakyante kartuṁ teṣām ayaṁ vidhiḥ ||
naiṣṭhika-brahmacaryaṁ vā parivrājakatāthavā |
tair avaśyaṁ gṛhītavyā tenādāv etad ucyate ||*

It should be said that this instruction is for those who cannot follow household life such as disabled persons. Such persons only must take vows of permanent *brahmacarya* or *sannyāsa*. Thus this is explained in the beginning.

|| 1.5.16 ||

*vicakṣaṇo 'syārhati vedituṃ vibhor
ananta-pārasya nivṛttitaḥ sukham |
pravartamānasya guṇair anātmanas
tato bhavān darśaya ceṣṭitaṃ vibhoḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The wise person, giving up material happiness, can realize the happiness of the Lord who is beyond measure and then take to *bhakti*, setting an example for others. Describe the pastimes of the Lord for those materialists who are pushed by the *guṇas* of matter.

COMMENTARY

Please condemn other paths and describe the glories of the Lord only!

It was said in the previous verse that the people devoid of proper discrimination (*itarah janah*) were certain that you recommended the material path. Now, those people who have discernment (*vicakṣaṇah*) can understand the happiness of the Lord, giving up material pleasure (*nivṛttitaḥ*), since the Lord is beyond time (*ananta-pārasya*) and measurement whereas material pleasure is very limited. Understanding that the happiness of the Lord is unlimited, he will perform *bhakti* for attaining that happiness. By seeing the preference of the discerning person for *bhakti* the undiscerning person will also take up the process. *Yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah*: whatever actions the superior person performs others will follow. (BG 3.21) For this reason (*tataḥ*) describe those pastimes of the Lord. Show the pastimes of the Lord in order to liberate those who are devoid of discrimination (*anātmanah*), pushed by the *guṇas* of material nature. O Lord! This address to the Lord implies: “This is possible because that even such a person, giving up all else and performing pure *bhakti* will attain your bliss.”

Or the verse has another meaning. “But if the people do not think of giving up their path, even now if I follow your instruction and preach *bhakti* with rejection of all else, they will reject this scripture.” No, it is not so. In this world not all people are undiscerning. Discerning people do exist (*vicakṣaṇah*) and they can understand the happiness of the Lord who is devoid of an end by time (*ananta-pārasya*) -- who is even now existing (*pra + vartamānasya*). Things which are temporary can be measured. He has a body without material *guṇas* (*guṇaiḥ anātmanah*), a body of eternity, knowledge and bliss — which is not possible to measure.

|| 1.5.17 ||

*tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi |*

*yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kiṁ
ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

If a person having given up his duties in *varṇāśrama*, begins the worship of the Lord's lotus feet, and happens to deviate or not reach perfection, there is no misfortune for him at all in the future. But what does the person who follows all duties of *varṇāśrama* but does not worship the Lord gain?

COMMENTARY

“But *Bhagavad-gītā* says:

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām |
yojayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran ||*

The wise man should not disturb the intelligence of the ignorant attached to results of work. Engaging in all work himself with detachment, he should engage them in activity. BG 3.26

Thus it is forbidden to give up *karma*.”

That is true. This instruction is given to one who is teaching *jñāna* to another person. Practicing *jñāna* depends on inner purification, and that purification depends on *niṣkāma-karma*. This is not an instruction for one teaching another person about *bhakti*, for *bhakti* is independently powerful, not depending on prior inner purification. Lord Ajita says:

*svayaṁ niḥśreyasaṁ vidvān na vakty ajñāya karma hi |
na rāti rogiṇo 'pathyaṁ vāñchato 'pi bhiṣaktamaḥ ||*

One who knows the highest good will never instruct a foolish person to engage in material enjoyment, just as an experienced physician gives his patient eat food injurious to his health, even if the patient desires it. SB 6.9.50

Therefore the Lord says *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja* (BG 18.66) and as well:

dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ

Having taken complete shelter at My lotus feet, however, a saintly person ultimately renounces such ordinary religious duties and worships Me alone. He is thus considered to be the best among all living entities. SB 11.11.32

From the strength of these statements one should teach only *bhakti* to the Lord,

while giving up attachment to daily and periodic duties in *varṇāśrama*. With this intention the verse is spoken.

Even in the beginning stage of *bhakti*, practice of *karma* is forbidden. Having given up ones *dharma* (*tyaktvā svadharmān*) even at the beginning stages of *bhakti*, a person who worships the lotus feet of the Lord will incur no sin by giving up that *dharma*. This is understood also from the following:

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

Anyone who has taken shelter at the lotus feet of Mukunda, the giver of liberation, giving up all kinds of obligation, and has taken to the path in all seriousness, owes neither duties nor obligations to the demigods, sages, general living entities, family members, humankind or forefathers. SB 11.5.41

And if the person dies without being qualified to attain the Lord, or (*vā*), if while alive falls down because of sinful acts, being attached to material pleasures, even then, there is no misfortune incurred by having given up *karmas*, because the impressions created by *bhakti* are indestructible, and remain in subtle form. In such a state one should not revert to performance of *karma*. Is there any misfortune somewhere (*yatra kva*), in his next life? No there is no misfortune at all. *Vā* indicates a remote possibility of falling. It is stated as a concession to the opponent (*tusyatu durjana nyāya*). His falling after leaving the present body is actually not a fall—one does not take a low body because of omitting *karmas*. This is shown by the following statement of the Lord:

*na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyaṅ nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ*

O Uddhava! Because I have personally established it, this process of *niṣkāma-bhakti* is beyond the *guṇas*. Even by starting and not completing the process, there is no destruction of results. SB 11.29.20

This is because certainly the sprout of *bhakti*, being productive, will eventually bear leaves, flowers and fruit. Instead of the present or future verb, the past tense is used (*abhūt*). This implies a criticism of all those who object (by showing that the fact is already proven). And what is gained from performing all of one's *karmas* (*sva-dharmataḥ*) by persons who do not worship the Lord (*abhajatām*).

|| 1.5.18 ||

*tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad bhramatām upary adhaḥ |
tal labhyate duḥkhavad anyataḥ sukham*

kālena sarvatra gabhīra-ramhasā ||

TRANSLATION

The wise man strives for that happiness which is not attained by *jīvas* wandering from Brahma-loka to the lowest species. Material happiness is attained in all cases without endeavor, by the law of *karma*, just like distress, through the force of fast moving time.

COMMENTARY

“But the *śrutis* say *karmanā pitṛ-loka*: by *karma* one goes to Pitṛ-loka (*Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.5); and *apām somam amṛtā abhūma*: we drank *soma* and became immortal. (*Ṛg Veda* 8.48.3) These encourage people to seek happiness of Svarga in the next life. The mercantile people encourage others to seek happiness in this life. How can one promote *bhakti* for people by rejecting one’s *dharma* and consequently the happiness in this and next life?

True, but the wise are not deluded by this at all. That is expressed in this verse. A person with discrimination (*kovidah*) should endeavor for that cause which is not attained by the *jīvas* wandering up to Brahma-loka or down to non-moving bodies. But there material happiness is attained without endeavor (*anyatah*), due to ancient *karmas*, even being born as pigs or being born in hell, just as distress is also attained without endeavor (*duḥkhavat*). It is said:

aprārthitāni duḥkhāni yathaivāyānti dehinām |
sukhāny api tathā manye dainyam atrātiricyate ||

Just as one does not pray for misery, and it nevertheless comes to all creatures, in the same way happiness predominates over suffering.

|| 1.5.19 ||

na vai jano jātu kathañcanāvrajen
mukunda-sevy anyavad aṅga saṁsṛtim |
smaran mukundāṅghry-upagūhanam punar
vihātum icchen na rasa-graho janaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Oh! The person who serves Mukunda will never under any condition return to the material world, unlike practitioners of other processes. Remembering the embrace of the Lord’s lotus feet, eager for that taste he has experienced, he will not desire to give up those feet again.

COMMENTARY

This verse elaborates the point that there is no misfortune for the devotee. Even if overcome because of poor determination, the person who serves Mukunda (*neverna jātu*), returns to *saṁsāra*, the place for enjoying the results of *karma*,

whereas those practicing *karma* (*anyavat*) return. That is because he does not experience happiness and distress from *karmas*, since he experiences only the fruit of happiness and distress directly given by the Lord.

tvad avagamī na vetti bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor

When a person realizes You, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is You alone who control this good and bad fortune. SB 10.87.40

Na karma-bandhanam janma vaiṣṇavānām ca vidyate

The Vaiṣṇavas do not have rebirth caused by *karma*. *Padma Purāṇa*

Remembering from previous practice alone the mental embrace (*upagūhanam*) of the Lord's lotus feet, he has no desire to give that up. The verse does not say "remembering his lotus feet" but rather "remembering the embrace of his lotus feet." And the word "again" is used. The implication of these two words is that even though he may give up by his own choice the worship, once, twice or three times because of poor determination, after some time, by remembering his previous state of bliss from remembering the Lord and also remembering his present state of distress from not remembering the Lord, he repents. "Oh! Oh! What have I foolishly done? Let that be. I will not again abandon worship of Lord." He again begins worshipping the Lord.

The verse also uses the phrase "does not desire to give up" instead of "does not give up." This implies that he desires that he be devoid of pride in his practice. The accomplishment is in the hands of the Lord. The cause of not desiring to give up is then mentioned. *Rasa-graha* means one who is eager for tasting, or one who has a taste which is something like a ghost which cannot be given up, "haunted by *rasa*." The meaning is then that worship after the stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āsakti*, becomes actual *rasa* at the stage of *rati*. However, even from the first day of worshipping the Lord, there is certainly a portion of tasting *rasa* in a very covered form. Thus it is said:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things-these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, in the same way that pleasure, fullness of the stomach and relief from hunger are experienced simultaneously, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating. SB 11.2.42

*idaṁ hi viśvaṁ bhagavān ivetaro
yato jagat-sthāna-nirodha-sambhavāḥ |
tad dhi svayaṁ veda bhavāms tathāpi te
prādeśa-mātram bhavataḥ pradarsitam ||*

TRANSLATION

This universe is the Lord but the Lord is also different from the universe for from him arises the maintenance, destruction and creation of the universe. You know this naturally since you are an *avatāra* of the Lord. Thus I have shown to you a small portion of *bhakti* and knowledge concerning the Lord's power.

COMMENTARY

Having taught about *bhakti*, now Nārada teaches about knowledge of the worshippable Lord which is necessary for the devotees. This universe is like the Lord: it exists, has life, and a form of bliss, but it is not the Lord's form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. This is because the Lord's qualities like existence are eternal, whereas the universes quality of existence is temporary, because the Lord is different from the universe (*itarah*). How is the Lord like the universe and also different from it? From the Lord, who is the possessor of *māyā-śakti*, arises the maintenance, destruction and creation of the universe. The universe is described as a form of the Lord in small portion (like the Lord), because it is an effect of the Lord. Because the Lord is the cause, he is different. Because *brahman* is the cause, the universe is also designated as *brahman* in the *śruti*: *sarvam khalv idam brahma*: this universe is *brahman*. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1) You know all this spontaneously (*svayam*) because you are an *avatāra* of the Lord. Thus I have shown only a small portion, ten fingers (*prādeśa-mātram*) of *bhakti* and knowledge of the powers of the Lord who measures more than ten million times a hundred trillion, in order to fulfill the statement *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*: one who has a teacher knows. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.14.2) *Amara-kośa* says *prādeśa-tāla-gokarṇās tarjany-ādi-yute tate*: *prādeśa*, *tāla* and *gokarṇa* mean a measure from the thumb to the end of the forefinger.

|| 1.5.21 ||

*tvam ātmanātmānam avehy amogha-drk
parasya puṁsaḥ paramātmānaḥ kalām |
ajam prajātam jagataḥ śivāya tan
mahānubhāvābhyudayo 'dhigaṇyatām ||*

TRANSLATION

You possess useful knowledge! Please understand spontaneously that you were born as a portion of the supreme person, the *paramātmā*, for the benefit of the world. Therefore please describe the glories of the all powerful Lord.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains how Vyāsa knows spontaneously. O person with useful

knowledge (*amogha-dṛk*)! Therefore (*tat*) please describe (*gaṇyatām*) more fully (*adhikam*) the most auspicious glories (*abhyudayaḥ*) of the mighty Lord (*mahānubhāva*)

|| 1.5.22 ||

*idaṁ hi puṁsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā
sviṣṭasya sūktasya ca buddhi-dattayoḥ |
avicyuto 'rthaḥ kavibhir nirūpito
yad-uttamaśloka-guṇānuvarṇanam ||*

TRANSLATION

The unfailing cause of perfection from men's austerity, study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, chanting of *mantras*, practicing *jñāna* and giving charity is defined by the wise as glorifying the qualities of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

I have said that one becomes successful by *bhakti*, after giving up all *dharmas*. Now, if some devotee has some desire for some *dharmas*, those *dharmas* will be produced by *bhakti*. That is now explained. The unfailing cause (*avicyutaḥ arthaḥ*) of men's austerity and the other items of *dharma* has been described to be narrating the qualities of the Lord. Medinī says:

*artha viṣayānarthayor dhana-kāraṇa-vastuni |
abhidheye ca śabdānām nivṛttau ca prayojane ||*

Artha means an object of the senses, obstacle, wealth, cause, thing, meaning of a word, prevention and goal.

The results of austerity and other acts are achieved by *bhakti* according to the statement of the Lord and thus what is their necessity?

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api
sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargam mad-dhāma kathaṅcid yadi vāñchati*

Everything that can be achieved by karma, penance, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, mystic yoga, charity, *dharma* and all other auspicious means of perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through *bhakti*. If somehow or other my devotee desires Svarga, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.32-33

*smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit |
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ ||*

One should always remember Viṣṇu and never forget Him. All injunctions and prohibitions are dependent on these two principles. *Padma Purāṇa*

According to this, all *dharmas* are unnecessary. Or another meaning is because performance of *bhakti* to the Lord is the conclusion of all the scriptural statements recommending austerity, studying the Vedas etc., chanting the Lord's name is the unmistakably mentioned process. And in his commentary on the Lord's words *dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ* (SB 11.14.3) Madhusūdana Sarasvatī says that the purport of all scriptural statements is the Supreme Lord.

|| 1.5.23 ||

*aham purātīta-bhave 'bhavam mune
dāsyās tu kasyāścana veda-vādinām |
nirūpito bālaka eva yoginām
śuśrūṣaṇe prāvṛṣi nirvivikṣatām ||*

TRANSLATION

In another *kalpa* of Brahmā in a previous life, I was born as the son of a maidservant engaged by some persons studying the Vedas. Though a child, I was also engaged in serving them during the monsoon season when they decided to stay in one place.

COMMENTARY

There is no cause for pure *bhakti* other than the fortunate mercy of the devotees of the Lord. Austerity and other processes are not the cause. To illustrate this Nārada recounts a previous birth. In a previous *kalpa* (day of Brahmā) in a previous birth (*atīta-bhave*) I was born from a maid servant of some studiers of the Vedas. I was engaged (*nirūpitaḥ*) in serving those persons having *bhakti-yoga* and who desired to stay in one place (*nirvivikṣatām*) during the rainy season. That they also practiced *bhakti-yoga* is understood later from the following verse:

*tatrānvaham kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ pragāyatām anugraheṇāśṛṇavam manoharāḥ
tāḥ śraddhayā me 'nupadam viśṛṇvataḥ priyaśravasy aṅga mamābhavad ruciḥ*

O Vyāsadeva, in that association and by the mercy of those great Vedāntists, I could hear them describe the attractive activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And thus listening attentively, my taste for hearing of the Personality of Godhead increased at every step. SB 1.5.26

|| 1.5.24 ||

*te mayy apetākhila-cāpale 'rbhake
dānte 'dhṛta-kṛīdanake 'nuvartini |
cakruḥ kṛpām yadyapi tulya-darśanāḥ
śuśrūṣamāṇe munayo 'lpa-bhāṣiṇi |*

TRANSLATION

Though the sages saw everything equally, they showed mercy to me, by which I, though a boy, developed sense control, gave up child's play and all agitation, became obedient, served attentively, and spoke little.

COMMENTARY

Nārada had controlled senses (*dānte*), had given up childish play (*adhṛta-kṛīḍanake*). Those sages saw equally good-tempered and bad-tempered, those who are praiseworthy and those who are to be criticized, those who have good conduct and those who are sinful (*tulya-darśanāḥ*), and thus they should not show mercy to one and reject in disgust another. However, they showed mercy to me. Though great devotees such as Bharata and Prahlāda see equally, they also show some partiality concerning giving mercy. Their first show of mercy did not depend on Nārada's good qualities and show of respect. He developed the good qualities by their mercy. Then those qualities became the cause of further mercy. It must be explained that the cause of their mercy was not due to seeing qualities. If one says that though they had equal vision, they showed mercy because he showed good qualities, then their equal vision would be contradicted by their seeing good and bad qualities. One should not explain in this way because then the first mercy would be prejudiced.

There are two types of mercy; affected by seeing material qualities and not affected by seeing material qualities. The first type of mercy is explained as follows. All persons in the material world have mercy caused by qualities. If they see qualities they show mercy, if the qualities are absent, they withdraw mercy. And if they see bad qualities, they show hatred. The second type of mercy is as follows. Those who are beyond the influence of material world show mercy without such causes, without dependence on seeing material qualities, since they see everything in the material world as the same.

Śukadeva has said:

*girayo mumucus toyam kvacin na mumucuḥ śivam
yathā jñānāmṛtaṁ kale jñānino dadate na vā*

During this season the mountains sometimes released their pure water and sometimes did not, just as experts in transcendental science sometimes give the nectar of transcendental knowledge and sometimes do not. SB 10.20.36

In this manner sometimes these persons show mercy to some person. When hardness of the heart caused by *guṇas* is destroyed and becomes soft by devotion to the Lord, mercy will appear in the heart.

*śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā prema-sūryāmśu-sāmya-bhāk |
rucibhiś citta-māsṛṇya-kṛd asau bhāva ucyate ||*

That part of *bhakti* is called *bhāva*, whose essence is *saṁvit* and *hlādinī śakti*, which is one ray of the sun of *prema* which will soon rise in the heart, and which softens the heart with desires to meet, serve, and exchange love with the Lord. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.3.1

The first four stages of *bhakti* are understood here: mercy of the devotees, service to devotees, faith, and taking shelter of *guru*.

|| 1.5.25 ||

*ucchiṣṭa-lepān anumodito dvijaiḥ
sakṛt sma bhuñje tad-apāsta-kilbiṣaḥ |
evaṁ pravṛttasya viśuddha-cetasas
tad-dharma evātma-ruciḥ prajāyate ||*

TRANSLATION

One time only I happened to eat their food remnants with their permission. All obstacles to *bhakti* disappeared by that. Having developed an inclination for *bhakti*, being pure in mind, taste for devotional processes inevitably developed in my mind.

COMMENTARY

After getting permission from them to do so, I ate one time some rice stuck to one of their dishes. By that all obstacles to *bhakti* were destroyed (*tad-apāsta-kilbiṣaḥ*). Having taken their food, I developed without effort *bhakti* in the form of hearing, chanting and remembering the Lord continually. Having developed a tendency for *bhakti* after eating the devotees' food (*evaṁ pravṛttasya*), which applies to anyone else as well, I inevitably developed a taste (*ruciḥ prajāyate*) for hearing and chanting (*tad-dharme*) in the mind (*ātma*). By this verse five stages of *bhakti* should be understood: desire for worship (*sṛṅhā*), *bhakti*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā* and *ruci*.¹⁹

|| 1.5.26 ||

*tatrānvaham kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ pragāyatām
anugraheṇāśṛṇavam manoharāḥ |
tāḥ śraddhayā me 'nupadam viśṛṇvataḥ
priyaśravasy aṅga mamābhavad ruciḥ²⁰ ||*

TRANSLATION

By the mercy of the sages who were chanting about the attractive pastimes of Kṛṣṇa daily, I heard about Kṛṣṇa in that place with *āsakti*. Hearing constantly, I then developed *rati* for Kṛṣṇa.

¹⁹ These five stages and the four stages mentioned in the previous commentary are listed first in the commentary on 1.2.21.

²⁰ Viswanath favors the reading “*ratiḥ*” and quotes it that way in *Mādhurya-kādambiné* 8.12 and elsewhere.

COMMENTARY

Śraddha here indicates the tenth stage *āsakti*. At every moment or at hearing every word, I developed *rati* (*bhāva*) for Kṛṣṇa, whose qualities are pleasing to hear (*priya-śravasi*). *Ruci* should here mean *rati*, the eleventh stage, since the stage of *ruci* has already been mentioned in the previous verse.

|| 1.5.27 ||

*tasmimś tadā labdha-rucer mahā-mate
priyaśravasy askhalitā matir mama |
yayāham etat sad-asat sva-māyayā
paśye mayi brahmaṇi kalpitaṁ pare ||*

TRANSLATION

Having attained an excellent taste for the Lord, my intelligence did not waver from the Lord. By my intelligence, I directly experienced that my gross and subtle bodies created by the Lord's material energy were fixed only in the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

Having attained an excellent taste, my intelligence became steadily fixed in the Lord. By that intelligence I saw the gross and subtle body (*sad-asat*) existing in me by the influence of the Lord's material energy to be established in Kṛṣṇa (*brahmaṇi*). The gross body became fixed in offering respects, carrying the Lord's water pot and other actions, not in material actions for oneself. The subtle body with senses such as ear, eye, mind and intelligence became fixed in tasting the sweetness of the lord's qualities and form, not in material objects for one's own pleasure. Previously the eye and mind were not fixed in the Lord even by exerting much effort. That is not the case now. With the development of *rati*, the mind and other senses, giving up the practice of fixing themselves on their material sense objects to which they had been long accustomed, became automatically fixed only on the Lord. Thus "I see" here means "directly experience."

|| 1.5.28 ||

*itthaṁ śarat-prāvṛṣikāv ṛtū harer
viśṛṇvato me 'nusavaṁ yaśo 'malam |
saṅkīrtiyamānaṁ munibhir mahātmabhir
bhaktiḥ pravṛttātma-rajas-tamopahā ||*

TRANSLATION

In this way, for the two seasons of monsoon and autumn, I constantly heard the pure glories of the Lord chanted by the generous sages. I then developed *prema*, which destroys *rajas* and *tamas* in the *jīvas*.

COMMENTARY

Extending over two seasons (four months) I heard constantly (*anusavam*). *Premā* (*bhaktiḥ*) which destroys (*apahā*) *rajas* and *tamas* in all *jīvas* (*ātma*) then appeared. It is implied here that there was destruction of *rajas* and *tamas* in others as well who realized devotion to the Lord. This is the twelfth stage of *bhakti*. Direct vision of the Lord and the experience of sweetness will be explained in the next chapter.

|| 1.5.29-30 ||

tasyaivam me 'nuraktasya praśritasya hatainasah |
śraddadhānasya bālasya dāntasyānucarasya ca ||
jñānam guhyatamaṁ yat tat sākṣād bhagavatoditam |
anvavocan gamiṣyantaḥ kṛpayā dīna-vatsalāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Though I was a boy, I had developed *prema* for the Lord. I was humble, sinless, filled with faith, sense-controlled, and was willing to serve. The sages, most affectionate to the fallen, as they were about to depart, taught me the most confidential knowledge of pure *bhakti*, which was taught by the Lord himself.

COMMENTARY

They gave knowledge to me who had developed *prema-bhakti* for the Lord (*tasya evam anuraktasya*). This knowledge was revealed directly by the Lord, son of Devakī (*bhagavatoditam*). *Jñāna-śāstra* has a prevalence of monistic *jñāna*. Confidential scripture (*śāstra-guhyam*) consists of a predominance of *jñāna* mixed with some *bhakti*. More confidential scripture (*śāstra-guhyataram*) is that which predominantly *bhakti* with a little mixture of *jñāna*. Most confidential scripture (*śāstra-guhyatamaṁ*) is pure *bhakti*, which was given to Uddhava and Brahmā in the *Bhāgavatam* and to Arjuna in the *Gītā* by the Lord. Contemplating that they would depart the next day (*gamiṣyantaḥ*), the sages taught (*anvavocan*) him the most confidential knowledge, pure *bhakti*.

|| 1.5.31 ||

yenaivāhaṁ bhagavato vāsudevasya vedhasaḥ |
māyānubhāvam avidaṁ yena gacchanti tat-padam ||

TRANSLATION

By this knowledge I understood the influence of the spiritual and material energies of the creator Lord Vāsudeva. By this understanding the devotees attain the Lord's abode.

COMMENTARY

By this knowledge of *Bhāgavatam*, I understood the influence or effect of the Lord's *cit-śakti*, the *kṛpa-śakti*, the *acit-śakti* of three *guṇas*, and the influence of the knowledge of the Lord's powers and sweetness (*māyānubhāvam*).

*triguṇātmikātha jñānam ca viṣṇu-śaktis tathaiva ca |
māyā-śabdena bhāṇyate śabda-tattvārtha-vedibhir ||*

Those who know the true meaning of words say that *māyā* means what is made of the three *guṇas* of matter, knowledge and the *śakti* of Viṣṇu. *Śabda-mahodadhi*

Nirghaṇṭu says *māyā ca vayunam jñānam*: *māyā* means knowledge. *Trikāṇḍa-śeṣa* of the *Amara-koṣa* says *māyā syāc chamberī-buddhyor*: *māyā* means a maidservant of Śambara and intelligence. *Viśva-koṣa* says *māyā dambhe kṛpāyām ca*: *māyā* means deceit and mercy. The Lord is endowed with his eternal *śakti* arising from his *svarūpa*, which is called *māyā*. In a commentary, Madhva quotes the following *śruti* text:

*svarūpa-bhūtayā nitya-śaktyā māyākhyayā yutaḥ
ato māyā-mayam viṣṇum pravādanti sanātanam*

They call the eternal Viṣṇu *māyā-mayam*, because he is endowed with his eternal *śakti* arising from his *svarūpa*, which is called *māyā*.

Later in the *Bhāgavatam* the word *māyā* may mean *cit-śakti*, *acit-śakti*, knowledge or mercy according to the context.

|| 1.5.32 ||

*etat saṁsūcitam brahmaṁs tāpa-traya-cikitsitam |
yad īśvare bhagavati karma brahmaṇi bhāvitam ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhman*! They indirectly explained the destruction of the three types of miseries, in which actions are offered to Paramātmā, Bhagavān and the impersonal *brahman*.

COMMENTARY

Having had me practice *bhakti* beyond the modes of nature, and experience *prema*, and taught the *Bhāgavatam* which was spoken by the Lord, who is the direct speaker of *bhakti*, they taught me the process of *jñāna* which gives rise to knowledge and the goal of liberation, even though I did not request it. Considering that the question of *jñāna* may arise when the boy grows older, they then taught me *jñāna* indirectly for the purpose of developing indifference to the world. That is explained in this verse.

Since it was not my goal they spoke indirectly about it (*saṁsūcitam*). What did they speak about? They explained the remedy for, or destruction of, the three miseries in which actions are offered (*bhāvitam*) to the Paramātmā (*īśvare*), to Bhagavān with six opulences or to the impersonal *brahman*.

|| 1.5.33 ||

*āmayo yaś ca bhūtānām jāyate yena suvrata |
tad eva hy āmayam dravyam na punāti cikitsitam ||*

TRANSLATION

The substance by which a living being's disease arises and which does not cure the disease, when combined with other substances in a medicine, destroys the disease.

COMMENTARY

“How can *karma*, the cause of *samsāra*, destroy the three miseries?” In two verses, examples are given to show that by different combinations, the destruction can occur. That ghee or some other substance which causes disease (*āmayah*) when infused (*cikitsitam*) with medicines (*dravyam*) does not protect the disease (*na punāti*), but destroys the disease. The word *na punāti* (it does not purify) here means “it does not protect.”

|| 1.5.34 ||

*evam nṛṇām kriyā-yogāḥ sarve samsṛti-hetavaḥ |
ta evātma-vināśāya kalpante kalpitāḥ pare ||*

TRANSLATION

In the same way, all types of *karma-yoga* performed by men, which are normally causes of continued rebirth in this world, are able to destroy *karma* when offered to the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY

All the actions in *karma-yoga* (*kriyā-yogāḥ*) - daily duties, duties to fulfill specific desires, periodic duties, and desireless duties - when offered to the Supreme Lord become capable of destroying *karma* (*ātma-vināśāya*).

|| 1.5.35 ||

*yad atra kriyate karma bhagavat-paritoṣaṇam |
jñānam yat tad adhīnam hi bhakti-yoga-samanvitam ||*

TRANSLATION

That *jñāna* which arises from *karma*, which is pleasing to the Lord because of being offered to him, is endowed with *bhakti*.

COMMENTARY

That *karma* which is offered to the Lord is a *sādhana* of *jñāna*, because it causes purification to the level of *sattva-guṇa*. That knowledge generated from (*tad-*

adhīnam) *karma* which is without desire and which is pleasing to the Lord because of being offering to the Lord, is endowed with *bhakti*, since *jñāna* devoid of *bhakti* will not yield liberation. Such *jñāna* is condemned in many places:

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam*

Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the Infallible [God]. SB 1.5.12

|| 1.5.36 ||

*kurvāṇā yatra karmāṇī bhagavac-chikṣayāsakṛt |
gṛṇanti guṇa-nāmāni kṛṣṇasyānusmaranti ca ||*

TRANSLATION

When those engaged in *karma* continuously perform those activities according to the instruction of the Lord, they also chant and remember the qualities and names of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

It has just been said that by *karma-yoga* mixed with *bhakti* (*bhakti-miśra-karma*) one achieves *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti*, which aims at liberation. Now it is said that sometimes, some people, who practice *niṣkāma-karma* mixed with *bhakti*, can develop *bhakti* mixed with *karma* (*karma-miśra-bhakti*) by association with devotees having *karma-miśra-bhakti*.

When persons in *karma-yoga* perform actions according to the lord's instructions, by unexpected association of devotees, some perform *bhakti* consisting of chanting and remembering. The instruction of the Lord is:

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat |
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam ||*

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever austerity you perform, offer it to Me, O son of Kuntī. BG 9.27

It is not befitting to explain this teaching of the Lord to be directed to the *karma-yogī* since this verse falls in the section on *bhakti*. The *karma-yogī* offers only Vedic *karmas* to the Lord in order that the results will come to him. The devotees however, understanding that their very selves belong only to the Lord, take Vedic, mundane, and daily duties, which are impelled by the Lord, and offer them all completely to the Lord. There is a great difference between these two persons. This is how the *Gītā* verse is explained by Śrī Rāmānujācārya. This is indicated by including the phrase “whatever you eat.” Because of the use of the present tense in

the verb *kurvāṇāḥ* (while doing *karmas* according to the Lord's instructions) and because the main verb (chanting and remembering) indicates that they simultaneously perform *bhakti*, the whole sentence refers to *bhakti* as the principle action mixed with *karma*. By *karma-miśra-bhakti* one achieves *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*. From that one achieves *rati* for the Lord along with liberation. This is called *śānta-bhakti*. This is understood from the following verse:

*ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

Some sages who are *ātmārāmas*, beyond the scriptures, false ego and rules, also practice unmotivated, pure *bhakti* to the master of pure *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa, since he possesses qualities attractive to even them. SB 1.7.10

|| 1.5.37 ||

*om namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ vāsudevāya dhīmahi |
pradyumnāyāniruddhāya namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca ||*

TRANSLATION

I offer respects to you, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. Let us respect Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa (Balarāma) in our minds.

COMMENTARY

It has been explained that both *jñāna* and *karma* without *bhakti* are condemned completely (SB 1.5.12). It has also been said in three verses (SB 1.5.17-19) that pure *bhakti* beyond the *guṇas* is the supreme process. The whole process from the first appearance of pure *bhakti* to its increase up to *prema* has also been described in six verses (SB 1.5.23-28). Then according to qualification, *bhakti-miśra-jñāna* was permitted (SB 1.5.35), and *karma-miśra-bhakti* was mentioned as superior to that (SB 1.5.36). Now in two verses, desiring to teach his personal *mantra* received from the *gurus*, Nārada first creates faith in those *mantras*. This is according to the statement *brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya guravo guhyam apy uta*: the *gurus* should speak the secret to the disciple who has affection for the *gurus*. (SB 1.1.8)

This *mantra* has thirty-three syllables. Its *devatā* is *bhagavān*, who consists of four forms. By placing the members out of order, one can understand that this is a listing of the members of Kṛṣṇa's *caturvyūha* rather than the one in Vaikuṅṭha (Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa's son and grandson), with his son Pradyumna and his grandson Aniruddha placed next to Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) Or this the order of persons mentioned in the *mantra* can be taken as a statement of creation (Pradyumna), maintenance (Aniruddha) and destruction (Saṅkarṣaṇa). Let us meditate upon offering respects (*namo dhīmahi*). This means let us offer respects in the mind.

|| 1.5.38 ||

*iti mūrty-abhidhānena mantra-mūrtim amūrtikam |
yajate yajña-puruṣam sa samyag darśanaḥ pumān ||*

TRANSLATION

Using this *mantra* indicating the four forms, one worships the deity who is the subject of the *dhyāna-mantra*, the Lord worthy of worship. That person is worthy of being seen.

COMMENTARY

One worships using the four names indicating the four forms starting with Vāsudeva. One should worship the Lord, who is the subject of the *dhyāna-mantra* (*mantra-mūrtim*), with the sixteen items of worship while uttering *vāsudevāya namaḥ* etc. according to the rules of Pañcarātra. By chanting the *mantra*, the deity makes his appearance. Or *mantra-mūrti* can mean the deity whose body is the *mantra*. That Lord does not have a material form (*amūrtikam*). *Amūrtikam* can also mean that the Lord who is not hard, but rather soft with mercy. *Amara-kosa* says *mūrtiḥ kāṭhinya-kāyayor: mūrti* means hard and body. *Yajña-puruṣam* means “the Lord who should be worshipped.” He is pleasant to behold (*samyag-darśanaḥ*). This means that when others see that worshipper, they become successful. Or *darśanaḥ* can mean knowledge. One who worships the lord has complete knowledge. Or *darśanaḥ* can mean “by which something is seen.” That means scripture which denotes *bhakti*, such as the Pañcarātra, which is most wholesome (*samyak*), because it is satisfying to the soul. One who worships the Lord possesses the complete scriptural conclusion. This does not refer to scriptures devoid of *bhakti*, which are not wholesome but deficient.

*bhavatānudita-prāyaṁ yaśo bhagavato ’malam |
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta manye tad darśanam khilam ||*

You have not sufficiently described the glories of the spotless Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because your mind could never be satisfied with Vedānta, I think that writing the *Vedānta-sūtras* is insufficient. SB 1.5.8

This means “Though you wrote the *Vedānta-darśana*, your mind is not satisfied completely, but I became fully satisfied in mind by writing the Pañcarātra.”

|| 1.5.39 ||

*imaṁ sva-nigamaṁ brahmann avetya mad-anuṣṭhitam |
adān me jñānam aiśvaryaṁ svasmin bhāvaṁ ca keśavaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! The Lord, knowing that I had undertaken the highest instructions given by him, gave me realization of himself, then powerful *siddhis*, and finally *prema* for him.

COMMENTARY

Sva-nigamam (*nigama*—going within) means instructions given by the Lord, given in his own confidential version of the Vedas (*Pañcarātra*). First the Lord gave realization of Himself (*jñānam*). Then he gave powers, such as *añima* and other *siddhis*. Then knowing that I was unattached to those powers, the Lord gave me great *prema* for him (*svasmin bhāvam adāt*). The intelligent persons can understand that then Vyāsa prayed to Nārada, “Please teach me this *mantra*” and then learned this same *mantra*.

|| 1.5.40 ||

*tvam apy adabhra-śruta viśrutam vibhoḥ
samāpyate yena vidām bubhutsitam |
prākhyāhi duḥkhair muhur arditātmanām
saṅkleśa-nirvāṇam uśanti nānyathā ||*

O omniscient Vyāsa! Explain the glories of Kṛṣṇa, by which the curiosity of persons already having so much knowledge will be satisfied. The wise do not consider that there is any other way to destroy the afflictions of the *jīvas* tormented by suffering.

COMMENTARY

O knower of many scriptures (*adabhra-śruta*)! O omniscient one! Please relate the glories (*viśrutam*) of the Lord. By understanding them, the desire of the knowers who want to know will be satisfied. This means that those who become devoted solely to these confidential scriptures which have the sweet taste of the lord’s glories will not have a desire for *jñāna*. Those with intelligence do not consider that the calamity of the *jīvas* afflicted by suffering can be removed by any other means.

Chapter Six

Nārada Achieves Perfection

|| 1.6.1 ||

*sūta uvāca—
evam niśamya bhagavān devarṣer janma karma ca |
bhūyaḥ papraccha taṁ brahman vyāsaḥ satyavatī-sutaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said:

O brāhmaṇa Śaunaka! The powerful Vyāsa, son of Satyavatī, after hearing about Nārada’s birth and activities, again asked him questions.

COMMENTARY

In the sixth chapter, Nārada describes how he went to the forest to see the Lord and hearing his words, later received a spiritual body.

|| 1.6.2 ||

vyāsa uvāca—

*bhikṣubhir vipravasite vijñānādeṣṭṛbhis tava |
vartamāno vayasy ādye tataḥ kim akarod bhavān ||*

TRANSLATION

Vyāsa said:

When the mendicants who had taught you that knowledge departed, being of young age, what did you do?

COMMENTARY

Vipravasite means “departing from there.” Lack of *samprasāraṇa* (*viproṣite*) is poetic license.

Since I am your disciple, I desire to know. Therefore I am asking

|| 1.6.3 ||

*svāyambhuva kayā vṛttyā vartitaṁ te param vayah |
kathaṁ cedam udasrākṣiḥ kāle prāpte kalevaram ||*

TRANSLATION

Son of Brahmā! How did you spend the rest of your life? In what manner did you give up that body as the son of the maidservant at the time of death?

COMMENTARY

Idam kalevaram (this body) refers to the body born from the maidservant. How did you give up that body?

|| 1.6.4 ||

*prāk-kalpa-viṣayām etāṁ smṛtiṁ te muni-sattama |
na hy eṣa vyavadhāt kāla eṣa sarva-nirākṛtiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Time destroys everything. Why did time not destroy your memories from some previous day of Brahmā?

COMMENTARY

Na vyavadhāta means “did not separate” but the implication is “time did not separate you from the memory, and did not destroy the memory.” *Vyavadhāt*

without the augment “a” (vyavādhāt) is poetic license. *Nirākṛtiḥ* means destruction.

|| 1.6.5 ||

*nārada uvāca—
bhikṣubhir vipravasite vijñānādeṣṭṛbhir mama |
vartamāno vayasī ādye tata etad akāraṣam ||*

TRANSLATION

Nārada said :

When the mendicant teachers who had given me knowledge left, even though I was of young age, I did as they instructed.

COMMENTARY

The verb form *akāraṣam* instead of *akārṣam* is for meter. It is said *mūrdha-rephāri-kalpyante chando-bhaṅga-bhayād iha*: for fear of disrupting the meter, cerebral consonants and “r” are separated.

|| 1.6.6 ||

*ekātmajā me janānī yoṣin mūdhā ca kiṅkarī |
mayy ātmaje ’nanya-gatau cakre snehānubandhanam ||*

TRANSLATION

My mother, a woman, uneducated, a menial servant, had only me as a son. She therefore had great affection for me, her only shelter.

COMMENTARY

She had only one son - myself (*ekātmajā*).

|| 1.6.7 ||

*sāsvatantrā na kalpāsīd yoga-kṣemaṁ mamecchatī |
īśasya hi vaśe loko yoṣā dārumayī yathā ||*

TRANSLATION

Because she was dependent, though she wanted to protect me she could not do so. Just as a puppet master controls a female puppet, the Lord controls all people.

COMMENTARY

Because she was dependent on others, she could not (*na kalpā*) protect me.

|| 1.6.8 ||

*aham ca tad-brahma-kule uṣivāms tad-apekṣayā²¹ |
dig-deśa-kālavyutpanno bālakaḥ pañca-hāyanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Only five years old, inexperienced with time, place and direction, I lived in a *brāhmaṇa* house, with the belief that she would never leave me.

COMMENTARY

Tad-apekṣayā means “with the expectation that she would not give me up.”

|| 1.6.9 ||

*ekadā nirgatām gehād duhantīm niśi gām pathi |
sarpo 'daśat padā sprṣtaḥ kṛpaṇām kāla-coditaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

One time, a snake, impelled by time, touched by her foot, bit my poor mother who had gone from the house to milk the cow at night and was walking along the path.

COMMENTARY

Duhantīm means “to milk.”

|| 1.6.10 ||

*tadā tad aham īsasya bhaktānām śam abhīpsataḥ |
anugrahaṁ manyamānaḥ prātiṣṭhaṁ diśam uttarām ||*

TRANSLATION

Considering that her death was the mercy of the Lord who is concerned for the welfare of his devotees, I departed immediately for the north.

COMMENTARY

Considering the death of my mother (*tat*) as the mercy of the Lord, I departed (*prātiṣṭhaṁ*) to the north. He did so without performing her funeral rites. Use of *parasmaipadam* verb is poetic license.

|| 1.6.11 ||

*sphītāñ janapadāms tatra pura-grāma-vrajākarān |
kheṭa-kharvaṭa-vāṭīś ca vanāny upavanāni ca ||*

TRANSLATION

I passed through large populated areas, capitals, *brāhmaṇa* villages, cowherd villages, mines, farms, villages on mountain sides, gardens of flowers and betel,

²¹ Some versions have *upekṣayā*.

wild groves and plantations.

COMMENTARY

Four verses are connected together with the following general structure; leaving behind the inhabited areas, I continued walking, and saw a large forest. *Pura* means capital cities. According to Bhṛgu:

*viprās ca vipra-bhṛtyās ca yatra caiva vasanti te |
sa tu grāma iti proktaḥ śūdrāṇām vāsa eva ca ||*

That place where *brāhmaṇas* and their servants live is called *grāma*. It also refers to a living place of *śūdras*.

Vraja means cow sheds. *Ākarān* means mines, from which jewels are dug. *Kheta* means farming village. *Kharvaṭa* means villages on the sides of mountains. Or Bhṛgu says:

*ekato yatra tu grāmo nagaram caikataḥ sthitam |
miśram tu kharvaṭam nāma nadī-giri-samāśrayam ||*

When villages and towns situated on rivers or mountains become mixed together as one it is called *kharvaṭa*.

Vāṭiḥ means gardens of flowers and betel. *Vanāni* refers to groups of trees growing together by themselves. *Upavanāni* refers to groups of trees which were planted.

|| 1.6.12-13 ||

*citra-dhātu-vicitrādrīn ibha-bhagna-bhuja-drumān
jalāśayāñ chiva-jalān nalinīḥ sura-sevitāḥ
citra-svanaiḥ patra-rathair vibhramad bhramara-śriyaḥ*

*nala-veṇu-śara-stamba-kuśa-kīcaka-gahvaram
eka evātiyāto 'ham adrākṣam vipinam mahat
ghoram pratibhayākāram vyālolūka-śivājiram*

TRANSLATION

Passing by mountains colored with gold and silver, trees with branches broken by elephants, pools with fresh water, and lakes used by the *devatās*, beautified by bees wandering about, awakened by the sounds of birds; all alone, I saw a huge, repulsive, fearsome forest dense with reeds, cane, clumps of *śara* grass, *kuśa* grass and hollow bamboo which was the playground for snakes, owls and jackals.

COMMENTARY

There were mountains resplendent with silver and gold and trees whose branches were broken by elephants. There were ponds with auspicious water and lakes (*naliṇīḥ*). What type of lakes were they? The lakes were beautified with bees wandering here and there roused by the sounds of birds (*patra-rathaiḥ*). The grammatical sense of these verses is “Passing all these towns and lakes, I saw a dense forest.” *Stamba* means clumps of grass. *Amara-koṣa* explains *veṇavaḥ kīcakās te sūrye svananty aniloddhatā: kīcaka* is hollow bamboo which makes noise when blown by the wind. *Ghoram* means repulsive because of its fearsome form. It was the playground (*ajīram*) of snakes, owls and jackals. I did not have surprise or fear in seeing those surprising and fearsome things, because my mind was absorbed in tasting the sweetness of the Lord at that time.

|| 1.6.14 ||

pariśrāntendriyātmāhaṁ tṛṭ-parīto bubhukṣitaḥ |
snātvā pītvā hrade nadyā upa sprṣṭo gata-śramaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Senses and body exhausted, thirsty and hungry, after bathing in a pool of a river, I performed *ācamana* and took rest.

|| 1.6.15 ||

tasmin nirmanuje ’raṇye pippalopastha āśritaḥ²² |
ātmanātmānam ātmasthaṁ yathā-śrutam acintayam ||

TRANSLATION

In that desolate forest, sitting at the base of a *pippala* tree, I concentrated by using my intelligence on Paramātmā situated within my mind, as I had been taught.

COMMENTARY

Sitting (*āśritaḥ*) at the base of an *aśvattha* tree (*pippalopasthe*), in the manner I had heard from the mendicants (*yathā śrutam*), not surpassing the meditation using the *mantra* given, using my intelligence (*ātmanā*), I contemplated Paramātmā (*ātmānam*) who was situated in my mind, and who resided there permanently because I had developed *prema*.

|| 1.6.16 ||

dhyāyataś caraṇāmbhojaṁ bhāva-nirjita-cetasā |
autkaṇṭhyāśru-kalākṣasya hṛdy āsīn me śanair hariḥ ||

TRANSLATION

As I meditated on the lotus feet of the Lord with a mind conquered by *prema*,

²² ‘āsthitaù’ iti mūla-ōēkayoù kvacit pāōhau |

with tears in my eyes from longing, step by step the Lord made his appearance in my mind.

COMMENTARY

As I meditated in the mind (*hṛdi*) with the mind (*cetasā*) conquered by *prema* (*bhāva-nirjita*), the Lord step by step made his appearance before me (*āsīt*). Or *śanaiḥ* (gradually) can mean that first he appeared in the heart, and then he appeared in the three functions of the mind—nose, ear and eye, so that I could experience the fragrance of his body, the sound of his ankle bells and the beauty of his face. What happened to me? I had tears in my eyes because of longing.

|| 1.6.17 ||

premātibhara-nirbhinna- pulakāṅgo 'tinirvṛtaḥ |
ānanda-samplave līno nāpaśyam ubhayam mune ||

TRANSLATION

My limbs covered in distinct goose bumps out of excessive *prema*, filled with delight, I fainted out of bliss, and could not see myself or the Lord.

COMMENTARY

His limbs were covered with distinct goose bumps because of the excessive *prema*. This indicates that all his limbs developed the symptoms of *prema* at that time. The phrase can also mean that he was covered with goose bumps erupting so much that the *prema* was difficult to bear. He then fainted out of bliss (*ānanda-samplave līnaḥ*). I did not see myself or the Lord (*ubhayam*).

|| 1.6.18 ||

rūpaṁ bhagavato yat tan manaḥ-kāntaṁ śucāpahaṁ |
apaśyan sahasottasthe²³ vaiklavyād durmanā iva ||

TRANSLATION

Suddenly not seeing the attractive form of the Lord which destroys all lamentation, I became agitated from the sorrow of separation. I became despondent like someone who has lost a treasure.

COMMENTARY

Suddenly not seeing the Lord, I became roused. Like a man who has lost a treasure, I became despondent (*durmanā*).

|| 1.6.19 ||

didṛkṣus tad ahaṁ bhūyaḥ praṇidhāya mano hṛdi |
vīkṣamāṇo 'pi nāpaśyam avitṛpta ivāturaḥ ||

²³ 'uttasthau' ity api pāḥau kvacit tathāpy ātmanepadapāḥa eva yuktau |

TRANSLATION

Desiring to see that form again, I fixed my mind in the heart. Though I looked intently, I did not see that form. Dissatisfied, I became like a diseased person.

COMMENTARY

Praṇidhāya means “having fixed.”

|| 1.6.20 ||

*evaṁ yatantaṁ vijane mām āhāgocarō girām |
gambhīra-ślakṣṇayā vācā śucaḥ praśamayann iva ||*

TRANSLATION

As I endeavored to see him in that lonely place the Lord, inexpressible by words, then spoke to me with affectionate words, which removed my grief.

COMMENTARY

The Lord is beyond the description of words (*girām agocaraḥ*) as stated by the *śruti*: *yato vāco nivartante*: the Lord, from whom words return without attaining him. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.4.1) The Lord who cannot be approached by words spoke to me. I had an experience of his sweet sounding words by my ears. Because Nārada had *bhakti* arising from *vaidhi-sādhana*, he had realization of the sweetness of the Lord’s fragrance, beauty and speech in his present body. The complete experience with all other types of sweetness (touch, taste etc.), would be experienced in the future in his spiritual body (*siddha-deha*). By this (his sweet words), the Lord removed all types of lamentation and suffering which had arisen by not seeing Him. The word *iva* (somewhat) is used because his love in longing, caused by separation, had not been fully satisfied.

|| 1.6.21 ||

*hantāsmiṁ janmani bhavān mā mām draṣṭum ihārhati |
avipakva-kaṣāyāṇām durdarśo ’haṁ kuyoginām ||*

TRANSLATION

Oh! In this body you will not be able to see me again. But lax practitioners who still have some contamination cannot see me at all.

COMMENTARY

What did he say? Oh! (*hanta*) This is an address made out of affection. In this birth, having the body of a practitioner, you cannot see me. I am invisible (*durdarśaḥ*) to those faulty practitioners of *yoga* (*kuyoginām*) whose contaminations such as lust have not been burned up.²⁴ The intention here is to say “But I showed myself to you. Therefore you are not a faulty practitioner.”

²⁴ Jéva Gosvāmé mentions that some persons purify themselves, but remain with *sattva-guṇa*, and thus are attached to living in the forest.

|| 1.6.22 ||

*sakṛd yad darśitam rūpam etat kāmāya te 'nagha |
mat-kāmaḥ śanakaiḥ sādhu sarvān muñcati hṛc-chayān ||*

TRANSLATION

O sinless Nārada! I showed myself once to produce a desire in you to see me. The devotee so desiring me gradually becomes freed of all material desires.

COMMENTARY

“But just show yourself once more to me!”

Seeing me only once, not many times, is enough to produce desire for me (*kāmāya*). By only slight increase in longing, *prema* will not develop to the state of youthfulness in a person having somewhat weak *prema*. My rule is that I show myself one time only to a person practicing in his present body (in his *sādhaka-deha*) who has developed *prema*. The infant state of *prema* in the *sādhaka's* body matures to a youthful state in the *siddha-deha* by an increase of *prema* arising from longing in separation. That youthful *prema* allows the devotee to see me constantly and serve me directly. I alone, and not my devotee, know the process of fulfilling the desires of my devotee. You, who simply desire me (*mat-kāmaḥ*), even without having seen me, will become free from all desires for material enjoyment (*hṛccayān*). This statement does not actually apply to Nārada since he did not have any material desires, being at the level of *prema* already. But saying this, the Lord shows the nature of devotion. Additionally by saying this, the Lord increases the humility of Nārada.

|| 1.6.23 ||

*sat-sevayādīrghayāpi jātā mayi dṛḍhā matiḥ |
hitvāvadyam imam lokam gantā maj-janatām asi ||*

TRANSLATION

By serving the devotees for even a short time, your intelligence became firmly fixed in me. When you give up this body of low birth, you will become my associate.

COMMENTARY

By serving the devotees for even a short time (*adīrghayā*) you developed strong intelligence in me. Giving up the low body (*avadyam lokam*), you will become my associate (*maj-janatām*).

|| 1.6.24 ||

matir mayi nibaddheyam na vipadyeta karhicit |

prajā-sarga-nirodhe 'pi smṛtiś ca mad-anugrahāt ||

TRANSLATION

Your intelligence being absorbed in me will never be destroyed. Even at the time of creation and destruction of the living entities, by my mercy, your memory of the previous *kalpa* will not be destroyed.

COMMENTARY

Your concentration on me will not perish because it has been fixed upon me by *prema*. Because I am eternal, the remembrance of me is also eternal.

|| 1.6.25 ||

*etāvad uktevopararāma tan mahad
bhūtaṁ nabho-liṅgam alīṅgam īśvaram |
ahaṁ ca tasmai mahatām mahīyase
śiṛṣṇāvanāmaṁ vidadhe 'nukampitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Having spoken this, the Lord, whose words are the highest proof, whose words appeared in the sky, who was not visible to the eyes, and who was capable of bestowing mercy to the most fallen boy, the Lord stopped speaking. Receiving his mercy, I lowered my head to greatest of the great.

COMMENTARY

Mahad-bhutam is a name of the Lord in the neuter gender. The *śruti* says *asya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad yad ṛg-veda*: the breathing of the Lord called *Mahadbhūta* is the Ṛg-veda. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka upaniṣad*) Since his breathing is the four Vedas, his words are the highest proof. Since he gave blessings even to me, the low born son of a maid servant, he is called the one Supreme Lord (*īśvaram*—*one who is capable*). Since the lord left a trace in the ether in the form of his speaking to Nārada, he is called (*nabho-liṅgam*). He is called *alīṅgam* because he is not visible to the eyes.

|| 1.6.26 ||

*nāmāny anantasya hata-trapaḥ paṭhan
guhyāni bhadraṇi kṛtāni ca smaran |
gām paryaṭams tuṣṭa-manā gata-sprḥaḥ
kālam pratikṣan vimado vimatsaraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Giving up shyness, I began to chant the names of the unlimited Lord, and to remember his most excellent, hidden pastimes. I wandered the earth with satisfied mind, without material desires, without pride or selfishness, waiting for that time.

COMMENTARY

Kṛtāni refers to the Lord's pastimes. *Kālam pratīkṣan* (expecting the time) means "When will that time come when I will become an associate of the Lord?" I had no pride or selfishness since I always thought "Who is more fallen than I?"

|| 1.6.27 ||

evam kṛṣṇa-mater brahman nāsaktasyāmalātmanaḥ |
kālaḥ prādurabhūt kāle tadit saudāmanī yathā ||

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa* Vyāsa! Concentrating only on Kṛṣṇa, not attached to material enjoyment and pure in mind, the time of receiving my spiritual body occurred simultaneously with that of giving up my material body, like lightning flashing simultaneously with lightning.

COMMENTARY

At the time of dissolving my subtle and gross bodies (*kāle*), the time (*kālaḥ*) that I was waiting for expectantly for a long time made its appearance. That is the meaning. It is like saying "The time when the king went was the time he arrived." It is said that the intelligence, even when identified with the Lord completely, being non-different, still has the ability to make distinctions. But this case was different. Intelligence could not make a distinction. Suddenly the two times (disappearance of the material body and attainment of the spiritual body) simultaneously made their appearance, connected closely like subject and predicate. An example is given. It is like the simultaneity of lightning with another flash of lightning. Just as sometimes lightning appears at the same time as another flash of lightning, similarly at the exact time of giving up my material body, the time of receiving my spiritual body as an associate also occurred.

|| 1.6.28 ||

prayujyamāne mayi tām śuddhām bhāgavatīm tanum |
ārabdha-karma-nirvāṇo nyapatat pāñca-bhautikaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Having been awarded a transcendental body befitting an associate of the Lord, the body made of five material elements, with *karmas* relating to the present body, fell away.

COMMENTARY

The Lord previously promised *hitvāvadyam imam lokam gantā maj-janatām asi:* giving up this low body you will become my associate. (SB 1.6.23) At the time of being made to accept a body which was *śuddha-sattva* (*śuddhām*) because it was not a material body and because it belonged to the Lord (*bhāgavatīm*), my material body (*pāñca-bhautikaḥ*) fell away. Giving up my material body and attaining a

spiritual body were simultaneous, like the expression “I am walking while the cows are being milked.” The Lord’s own words were *hitvāvadyam imam lokam*. The use of the verb form *hitvā* (giving up the material body) in this case indicates simultaneously giving up the material body while receiving the spiritual body. It is said:

*kvacit tulya-kāle 'pi upaviśya bhunkte ṛṇat-kṛtya patati cakṣuḥ sammīlya
hasati mukham vyādāya svapitīty ādikam upasaṅkhyeyam*

There are examples in which the participles indicate simultaneous actions as in sitting down and eating, assuming debts and falling from esteem, closing the eyes and laughing, lowering the head and falling asleep. *Bhāṣā-vṛtti*

Śrīdhara Svāmī says *anena pārṣada-tanūnām akarmārabdhatvaṁ śuddhatvaṁ nityatvaṁ ity ādi sūcitam bhavati*: what is said in this verse is that the bodies of the associates of the Lord are pure, without *prārabdha-karmas*, and eternal. The *bahuvrīhi* compound *ārabdha-karma-nirvāṇaḥ* means that he had destroyed the *karmas* like fire burning wood. But this means that the *prārabdha-karmas* were not destroyed just now, but previously for that is accomplished by *sādhana*. *Prārabdha-karmas* do not remain with the devotees who have developed *prema-bhakti*. For those practicing pure *bhakti*, destruction of *prārabdha-karmas* takes place during *sādhana-bhakti*. It will be said in the story of Priyavrata:

*naivam-vidhaḥ puruṣa-kāra urukramasya puṁsām tad-aṅghri-ajasā jita-ṣaḍ-
guṇānām
citram vidūra-vigataḥ sakṛd ādadīta yan-nāmadheyam adhunā sa jahāti
tanvam*

Such power is not surprising from persons who have conquered the six senses by the dust from the lotus feet of the Lord, since even an outcaste becomes immediately free of bondage of *karma* by chanting the Lord's name once. SB 5.1.35

Here is the meaning of the verse. This is not so amazing for such a type of person. What should be amazing? Even an outcaste (*vidūra-vigataḥ*) who chants the name of the Lord once, now, at the time of accepting the name, gives up his body (*tanvam*). Since we do not see anyone giving up their body simultaneously with chanting, “body” here means his *prārabdha-karmas* which are being experienced in the present body. This is the opinion of some. Others say by the association of *bhakti*, like a touchstone, the body made of the three *guṇas* becomes free of the *guṇas*, as seen in the case of Dhruva. Thus, giving up the body means giving the body made of three *guṇas*. This will be explained later at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance with *jahur guṇa-mayam deham sadyaḥ prakṣiṇa-bandhanāḥ*: free of bondage, those *gopīs* abandoned their gross material bodies made of *guṇas*. (SB 10.29.11)

But others say that sometimes the Lord shows devotees, literally, giving up their

bodies in order that the opinion of others not be negated. Thus Nārada, who had developed *prema* already, gave up his body. However it should be understood that he had already destroyed his *prārabdha-karmas* during his practice of *bhakti*. Śrī-Rūpa Gosvāmī explains this:

yad brahma-sākṣāt-kr̥ti-niṣṭhayāpi vināśam āyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ |
apaiti nāma sphuraṇena tat te prārabdha-karmeti virauti vedaiḥ ||

The Vedas declare that although meditation on impersonal Brahman cannot bring freedom from past *karma*, O Holy Name, your appearance at once makes all *prārabdha-karma* disappear. *Nāmāṣṭaka* 4

If the intended meaning was “when Nārada’s *prārabdha-karmas*, were destroyed, his body fell away” the phrase would expressed as *prārabdha-karma-nirvāṇe nyapatat pāñcabhautika*. But this grammatical structure has not been used and instead a *bahuvrīhi* compound has been used. Thus the meaning is a general statement “for the devotees, the body which has had its *prārabdha-karmas* destroyed will fall away.”

|| 1.6.29 ||

kalpānta idam ādāya śayāne ’mbhasy udanvataḥ |
śisayiṣor anuprāṇam viviṣe ’ntar aham vibhoḥ ||

TRANSLATION

At the end of the *kalpa* when Brahmā withdrew the universe with his breathing, I entered into Brahmā who desired to sleep in Nārāyaṇa, who was lying in the water of the only ocean.

COMMENTARY

“If you have an eternal body, then why are you known to be born from Brahmā in this Svāyambhuva-*manvantara*? It is said *utsaṅgān nārado jajñe*: Nārada was born from the deliberation of Brahmā, which is the best part of the body. (SB 3.12.23)”

That is true. Just as the Lord for his particular pastimes enters the womb of Devakī, from the pastimes of being the son of Brahmā, at the end of the previous *kalpa* (Brahmā’s previous day), I entered the body of Brahmā. When Brahmā withdrew the three worlds (*idam ādāya*), I entered along with his breathing into Brahmā who desired to go to sleep in Nārāyaṇa (*śayāne*), who was sleeping in the water of the only ocean (*udantavaḥ*).

tato ’vatīrya viśvātmā deham āviśya cakriṇaḥ |
avāpa vaiṣṇavīm nidrām ekībhūyātha viṣṇunā ||

Having appeared, Brahmā, entering the body of Viṣṇu, becoming one with Viṣṇu, then went into Viṣṇu’s spiritual sleep. *Kūrma Purāṇa*

Another version has *svāyane* instead of *śayāne*. This means “in his controller, who is the water.” The expression equates Nārāyaṇa with the water, because he is non-different from it.

|| 1.6.30 ||

*sahasra-yuga-paryante utthāyedaṁ sisṛkṣataḥ |
marīci-miśrā ṛṣayaḥ prāṇebhyo 'haṁ ca jajñire ||*

TRANSLATION

At the end of thousand *yuga* cycles, Brahmā awoke and Marīci, other sages and I appeared from the senses of Brahmā, who desired to create the universe again.

COMMENTARY

At the end of thousand *yuga* cycles means “at the end of the previous *kalpa* and the beginning of this *kalpa*.” Marīci and other sages (*marīci-miśrā*) and I were born from the senses of Brahmā.²⁵ *Jajñire* instead of *jajñimaha* is poetic license.

|| 1.6.31 ||

*antar bahiś ca lokāṁs trīn paryemy askandita-vrataḥ |
anugrahān mahā-viṣṇor avighāta-gatiḥ kvacit ||*

TRANSLATION

With continuous worship of the Lord, by the grace of Mahā-viṣṇu, I travel outside and inside the universe with no obstacles at all.

COMMENTARY

I am not like Marīci and other sages with material bodies, under the influence of their own *karmas*, involved in *karma-yoga*, nor like the Kumāras, involved in *jñāna*. I am above the paths of material engagement and renunciation; I worship the Lord, and exist independently. This is expressed in this verse. Those who are *karma-yogīs* do not go beyond the universe. Those who have attained *brahman* by very difficult austerities do not go into the material universe out of fear of the bondage of *karma*. But I, fixed in continuous devotion to the Lord, travel outside and inside the universe. Or outside can mean “I travel outside the universe to Vaikuṅṭha.” Thus it is said:

*sanakādyā nivṛttākhye te ca dharme niyojitāḥ |
pravṛttākhye marīcādyā muktaikāṁ nāradaṁ munim ||*

The Kumāras are on the path of detachment and Marīci and others are engaged in the path of material life. Only Nārada is liberated. *Narasimha Purāṇa*

²⁵ Jéva Gosvāmé explains that their birth is actually awakening from sleep only. Nārada has an eternal body, but sometimes special *jévas* take the form of Nārada as well.

|| 1.6.32 ||

*deva-dattām imām vīṇām svara-brahma-vibhūṣitām |
mūrcchayitvā hari-kathām gāyamānaś carāmy aham ||*

TRANSLATION

Playing *mūrcchanas* and *ālāpas* on the *vīṇa* given by the Lord, using the seven sacred notes of the scale, I wander about singing the glories of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Nārada's paraphernalia, not available to any other person in the material world, is also constantly with him at all times wherever he goes. That is explained in two verses. The *vīṇa* was given by Kṛṣṇa. This is narrated in the *Liṅga Purāṇa*. *Svara* refers to the seven notes of the scale. Because they manifest *brahman* (the Lord) they are called *brahma* (*svara-brahma*). *Mūrcchayitvā* means that he played music filled with *mūrcchana*, *ālāpa* and other expressive modes.

|| 1.6.33 ||

*pragāyataḥ sva-vīryāṇi tīrtha-pādaḥ priya-śravāḥ |
āhūta iva me śīghram darśanam yāti cetasi ||*

TRANSLATION

When I sing his glories, the Lord who makes any place that he touches holy, and who is attracted to those who sing his glories, quickly appears in my heart, as if being called.

COMMENTARY

Priya-śravāḥ means that Kṛṣṇa goes wherever his glories are sung, since he is attracted to that.²⁶ *Tīrtha-pāda* means that wherever the Lord goes becomes a holy place. The Lord actually is controlled by *bhakti*, and thus appears without being called. Therefore the verse says that he comes as if being called.

|| 1.6.34 ||

*etad dhy ātura-cittānām mātrā-sparśecchayā muhuḥ |
bhava-sindhu-plavo dṛṣṭo hari-caryānuvarṇanam ||*

TRANSLATION

For persons whose minds are constantly afflicted with desires for enjoyment of sense objects, I have directly experienced that singing the glories of the Lord is the boat for crossing material existence.

COMMENTARY

²⁶ Jéva Gosvāmé explains that he is attracted not for his own glorification, but to give mercy to those devotees.

This verse summarizes the topic being discussed. For those whose minds are afflicted by the desire for enjoyment (*sparśa*) of sense objects (*mātrā*), which is an ocean, the boat (*bhava-sindhu-plavaḥ*) for crossing that ocean is praising the Lord's activities. I have directly seen (experienced) that (*dṛṣtaḥ*). There is no proof necessary. Because *kīrtana* is the main *aṅga* out of many *aṅgas* of *bhakti*, it is mentioned. However the statement should mean that all *aṅgas* of *bhakti* will be effective.

|| 1.6.35 ||

*yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat tathātmāddhā na sām्यati*

TRANSLATION

The *ātmā* constantly afflicted by lust and greed will not be satisfied by *aṣṭaṅga-yoga* and other paths as much as by direct service to Mukunda.

COMMENTARY

Though it is ascertained that the state of *bhakti* is real liberation, *yoga* and *jñana* mixed with *bhakti* will not pacify the *ātmā* as much as pure *bhakti*. *Ātmā* is not pacified by *yoga* (*yoga-pathaiḥ*) as much as by serving Mukunda directly (*addhā*). It is established that *yoga* and other processes without *bhakti* are futile

*pureha bhūman bahavo 'pi yoginas tvad-arpitehā nija-karma-labdhayā
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā prapedire 'ñjo 'cyuta te gatim parām*

O almighty Lord, in the past many *yogīs* in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode. SB 10.14.5

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śasvad abhadram īsvara na cārpitam karma yad apy akāraṇam*

Even the stage of *jñana* without the bondage of *karma* is not glorious if it is devoid of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What then to speak of *sakāma-karma* which causes suffering, both, during practice and at the stage perfection, and *niṣkāma-karma*, when not offered to the Lord? SB 1.5.12

Therefore this verse must only refer to *yoga* and other processes mixed with *bhakti*, since they otherwise would give no results at all. And even if these processes pacify the *ātmā* to some extent, they do not pacify it to the extent that

pure *bhakti* alone - serving Mukunda without these processes - does. These mixed processes will not satisfy *ātmā* completely:

*bhavatānudita-prāyaṃ yaśo bhagavato 'malam
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta manye tad darśanaṃ khilam*

You have not sufficiently described the glories of the spotless Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because your mind could never be satisfied with Vedānta, I think that writing the Vedānta-sūtras is insufficient. SB 1.5.8

Though *bhakti* is described later as a means of liberation, three types of *bhakti* are seen: pure *bhakti* (*kevala*), mixed *bhakti* but with *bhakti* being predominant (*prādhānya*) and mixed *bhakti* but with *bhakti* being secondary (*guṇa-bhāva*). *Kevala-bhakti* is illustrated in verses such as *tyaktvā sva-dharmam* (SB 1.5.17) and *ahaṃ purātīta-bhava* (SB 1.5.23). *Prādhānya-bhakti* is illustrated in the following:

*kurvāṇā yatra karmāṇi bhagavac-chikṣayāsakṛt
gṛṇanti guṇa-nāmāni kṛṣṇasyānusmaranti ca*

When those engaged in *karma* continuously perform those activities according to the instruction of the Lord, they also chant and remember the qualities and names of Kṛṣṇa. SB 1.5.36

Guṇa-bhāva-bhakti is illustrated as follows:

*yad atra kriyate karma bhagavat-paritoṣaṇam
jñānaṃ yat tad adhīnaṃ hi bhakti-yoga-samanvitam*

That *jñāna* which arises from *karma* which is pleasing to the Lord because of being offered to him is endowed with *bhakti*. SB 1.5.35

Kevala-bhakti, practiced by a person who is *niṣkāma*, also called as *ananya-bhakti*, *śuddha-bhakti*, *nirguṇa-bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti* and *akiñcana-bhakti*, gives *prema* as a result. *Prādhānya-bhakti*, classified as *karma-miśra-bhakti*, *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*, and *yoga-miśra-bhakti* and practiced by those who are *śānta*, produces *rati* (*bhāva*) and liberation for some. If one of these persons gets the association of a person with *dāsyā-bhāva* or other sentiments, because of the predominance of *bhakti* desiring *dāsyā* or other sentiments, that person will achieve *prema* from that *dāsyā* or other *bhāva* with a prominence of reverential (*aiśvarya*) mood. In *guṇa-bhāva-bhakti*, *bhakti* does not reveal its own results and name. It is only an assistant of *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* which cannot produce results without *bhakti*'s presence. *Bhakti* in this case is only secondary (*taṭashta*). *Bhakti-miśra-karma*, *bhakti-miśra-jñāna* and *bhakti-miśra-yoga* produce liberation. Thus in this scripture, only two types of *bhakti* are accepted: *kevala* and *pradhānībhūtā*. All this Nārada instructed to Vyāsa, who explains this in the Twelfth Canto.

|| 1.6.36 ||

*sarvaṁ tad idam ākhyātaṁ yat pṛṣṭo 'haṁ tvayānagha |
janma-karma-rahasyaṁ me bhavataś cātma-toṣaṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

O sinless Vyāsa! I have explained all this, confidential knowledge about my birth and activities about which you have asked so that your mind will be satisfied.

COMMENTARY

Sarvaṁ here refers to the appearance of Nārada's *bhakti*, its types, growth and result; the activities of the devotee; destruction of *prārabdha-karma*; how the devotee leaves his body; achieving a spiritual body without *karmas*. It is called secret (*rahasyam*) because it is not understood by those who study Vedānta.

|| 1.6.37 ||

*sūta uvāca
evaṁ sambhāṣya bhagavān nārado vāsavī-sutam |
āmantrya vīṇāṁ raṇayan yayau yādṛcchiko muniḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Nārada, freely moving without material motive, having spoken to Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, and taking leave, departed while taking pleasure in his *vīṇa*.

COMMENTARY

Āmantrya means taking leave. *Yādṛcchikaḥ* means that Nārada moves about without a motive. *Bhakti* is also *yādṛcchikī*, and so is the devotee. Giving association to Vyāsa is also *yādṛcchika*. Long live these three types of causelessness concerning devotion.

|| 1.6.38 ||

*aho devarṣir dhanyo 'yaṁ yat-kīrtiṁ śārṅgadhanvanah |
gāyan mādyann idaṁ tantryā ramayaty āturaṁ jagat ||*

TRANSLATION

Oh! Nārada is most fortunate because, singing and rejoicing in the glories of Kṛṣṇa with his *vīṇa*, he gives bliss to the suffering world.

COMMENTARY

This verse reveals astonishment. *Tantryā* means “with the *vīṇa*.”

Chapter Seven
Punishment of Aśvatthāmā

|| 1.7.1 ||

śaunaka uvāca
nirgate nārade sūta bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ |
śrutavāms tad-abhipretaṁ tataḥ kim akarod vibhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: O Sūta! When Nārada departed, what did the powerful Vyāsa do, having heard the advice of Nārada?

COMMENTARY

In the seventh chapter Vyāsa sees the meaning of all scriptures while in trance. The withdrawal of the *brahmāstra* and the punishment of Aśvatthāmā are also told.

|| 1.7.2 ||

sūta uvāca
brahma-nadyām sarasvatyām āśramaḥ paścime taṭe |
śamyāprāsa iti prokta ṛṣiṇām satra-varḍhanaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: There is a hermitage for sages called Śamyāprāsa, favorable for many sacrifices, situated on the west bank of the Sarasvatī River where *brāhmaṇas* take shelter.

COMMENTARY

Brahma-nadyām can mean river of the Vedas, of the *brāhmaṇas*, of austerity, of the Lord. *Amara-koṣa* says *vedas tattvaṁ tapo brahma brahmā vipraḥ prajāpatiḥ*: the word *brahma* can mean Veda, truth, austerity, the *brahman*, Lord Brahmā, a *brāhmaṇa*, and a progenitor.

|| 1.7.3 ||

tasmin sva āśrame vyāso badarī-ṣaṇḍa-maṇḍite |
āsīno 'pa upaspr̥ṣya praṇidadhyau manaḥ svayam ||

TRANSLATION

In his hermitage surrounded by a grove of *badari* trees Vyāsa sat down,

performed *ācamana*, and began to reflect using his mind.

COMMENTARY

Nārada had instructed Vyāsa to remember the pastimes of the Lord continually in *samādhi* (SB 1.5.13). Thus he sat and concentrated using his mind.

|| 1.7.4 ||

*bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male |
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam ||*

TRANSLATION

In that mind which was undisturbed because it was pure from the performance of *bhakti*, he saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, complete with all his energies and spiritual expansions, and also saw *māyā* who took shelter behind the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Praṇihite means “without movement.” The cause was that the mind was purified by *bhakti* (*bhakti-yogena amale*). He saw the perfect form of the *puruṣa*. This means Kṛṣṇa, because it will later be said *kṛṣṇe parama-puruṣe* (SB 1.7.7). Instead of *pūrṇam*, *pūrvam* is also seen. *Pūrvam* means “I alone existed in the beginning.” This confirms the Lord as the supreme person as mentioned in Vedic texts. The word *pūrṇam* indicates the *cit-śakti* arising from his *svarūpa* and all his *aśas* and *kalās*. Thus Vyāsa saw the *brahman* in its full form. If a person says that he saw the full moon it means that a person saw the moon’s fullness with all phases of the moon. But he did not see the external energy *māyā* which has opposite qualities. Thus *māyā* is mentioned separately with the words *māyāṁ ca*. This energy took shelter behind (*apāśrayam*) the Lord, since this is described later with the following:

*vilajjamānayā yasya sthātum īkṣā-pathe 'muyā
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyaḥ*

The ignorant *jīvas*, bewildered by *māyā* who is ashamed to stand in sight of the Lord, boast about "I" and "mine." 2.5.13

|| 1.7.5 ||

*yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam |
paro 'pi manute 'narthaṁ tat-kṛtaṁ cābhipadyate ||*

TRANSLATION

Bewildered by that *māyā*, the *jīva*, though separate from the three *guṇas*, considers himself made of the three *guṇas* and takes on material existence created by the *guṇas*.

COMMENTARY

In order to describe the sweetness of the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes, one needs to see the Lord. But what was the purpose of Vyāsa's seeing *māyā*? This verse explains. How can the *jīva* afflicted by the material disease naturally taste the sweetness which is necessary for beginning to learn *Bhāgavatam*? There can be no prescription for cure without first seeing the disease. Without that how can the patient be treated with proper medicine and food? Thus it is necessary to see both *māyā* and the *jīva*. Bewildered by the covering and bewildering potencies of *māyā* upon his *svarūpa*, the *jīva*, though separate from the three *guṇas*, thinks himself made of matter, and accepts material existence (*anartham*) – a body - created by that identification.

|| 1.7.6 ||

anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje |
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś cakre sātvata-saṁhitām ||

TRANSLATION

And Vyāsa saw *bhakti-yoga* to the Lord which effectively destroys *jīva*'s *saṁsāra*. Learned Vyāsa then wrote the *Bhāgavatam* for ignorant people.

COMMENTARY

He also saw the medicine for that disease. He saw *bhakti-yoga* which destroys material existence. One should understand the stages in seeing it. First he saw the Lord. By the use of the word *pūrṇa*, it should be understood that Vyāsa saw the Lord with his *aṁśas*, the *puruṣa* and *guṇāvatāras*. Without his *aṁśas* how can the Lord be considered complete? *Pūrṇa* means complete. Thus Vyāsa saw the complete form of the Lord. He saw his *cit-śakti* with many varieties such as *Vimalā* and *Utkarṣiṇī* which are manifestations of his beauty. He then saw the external energy *māyā-śakti* behind the Lord. He saw in the Lord, *bhakti* - the chief element of the *cit-śakti* – which is more powerful than all others and which can destroy the illusion caused by *māyā* and which arises from the actions of his *anugrahā-śakti* (mercy), and which controls even the Lord. Having seen all this, he then wrote the Vaiṣṇava scripture called *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, which reveals all of this for the ignorant people.

īśaḥ svatantraś cit-sindhuḥ sarva-vyāpyaika eva hi |
jīvo 'dhīnaś cit-kaṇo 'pi svopādhir vyāpi-śaktikaḥ ||
aneko 'vidyayopāttas tyaktāvidyo 'pi karhicit |
māyā tv acit-pradhānam cāvidyāvidyeti sā tridhā ||

The Lord is independent, an ocean of consciousness, and all-pervading. The *jīva* is dependent, a particle of consciousness, subject to mistaking his identity and pervasive with limitation. They are many in number, are covered with ignorance, and sometimes have ignorance removed. *Māyā* has three divisions: unconscious material substance, ignorance and knowledge.

The characteristics and proofs of the Lord, the *jīva*, *māyā*, the universe, and his *svarūpa-śakti* called *bhakti* will be clearly explained in the commentary on the prayers of the Vedas (SB 10.87).

|| 1.7.7 ||

*yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe |
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā ||*

TRANSLATION

By hearing *Bhāgavatam*, *bhakti* for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa appears. Hearing it also destroys lamentation, illusion and fear in the human being.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows that *Bhāgavatam* produces *prema*. Simply by hearing it, *prema* arises. What to speak then of the greater effect if one engages others in hearing it! And what greater effect speaking it must have! And what even greater effect will engaging others in speaking it produce! *Bhakti* here means *prema*. Because it has been said *īśvaraḥ sadyo hr̥dy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ*: the Supreme Lord becomes immediately captured in the heart of the accomplished devotees by hearing *Bhāgavatam* and even by those who have suddenly developed a desire to hear it. (SB 1.1.2); and because the Lord is captured in the heart only by the result of *sādhana-bhakti*. Destruction of *saṁsāra-* is an unsought result for the devotees. Nevertheless the devotees also achieve this.

|| 1.7.8 ||

*sa saṁhitām bhāgavatīm kṛtvānukramya cātma-jam |
śukam adhyāpayām āsa nivṛtti-nirataṁ muniḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Having already made the *Bhāgavatam*, the sage Vyāsa revised it and taught it to his son Śukadeva who had realized *brahman*.

COMMENTARY

Because he had realized the superiority of *prema*, his goal, over realization of the bliss of *brahman*, he taught *Bhāgavatam* to Śuka so that he also could see the superiority of the bliss of *prema*. In this world, if the father has experienced something blissful, he will attempt to have his son experience this also. That is explained in this verse.

First Vyāsa had made an abbreviated scripture about *bhakti*, but on the advice of Nārada, he rearranged it (*anukramya*), purified it, giving most prominence to *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa.

Nārada gave his instructions after the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa and before Parīkṣit punished Kali, because at that time itself there was a tendency towards irreligion even among the followers of religion and adherents of scripture since the power of Kali manifested even at the beginning of his control. Because of this, Vyāsa was dissatisfied in his heart. This is shown in the following verse:

*jugupsitam dharma-kṛte 'nuśāsataḥ svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramah
yad-vākyato dharma itītarah sthito na manyate tasya nivāraṇam janah*

You have created a great disturbance by teaching what is condemned to people attached to material enjoyment in order make them accept *dharma*. Thinking that what you have taught is real *dharma*, they do not consider giving it up. SB 1.5.15

It is understood that before the beginning of Kali-yuga he would not have been dissatisfied in heart. Now at this time, he revised the *Bhāgavatam* which was previously written. When it is said *kṛṣṇe svadhāmopagate, ... purāṇo 'rkto 'dhunotditaḥ* (SB 1.3.43), this refers to the revised *Bhāgavatam*, the present one. EWhen it is said that the present *Bhāgavatam* is another *Bhāgavatam* and that the *Bhāgavatam* is among the eighteen Purāṇas, it refers to the same *Bhāgavatam*, the present one... *Nivṛtti-niratam* means that Śukadeva had realized *brahman*.

|| 1.7.9 ||

*śaunaka uvāca—
sa vai nivṛtti-nirataḥ sarvatropekṣako muniḥ |
kasya vā bṛhatīm etām ātmārāmaḥ samabhyasat ||*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: Śukadeva was fixed in the *brahman*, indifferent to everything, and enjoying in the self. Why did he study this elaborate work?

COMMENTARY

Kasya vā means “for what reason.”

|| 1.7.10 ||

*sūta uvāca—
ātmārāmās ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame |
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said; Some sages who are *ātmārāmas*, beyond the scriptures, false ego and rules, also practice unmotivated, pure *bhakti* to the master of pure *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa, since he possesses qualities attractive to even them.

COMMENTARY

Nirgranthā can mean those who are freed from scriptures. For, it is said:

*yadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitariṣyati |
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca ||*

When your intelligence has completely crossed the denseness of illusion, you will be indifferent to all that has been heard and all that will be heard.
BG 2.52

Or *grantha* can mean “knot of false ego.” Thus *nirgranthāḥ* means “those who are free of the knot of false ego.” It is said *bhidyate hṛdaya-grantiḥ*: the knot of false ego is cut. (SB 1.2.21) Or *granthā* can mean “bondage.” Thus *nirgranthāḥ* can mean “those freed from the bondage of rules and prohibitions.” It said *cared vidhi-gocaraḥ*: he moves about beyond the rules. (SB 11.18.28)

Such persons perform *bhakti* without seeking results (*ahaitukīm*). *Bhakti* produces *jñāna* but is superior to *jñāna*. Therefore it is called best or *uru*. Therefore *urukrama* means “the Lord who produces the best method, *bhakti*.”

Can *bhakti* deliver the liberated? Can the *Bhāgavatam*, a scripture on *bhakti*, deliver those who have surpassed scriptures? Can a work discussing a server and the served (the Lord) deliver those who have given up all identities of ego? Can the rules of *bhakti* described in the *Bhāgavatam* deliver those who have given up all rules and prohibitions? To destroy all such protests, the verse says *ittam-bhūta-guṇa*: the Lord has such attractive qualities that even *ātmārāmas* become attracted. Because of their practice with predominance of *bhakti* or even just by mercy alone, the Lord gave mercy to the Kumāras, thinking “Let them realize my qualities.” Vyāsa gave mercy to Śukadeva, thinking “Let him realize Kṛṣṇa’s qualities.” The Lord or the devotees may give mercy to some other *ātmārāmas* in the same way. Having attained that qualification for realizing the Lord’s qualities, these *ātmārāmas* perform unmotivated *bhakti*. Other *ātmārāmas* perform *bhakti* with the goal of merging into *brahman*. The word *ahaitukī* cannot be applied to their *bhakti*. Concerning them it is said:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām ||
bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ |
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram ||*

Having attained the state of *brahman*, being a pure soul, the *ātmārāma* does not lament the loss of what he had nor does he desire what he does not have, and looks upon all beings as equal. He then manifests *prema-bhakti*. Only by *bhakti* can a person know me as *brahman*. Then, knowing me as *brahman* by that *bhakti*, he merges with me. BG 18.54-55

|| 1.7.11 ||

*harer guṇākṣipta-matir bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ |
adhyagān mahad ākhyānam nityam viṣṇu-jana-priyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva, the son of Vyāsa, whose mind became distracted from trance by the qualities of Kṛṣṇa, and who became attracted to the Vaiṣṇavas, studied this great *Bhāgavatam*.

COMMENTARY

By the mercy of Nārada, Vyāsa realized the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's qualities. By the mercy of Vyāsa, Śukadeva realized the same sweetness even more. That is explained in this verse.

Śukadeva's mind was disturbed by the qualities of Kṛṣṇa (*harer guṇākṣipta-matiḥ*). He thought, "My intelligence is unfortunate, because though the Lord's qualities are so sweet, up until now that intelligence has been engaged uselessly in realizing *brahman*." He held not only the *ātmārāmas* dear, but also the Vaiṣṇavas dear because of the attraction to their discussions about Kṛṣṇa (*viṣṇu-jana-priyaḥ*). Or the Vaiṣṇavas held him dear.

Vyāsa made Śukadeva who was in continual trance in a lonely forest hear selected verses from the *Bhāgavatam* which described Kṛṣṇa's qualities through some of his followers. By the power of those verses, his trance was broken. His mind, attracted to the sweetness, broke the trance. Knowing these verses were from the *Bhāgavatam* because of his omniscience, and knowing that his father was the source of revealing those verses, he went to Vyāsa and learned *Bhāgavatam*. This story is told in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*. After conquering father and son, Vyāsa and Śukadeva, crest jewels of *brahman* realization, *bhakti* made them like an umbrella which gives relief to the whole world. Those who do not consider *bhakti* in this way, being led astray, are like thieves who deserve the punishment of Yama.

|| 1.7.12 ||

*parīkṣito 'tha rājarṣer janma-karma-vilāpanam |
samsthām ca pāṇḍu-putrāṇām vakṣye kṛṣṇa-kathodayam ||*

TRANSLATION

I will speak about the birth, activities and death of King Parīkṣit, and the death march of the Pāṇḍavas, which will give rise to discussions about Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

The question of how a great *yogī* like Śukadeva became inclined to hear *Bhāgavatam* has now been answered. Now the other question of how Parīkṣit

heard the *Bhāgavatam* while fasting till death and other topics such as his astonishing birth will be explained. *Vilāpanam* means death. Or it can mean talks about the Lord, since the verb *lap* means to talk. The suffix *lyuṭ* (the letters *ana*) is added at the end. *Samsthām* means a walk till death. These topics give rise to talks about Kṛṣṇa, since they relate to the aim of the *Bhāgavatam*.

|| 1.7.13-14 ||

yadā mṛdhe kaurava-sṛñjayānām vīreṣv atho vīra-gatim gateṣu |
vṛkodarāviddha-gadābhimarśa-bhagnoru-daṇḍe dhṛtarāṣṭra-putre ||

bhartuḥ priyam drauṇir iti sma paśyan kṛṣṇā-sutānām svapatām śirāmsi |
upāharad vipriyam eva tasya jugupsitam karma vigarhayanti ||

TRANSLATION

After the warriors of both sides had met their end on the battlefield, and Duryodhana had his thigh broken by a blow from the club of Bhīma; when Aśvatthāmā, thinking that Duryodhana would be pleased, presented him with the severed heads of the sleeping sons of Draupadī, everyone condemned the horrible act, even Duryodhana.

COMMENTARY

A story is now told in order to show how Parīkṣit, even in the womb, was able to see Kṛṣṇa. When Aśvatthāmā (*drauṇiḥ*) beheaded the sons of Draupadī, the mother began to weep. The sentence extends for three verses. *Kaurava* refers to Duryodhana's party. *Sṛñjaya* refers to the Pāṇḍavas' party since Dhṛṣṭādyumna of the Sṛñjaya family was their general. *Vīra-gatim* means liberation or *svarga* by the method described by Bhīṣma. *Vṛkodarāviddha-gadābhimarśa* means by the blow inflicted by the club thrown by Bhīma.

;

Thinking that Duryodhana would be pleased (*priyam*) he presented the heads of the sleeping sons of the Pāṇḍavas to him. Actually Duryodhana was not pleased with this action (*vipriyam*). After feeling joy that his enemies had been killed, he began to lament since he understood that his enemies such as Bhīma had not been killed on seeing the gift, that children had been killed, and that the Kuru dynasty had been destroyed. Thus he died with both joy and sorrow. Therefore here it said "All people condemned this horrible act."

|| 1.7.15 ||

mātā śiśūnām nidhanam sutānām niśamya ghoram paritapyamānā |
tadārudad bāṣpa-kalākulākṣī tām sāntvayann āha kirītamālī ||

TRANSLATION

At that time their mother hearing of the terrible death of her youthful sons,

pained, eyes full of tears, began to lament. Arjuna spoke to pacify her.

COMMENTARY

Arjuna is called *kirīṭamalī* because he accepted many crowns, or because he had a garland in his crown.

|| 1.7.16 ||

*tadā śucas te pramṛjāmi bhadre yad brahma-bandhoḥ śira ātatāyinaḥ |
gāṇḍīva-muktair viśikhair upāhare tvākramya yat snāsyasi dagdha-putrā ||*

TRANSLATION

O gracious woman! I will remove your sorrows when I bring the head of that lowest *brāhmaṇa* murderer using arrows released from my Gāṇḍīva bow and when you sit upon it, and bathe yourself after burning the bodies of your sons.

COMMENTARY

Śucaḥ means sorrows. I will remove your sorrows when (*yat*) I present to you using the arrows released from my bow the head of the lowest of *brāhmaṇas* (*brahma-bandhoḥ*), the aggressor who had a weapon in his hand (*ātatāyinaḥ*). According to the *smṛti* scriptures there are six aggressors:

*agnido garadaś caiva śastra-pāṇir dhanāpahaḥ |
kṣetra-dārāpahārī ca ṣaḍ ete ātatāyina ||*

There are six aggressors: the arsonist, poisoner, holder of weapons, the stealer of wealth, the stealer of property, and the stealer of others' wives. *Vasiṣṭha Smṛti* 3.19

|| 1.7.17 ||

*iti priyām valgu-vicitra-jalpaiḥ |
sa sāntvayitvācyuta-mitra-sūtaḥ ||
anvādravad damśita ugra-dhanvā |
kapi-dhvajo guru-putraṁ rathena ||*

TRANSLATION

Thus pacifying her with many sweet words, Arjuna, whose friend and charioteer was Kṛṣṇa, holding his terrifying bow, with Hanumān on his flag, put on his armor and pursued Aśvatthāmā on his chariot.

COMMENTARY

Acyuta-mitra-sūtaḥ means who had Kṛṣṇa as his friend and charioteer. *Damśitaḥ* means “putting on armor.”

|| 1.7.18 ||

*tam āpatantaṁ sa vilakṣya dūrāt kumāra-hodvigna-manā rathena |
parādravat prāṇa-parīpsur urvyām yāvad-gamaṁ rudra-bhayād yathā kaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing Arjuna pursuing on his chariot from far off, the killer of children became disturbed in mind. Desiring to save his life, he fled as fast as he could over the ground, just as Brahmā fled out of fear of Śiva.

COMMENTARY

When Brahmā (*kaḥ*) became desirous of his daughter, taking the form of a deer, he fled in fear from Śiva. In the same manner Aśvatthāmā fled from Arjuna. In another version the word *arka* (sun) is used instead of *kaḥ*. This is a story from the *Vāmana Purāṇa*. A demon named Vidyunmālī, a follower of Śiva, pursued the sun on a golden chariot given by Śiva. Due to the effulgence from the chariot, night disappeared. The sun became angry and melted the chariot with his heat and made it fall from the sky. Śiva appeared and the sun fled in fear. The sun fell down at Vārāṇasī, and became known as Lolārka (unsteady sun).

|| 1.7.19 ||

*yadāśaraṇam ātmānam aikṣata śrānta-vājinam |
astraṁ brahma-śiro mene ātma-trāṇam dvijātmajaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When he understood he had no one to protect him and his horses were exhausted, the son of a *brāhmaṇa* considered using the *brahmāstra* to protect himself.

COMMENTARY

He saw that he had no protector (*aśaraṇam*). He considered that the *brahmāstra* would be a method of protecting himself (*ātma-trāṇam*). The word *dvijātmajaḥ* (son of a *brāhmaṇa*) indicates that he was short-sighted.

|| 1.7.20 ||

*athopaspr̥śya salilam sandadhe tat samāhitaḥ |
ajānann api samhāram prāṇa-kṛcchra upasthite ||*

TRANSLATION

Sipping water and concentrating his mind, he released the weapon without knowing how to withdraw it, because his life was in danger.

COMMENTARY

Samāhitaḥ means that he began meditating.

|| 1.7.21 ||

*tataḥ prāduṣkṛtaṁ tejaḥ pracandaṁ sarvato diśam |
prānāpadam abhipreksya viṣṇuṁ jiṣṇur uvāca ha ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing that the fierce fire manifesting in all directions was a danger to life, Arjuna spoke to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.7.22 ||

*arjuna uvāca—
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bāho bhaktānām abhayaṅkara |
tvam eko dahyamānānām apavargo 'si saṁsṛteḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! Mighty-armed Lord! Bestower of fearlessness in your devotees! You alone are the deliverer of all those who are burning in the fire of material existence.

COMMENTARY

You are the form of liberation (*apavargaḥ*). You deliver us from material existence. Therefore why not deliver me from this fire?

|| 1.7.23 ||

*tvam ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ sāksād īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ |
māyām vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalye sthita ātmani ||*

TRANSLATION

You are the original Lord, the controller, beyond material energy. You are situated in your spiritual form, being one with your spiritual energy, and separate from the material energy.

COMMENTARY

“I am your cousin and equal to you. Do not speak like this!” Arjuna replies with this verse. You are beyond *prakṛti*. “By *prakṛti* do you mean ignorance or *māyā*?” Distancing your self from *māyā* composed of both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, unfortunate because it is your external *śakti*, you are situated in your spiritual form along with your auspicious *cit-śakti* arising from your *svarūpa* who is like your principal queen.

“But since I am the cause of the spiritual energy I am different from it. How can it be situated in my form?” It is one with you (*kaivalye*). Though it is with you, it is one with you, because it is your *svarūpa-śakti*. Factually you are situated in spiritual form. This *cit-śakti* arising from your *svarūpa* is always non-different from you, and is situated in the form of your body, senses and associates. Śruti says *parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*: the Lord has

many intrinsic energies called knowledge, strength and action. *Māyā* is only a shadow and remains in the form of the material world composed of three *guṇas* and knowledge and ignorance, because it does not arise from your *svarūpa*.

It (*Māyā*) is different from you, though it is somewhat non-different from you, being your *śakti*. Thus this *śakti* is different and non-different from you. The idea that *māyā* is the only *śakti* is rejected.

|| 1.7.24 ||

*sa eva jīva-lokasya māyā-mohita-cetasah |
vidhatse svena vīryeṇa śreyo dharmādi-lakṣaṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

Though you are non-different from your spiritual energy, you benefit all the *jīvas* bewildered by *māyā* through your power by giving them *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*.

COMMENTARY

Sah here means “you, even though situated in your spiritual energy.”

|| 1.7.25 ||

*tathāyaṁ cāvatāras te bhuvo bhāra-jihīṣayā |
svānām cānanya-bhāvānām anudhyānāya cāsakṛt ||*

TRANSLATION

You appear in this world in this way, in your spiritual form, with a desire to relieve the burden of the earth and to give continuous happiness to your dedicated devotees by letting them worship you.

COMMENTARY

In this way, rejecting *māyā*, in your spiritual form (*tathā*), you appear in this world (*ayam avatārah*).

|| 1.7.26 ||

*kim idaṁ svit kuto veti deva-deva na vedmy aham |
sarvato mukham āyāti tejaḥ parama-dāruṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

O Supreme Lord! What is this? I do not know where it has come from. This most ferocious fire is spread out in all directions.

COMMENTARY

Having praised Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna then informs Kṛṣṇa of the matter at hand.

|| 1.7.27 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—
vetthedaṁ droṇa-putrasya brāhmam astraṁ pradarśitam |
naivāsau veda saṁhāraṁ prāṇa-bādha upasthite ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord said: You know that what is displayed here by Aśvatthāmā is the *brahmāstra*. Seeing danger to his life, he has released it, though he does not know how to withdraw it.

COMMENTARY

The word *pradarśitam* (shown) implies “You have seen this weapon. Do you not recognize it? Why are you asking me?” He does not know how to withdraw it (*na veda saṁhāraṁ*). Then why did he use it? He used it to protect his own life.

|| 1.7.28 ||

na hy asyānyatamaṁ kiñcid astraṁ pratyavakarśanam |
jahy astra-teja unnaddham astra-jño hy astra-tejasā ||

TRANSLATION

No other weapon can counteract this weapon. O knower of weapons! Destroy the profuse fire of this weapon with the fire of your *brahmāstra*.

COMMENTARY

“But the fire can be counteracted by the water weapon.” Nothing can stop this weapon (*pratyavakarśanam*). Since you know all about weapons, you must destroy the fire of this weapon with the fire of your *brahmāstra*.

|| 1.7.29 ||

sūta uvāca
śrutvā bhagavatā proktaṁ phālgunaḥ para-vīra-hā
spṛṣṭvāpas taṁ parikramya brāhmaṁ brāhmāya (brāhmāstraṁ in folio) sandadhe ||

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Hearing the words of the Lord, Arjuna the slayer of hostile warriors, performing *ācamana*, circumambulated Kṛṣṇa and aimed his *brahmāstra* in order to counteract Aśvatthāmā’s weapon.

COMMENTARY

Tam refers to Kṛṣṇa. For destroying Aśvatthāmā’s weapon (*brāhmāya*) he aimed his weapon.

|| 1.7.30 ||

*samhatyānyonyam ubhayos tejasī śara-samvṛte |
āvṛtya rodasī kham ca vavṛdhāte 'rka-vahnivat ||*

TRANSLATION

Surrounded by arrows, the fires of both weapons, combining together like the sun in the sky and the fire emanating from Saṅkarṣaṇa's mouth at the time of final destruction, increased in strength, covering heaven, earth and the space between.

COMMENTARY

The fires of the two *brahmāstras*, surrounded with arrows, increased, covering heaven and earth (*rodasi*). It was like the combination of the sun and the fire emanating from Saṅkarṣaṇa's mouth at the time of devastation.

|| 1.7.31 ||

*dr̥ṣṭvāstra-tejas tu tayos trīl lokān pradahan mahat |
dahyamānāḥ prajāḥ sarvāḥ sām̐vartakam amamsata ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing the great fire of their two weapons burning up the three worlds, all the citizens, afflicted by the heat, thought that this was the fire of final destruction.

COMMENTARY

Tayoḥ refers to *Aśvatthāmā* and *Arjuna*. *Sām̐vartakam* is the fire of final destruction.

|| 1.7.32 ||

*prajopadravam ālakṣya loka-vyatikaram ca tam |
mataṁ ca vāsudevasya sañjahārārjuno dvayam ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing the danger to the inhabitants of the universe and the destruction of the planets, and understanding the will of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna withdrew the two weapons.

COMMENTARY

Loka means of the earth and other planets. *Vyatikaram* means destruction.

|| 1.7.33 ||

*tata āsādya tarasā dāruṇam gautamī-sutam |
babandhāmarṣa-tāmrākṣaḥ paśuṁ raśanayā yathā ||*

TRANSLATION

Eyes burning with anger, Arjuna quickly caught cruel Aśvatthāmā, and tied him up with rope like a beast.

COMMENTARY

Aśvatthāmā was the son of Kṛpī, who came from the Gautama *gotra*. Thus she is called *gautamī*.

|| 1.7.34 ||

*śibirāya ninīṣantaṁ rajjvā baddhvā ripuṁ balāt |
prāhārjunam prakupito bhagavān ambujekṣaṇaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing that Arjuna, who having forcibly bound him with ropes, wanted to bring him back to the camp, lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa became angry and spoke to Arjuna.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa speaks strongly in five verses to Arjuna, who was filled with lamentation and anger, to show the world Arjuna's standard of justice. Though Kṛṣṇa was angry, he is still described as lotus-eyed. Thus his anger was only external.

|| 1.7.35 ||

*mainam pārthārhasi trātuṁ brahma-bandhum imam jahi |
yo 'sāv anāgasahḥ suptān avadhīn niśi bālakān ||*

TRANSLATION

Arjuna! You should not release this friend of a *brāhmaṇa* who murdered innocent, sleeping children in the night. Kill him!

|| 1.7.36 ||

*mattam pramattam unmattam suptam bālam striyam jaḍam |
prapannam viratham bhītam na ripuṁ hanti dharma-vit ||*

TRANSLATION

The knower of *dharma* does not kill an enemy who is a drunkard, or who is inattentive, insane, sleeping, young, a female, immobilized, surrendered, without chariot, or afraid.

COMMENTARY

Mattam means intoxicated because of liquor etc. *Pramattam* means inattentive. *Unmattam* means crazy because of planetary influences or disturbance of *vāta* in the body.

|| 1.7.37 ||

*sva-prāṇān yaḥ para-prāṇaiḥ prapuṣṇāty aghṛṇaḥ khalāḥ |
tad-vadhas tasya hi śreyo yad-doṣād yāty adhaḥ pumān ||*

TRANSLATION

The merciless, cruel person who nourishes his own life by taking other lives should be killed; otherwise that man goes to hell from that sin.

COMMENTARY

Killing him as punishment is best (*tad-vadhaḥ śreyah*). *Smṛti* says:

*rājabhir dhṛta-daṇḍas tu kṛtvā pāpāni mānavāḥ |
vidhūta-kalmaṣā yānti svargaṁ sukṛtino yathā ||*

Those who have committed sin, if punished by the king, become freed of that sin and go to Svarga like the pious.

If he is not killed, because of that sin (*yad*) he goes to hell.

|| 1.7.38-39 ||

*pratiśrutam ca bhavatā pāñcālyai śṛṇvato mama |
āhariṣye śiras tasya yas te mānini putra-hā ||
tad asau vadhyatām pāpa ātatāyy ātma-bandhu-hā |
bhartuś ca vipriyam vīra kṛtavān kula-pāmsanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I have heard that you promised to Draupadī “O noble woman! I will present you with the head of the killer of your sons.”

COMMENTARY

O warrior! This sinner, aggressor, killer of relatives, disgrace to his family, who has displeased Duryodhana, should be killed.

|| 1.7.40 ||

sūta uvāca—

*evam parīkṣatā dharmam pārthaḥ kṛṣṇena coditaḥ |
naicchad dhantum guru-sutam yadyapy ātma-hanam mahān ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Although Kṛṣṇa, who was examining Arjuna in religion, encouraged Arjuna to kill the son of Droṇācārya, Arjuna, a great soul, did not want to kill him, although Aśvatthāmā was a murderer of Arjuna’s family members.

COMMENTARY

Though incited by Kṛṣṇa who was testing Arjuna's sense of justice, Arjuna did not want to kill him, even though he had killed his son (*ātma-hanam*), because he was intelligent (*mahān*) - he knew the nature of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's nature is that, though he is omniscient, he tests the devotees in this way in order to show their sense of justice to others. He tests Arjuna, possessor of *dharma*, by showing *vīra* and *raudra rasas* when he says "You should not release him." (SB 1.7.35)

In the same way he tested the *gopīs*, possessors of *prema*, by showing *karma* and *jñāna* in such verses as *bhartuḥ śuśrūṣaṇam strīṇām paro dharmah*: the highest religious duty for a woman is to sincerely serve her husband (SB 10.29.24); *bhavatīnām viyogo me na hi sarvātmanā kvacit*: you are never actually separated from me, for I am the Soul of all creation (SB 10.47.29); *aham hi sarva-bhūtānām ādir anto 'ntaram bahiḥ*: dear ladies, I am the beginning and end of all created beings and exist both within and without them. (SB 10.82.45)

He also tested Pṛthu, Prahlāda and others, who were filled with devotion, by showing or promising enjoyment and powers to them. *Varam ca mat kañcana mānavendra vṛṇīṣva*: dear Pṛthu, you may therefore ask from me any benediction you like. (SB 4.20.16) *Varam vṛṇīṣvābhimataṁ kāma-pūro 'smy aham nṛṇām*: it is my pastime to fulfill the desires of all living beings, and therefore you may ask from me any benediction that you desire to be fulfilled. (SB 7.9.52) *Dīyamānam na grhṇanti*: though I offer these benedictions, they do not accept. (SB 3.29.13)

Even his *siddha* devotees test others. Thus Śukadeva tests Parīkṣit. In the Sixth Canto, he tests his knowledge of *siddhānta* when he speaks of regular atonements when Parīkṣit asks the method of getting free of sin. In the Ninth Canto, Śukadeva tests Parīkṣit's eagerness for Kṛṣṇa's pastimes by summarizing those pastimes, and in the Twelfth Canto, he tests his steadiness in *bhakti* by talking of *brahma-jñāna*. The real meaning is not always in the directly observed events.

|| 1.7.41 ||

*athopetya sva-śibiram govinda-priya-sārathiḥ |
nyavedayat taṁ priyāyai śocantyā ātma-jān hatān ||*

TRANSLATION

Arriving at his camp, Arjuna, whose friend and driver was Kṛṣṇa, offered Aśvatthāmā to his wife who was lamenting for her killed sons.

COMMENTARY

He offered Aśvatthāmā to her saying, "I have brought you the killer of your sons."

|| 1.7.42 ||

*tathāhṛtam paśuvat pāśa-baddham avān-mukham karma-jugupsitena |
nirīkṣya kṛṣṇāpakṛtam guroḥ sutam vāma-svabhāvā kṛpayā nanāma ca ||*

TRANSLATION

Draupadī, of noble nature, looked with compassion upon wicked Aśvatthāmā, son of a *guru*, brought before her tied up like an animal, with downcast face because of his shameful crime, and also offered him her respects.

COMMENTARY

Tathā āhr̥tam means “brought in this manner.” *Karma-jugupsitena* means “because of his repulsion to that act.” *Apakṛtam* (wrongful act) should be *apakāriṇam* “the person who has done wrong.” She looked with compassion on him. *Vāma* means virtuous. She also offered her respects.

|| 1.7.43 ||

uvāca cāśahanty asya bandhanānayanam satī |
mucyatām mucyatām eṣa brāhmaṇo nitarām guruḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Unable to tolerate him being brought in a bonded state, the noble Draupadī said, “Release him! Release him! The *brāhmaṇa* is always our *guru*.”

COMMENTARY

The word *ca* with *uvāca* indicates “she spoke with reverence.” She is called *satī* or noble because she could not tolerate his bondage. She was thus nobler than Parīkṣit and Arjuna towards those who were offenders to the devotees.

|| 1.7.44-45 ||

sa-rahasyo dhanur-vedaḥ sa-visargopasaṁyamah |
astra-grāmaś ca bhavatā śikṣito yad-anugrahāt ||
sa eṣa bhagavān droṇaḥ prajā-rūpeṇa vartate |
tasyātmano ’rdham patny āste nānvagād vīrasūḥ kṛpī ||

TRANSLATION

By the mercy of Droṇa you learned the military arts with secret *mantras*, the method of throwing and withdrawing all weapons. Droṇa is standing before you in the form of his son. The other half of Droṇa, his wife Kṛpī, did not follow her husband when he died, but remains alive, because she has a son.

COMMENTARY

Sa-rahasyaḥ means “with secret *mantras*.” In mentioning that the father taught how to throw and withdraw the weapon, she implies “If you had not learned how to throw and withdraw the *brahmāstra* from his father, how could you now bind him up and bring him here?” The son is considered a representative of the father according to the saying *ātmā vai jāyate putraḥ*: one is born again as one’s son.²⁷

²⁷ This is quoted in CC. *Madhya-lēlā*, 12.56. There is a similar text in SB 10.78.36.

The wife is considered half of the husband according to the śruti text *ardho vā eśa ātmano yat-patnī*: the wife is half of oneself. (*Black Yajur-veda, Baudhāyana-śrauta-sūtra* 29.89.381.2) She did not follow her husband to death because she had a son (*vīra-sūh*).

|| 1.7.46 ||

*tad dharmajña mahā-bhāga bhavadbhir gauravam kulam |
vṛjinam nārhati prāptum pūjyam vandyam abhīkṣaṣaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O knower of *dharma*! Man of good character! You should not cause suffering to the family of your *guru*, because they are always praiseworthy and worthy of worship.

COMMENTARY

The relatives of your *guru* (*gauravam kulam*) should not attain suffering by you, because they are to be worshipped.

|| 1.7.47 ||

*mā rodīd asya janani gautamī pati-devatā
yathāham mṛta-vatsārtā rodimy aśru-mukhī muhuḥ*

TRANSLATION

Do not make Kṛpī, the mother of Aśvatthāmā and devoted to her husband, cry as I cry constantly with tearful face, pained by the death of my sons.

COMMENTARY

Mā rodīt should be *mā roditu* “let her not cry.”

|| 1.7.48 ||

*yaiḥ kopitam brahma-kulam rājanyair ajitātmabhiḥ |
tat kulam pradahaty āśu sānubandham śucārpitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Angered by the uncontrolled warriors, the *brāhmaṇas* will quickly destroy the warrior class and their associates who then will become full of lamentation.

COMMENTARY

Sānubandham means “with their associates.” *Śucārpitam* means “spread with lamentation (*śucā*).” The *brāhmaṇas* will destroy the *kṣatriya* families.

|| 1.7.49 ||

sūta uvāca—

*dharmyaṁ nyāyāṁ sa-karuṇāṁ nirvyalīkaṁ samāṁ mahat |
rājā dharmā-suto rājñyāḥ pratyānandad vaco dvijāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: O *brāhmaṇas*! Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Dharma, agreed with the words of his queen, which were according to scripture, reasonable, merciful, without desire to harm others, desirous of peace and generous.

COMMENTARY

The good quality of her words is seen in the previous six verses. Her words were faithful to *dharmā*: release him because the *brāhmāna* is always our *guru*. (SB 1.7.43) Her words were filled with correctness: his father taught you the military arts. (SB 1.7.44) Her words were full of mercy: the wife is half the husband. (SB 1.7.45) Her words expressed unwillingness to cause pain to others: do not cause suffering to the family of your *guru*. (SB 1.7.46) Her words expressed sense of calmness, allaying suffering: do not let her cry like me. (SB 1.7.47) Her harsh words express generosity, desiring to benefit the hearer: the angry *brāhmaṇas* will destroy the *kṣatriyas*. (SB 1.7.48)

|| 1.7.50 ||

*nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca yuyudhāno dhanañjayaḥ |
bhagavān devakī-putro ye cānye yāś ca yoṣitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Nakula and Sahadeva, Sātyaki, Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa, and the women, were also happy with her words.

COMMENTARY

They all agreed with her words. Yuyudhāna means Sātyaki.

|| 1.7.51 ||

*tatrāhāmarṣito bhīmas tasya śreyān vadhaḥ smṛtaḥ |
na bhartur nātmanaś cārthe yo ’han suptān śīsūn vṛthā ||*

TRANSLATION

At that time angry Bhīma spoke. “He who has killed the sleeping children without purpose, without benefit to his master or to himself, should be killed.”

|| 1.7.52 ||

*niśamya bhīma-gaditaṁ draupadyāś ca catur-bhujāḥ |
ālokyā vadanāṁ sakhyur idam āha hasann iva ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing the words of Bhīma and Draupadī, Kṛṣṇa with four hands looked towards his friend Arjuna while smiling and spoke.

COMMENTARY

Bhīma favored killing Aśvatthāmā and Draupadī favored releasing him. The Lord assumed four arms to keep the two parties apart. Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly as if saying, „ O friend! Today I will test the sharpness of your intelligence.” He smiled and did not laugh.

|| 1.7.53 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—

*brahma-bandhur na hantavya ātatāyī vadhārhaṇaḥ |
mayaivobhayam āmnātaṁ paripāhy anuśāsanam ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord said: One should not kill a fallen *brāhmaṇa*. But an aggressor should be killed. Please follow both of these instructions established in scripture made by me.

COMMENTARY

No *brāhmaṇa* should be killed. But Manu has said that if an aggressor approaches with the desire to kill, he can be killed, even if he is learned in *Vedānta*. Follow both of these instructions ordered by me, the maker of scriptures. Since Aśvatthāmā is still considered a *brāhmaṇa*, and since he is not an aggressor since he does not have a weapon in his hands, he should not be killed. That is my opinion. I told you previously to kill the fallen *brāhmaṇa*, but that was only to test you. Therefore, do not kill the fallen *brāhmaṇa*, but free him. Then I have said that the knower of *dharma* does not kill the enemy who is frightened or without a chariot, and also I have said it is best to kill him. But do not be the cause of killing him. **His killing should take the form of being bound up.** That is the real meaning of my words.

|| 1.7.54 ||

*kuru pratiśrutaṁ satyaṁ yat tat sāntvayatā priyām |
priyām ca bhīmasenasya pāñcālyā mahyam eva ca ||*

TRANSLATION

You must fulfill your promise to Draupadī so that she is pacified. You must also act to please Bhīma, Draupadī, me and others.

COMMENTARY

You made a promise to bring Draupadī the head of Aśvatthāmā. Thus you should cut off his head. You should also please Bhīma. You should also please Draupadī who does not want him killed. You should also please me and others because they

are dear to me (indicated by *ca*).

|| 1.7.55 ||

*sūta uvāca—
arjunaḥ sahasājñāya harer hārdam athāsinā |
maṇim jahāra mūrdhanyaṁ dvijasya saha-mūrdhajaṁ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Suddenly understanding Kṛṣṇa's intention, Arjuna cut off the jewel on Aśvatthāmā's head along with his hair.

COMMENTARY

Understanding Kṛṣṇa's intention (*hārdam*) Arjuna then acted. "I made the promise to cut off his head. Kṛṣṇa has said that I have to fulfill that promise. He has also said I should please Draupadī. Therefore I cannot cut off his head. It is not impossible. I should fulfill both directions. Therefore somehow I must do that." This was what he discerned. He then cut off the jewel on his head (*maṇim mūrdhanyaṁ*) along with his hair. The jewel is situated on his head and thus represents his head. Thus it also means "head." Therefore cutting off his jewel is cutting off his head. But in the literal sense, his head will not be cut off. Thus Aśvatthāmā was killed and not killed.

|| 1.7.56 ||

*vimucya raśanā-baddhaṁ bāla-hatyā-hata-prabhaṁ |
tejasā maṇinā hīnaṁ śibirān nirayāpayat ||*

TRANSLATION

Aśvatthāmā, who had lost his effulgence by killing the children, was further deprived of his jewel and energy. Arjuna released him from the bondage of the ropes and led him from the camp.

|| 1.7.57 ||

*vapaṇaṁ draviṇādānaṁ sthānān niryāpaṇaṁ tathā |
eṣa hi brahma-bandhūnāṁ vadho nānyo 'sti daihikaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The method of killing the fallen *brāhmaṇa* is by shaving his head, taking away his wealth, and taking away his living place. One should not physically kill him.

COMMENTARY

One should execute *dharma* according to the scriptures as the verse indicates.

|| 1.7.58 ||

*putra-śokāturāḥ sarve pāṇḍavāḥ saha kṛṣṇayā |
svānām mṛtānām yat kṛtyam cakrur nirharaṇādikam ||*

TRANSLATION

Then all the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī, lamenting for their sons, performed the death rites for their dead relatives and carried them for burning.

COMMENTARY

Nirharaṇa means “going for burning.”

Chapter Eight Kuntī’s prayers and Yudhiṣṭhira’s grief

|| 1.8.1 ||

*sūta uvāca
atha te samparetānām svānām udakam icchatām |
dātum sakṛṣṇā gaṅgāyām puraskṛtya yayuḥ striyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said:

Then the Pāṇḍavas along with Kṛṣṇa, putting the women in front, went to the Gaṅgā to give water to the departed relatives who desired it.

COMMENTARY

In the Eighth Chapter Kṛṣṇa protects Parīkṣit from the *brahmāstra* when he is in the womb, Kuntī offers prayers to Kṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira laments.

There is a rule that the women should go in front during the funeral rites.

|| 1.8.2 ||

*te ninīyodakam sarve vilapya ca bhṛśam punaḥ |
āplutā hari-pādābja-rajah-pūta-sarij-jale ||*

TRANSLATION

Offering water to the departed and lamenting intensely, everyone again took bath in the water purified by the dust from the lotus feet of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Ninīya means “having given.”

|| 1.8.3-4 ||

*tatrāsīnam kuru-patim dhṛtarāṣṭram sahānujam |
gāndhārīm putra-śokārtām pṛthām kṛṣṇām ca mādhabaḥ ||
sāntvayām āsa munibhir hata-bandhūñ śucārpitān |
bhūteṣu kālasya gatim darśayan na pratikriyām ||*

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa along with the sages then consoled Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī, Kuntī and Draupadī, lamenting the loss of their sons, all of whom were overcome with grief by the death of their relatives, who were all seated there, by showing the relentless movement of time upon all entities.

COMMENTARY

Kuru-patim refers to Yudhiṣṭhira. *Sahānujam* refers to Bhīma and his brothers. Kṛṣṇa consoled them along with the sages.

|| 1.8.5-6 ||

*ādhayitvājāta-śatroḥ svam rājyam kitavair hṛtam |
ghātayitvāsato rājñāḥ kaca-sparśa-kṣatāyusaḥ ||
yājayitvāśvamedhais tam tribhir uttama-kalpakaiḥ |
tad-yaśaḥ pāvanam dikṣu śata-manyor ivātanot ||*

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa had Yudhiṣṭhira established in his rightful kingdom stolen by cheaters, had the unrighteous kings whose lives were shortened because of grabbing Draupadī's hair destroyed, and had Yudhiṣṭhira conduct horse sacrifices three times with best arrangements. Thus his pure fame spread in all directions like that of Indra.

COMMENTARY

The kings' lives were destroyed by grabbing Draupadī's hair and other sinful acts. The horse sacrifices were actually carried out later. This is a summary of events without chronology.

|| 1.8.7-8 ||

*āmantrya pāṇḍu-putrāṁś ca śaineyoddhava-saṁyutaḥ |
dvaipāyanādibhir vipraiḥ pūjitaiḥ pratipūjitaḥ ||
gantum kṛtamatir brahman dvārakām ratham āsthitaḥ |
upalebhe 'bhidhāvantiṁ uttarām bhaya-vihvalām ||*

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! Having spoken to the Pāṇḍavas, having worshipped the sages such as Vyāsa and have been worshipped by them, Kṛṣṇa, desiring to go to Dvārakā, while seated on his chariot with Sātyaki and Uddhava, saw Uttarā, shaking with fear, running towards him.

COMMENTARY

Śaineyaḥ means Sātyaki, the grandson of Śini.

|| 1.8.9 ||

uttarovāca

*pāhi pāhi mahā-yogin deva-deva jagat-pate |
nānyam tvad abhayaṁ paśye yatra mṛtyuḥ parasparam ||*

TRANSLATION

Uttarā said:

O great *yogī*! O Supreme Lord! Master of the universe! Please protect me. I do not see anyone except you who is fearless in this world where each living being causes another's death.

COMMENTARY

Other than you (*tvad*) I see no one who can give fearlessness. Death is mutual (*parasparam*) in the sense that one person causes another's death, and someone else causes his death.

|| 1.8.10 ||

*abhidravati mām īśa śaras taptāyaso vibho |
kāmaṁ dahatu mām nātha mā me garbho nipātyatām ||*

TRANSLATION

O powerful lord! This arrow of burning iron is pursuing me. O Lord! Let it burn me up! But let it not kill my child!

COMMENTARY

“You are praying for your life even though you are now without your husband Abhimanyu. Are you not ashamed?” I am not praying for my life. I am praying for my son's life.

|| 1.8.11 ||

sūta uvāca

*upadhārya vacas tasyā bhagavān bhakta-vatsalaḥ |
apāṇḍavam idam kartum draṇer agram abudhyata ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Hearing Uttarā's words, Kṛṣṇa, affectionate to his devotees, understood that Aśvatthāmā had released a *brahmāstra* to rid the world of the Pāṇḍavas.

COMMENTARY

Aśvatthāmā wanted to make the world (*idam*) without the Pāṇḍavas (*apāṇḍavam*).

|| 1.8.12 ||

tarhy evātha muni-śreṣṭha pāṇḍavāḥ pañca sāyakān |
ātmano 'bhimukhān dīptān ālakṣyāstrāṇy upādaduḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O best of sages! Seeing five flaming arrows headed towards them, the Pāṇḍavas then took up their weapons.

COMMENTARY

The Pāṇḍavas only saw this and no one else could.

|| 1.8.13 ||

vyasanam vīkṣya tat teṣām ananya-viṣayātmanām |
sudarśanena svāstreṇa svānām rakṣām vyadhād vibhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord, seeing the danger to the Pāṇḍavas who were dedicated only to him, protected them with his own weapon - the Sudarśana.

COMMENTARY

The *brahmāstra* cannot be counteracted by any weapon except another *brahmāstra*. Arjuna had counteracted one *brahmāstra* with one of his previously. Now Aśvatthāmā had released five separate *brahmāstras* for each of the Pāṇḍavas. This was difficult to counteract because it would take time to release five *brahmāstras*. Considering (*vīkṣya*) the unavoidable danger, though the Lord had renounced all weapons, he protected his devotees, even if he had to break his own promise, in order to preserve his unique quality of having affection for his devotees.

|| 1.8.14 ||

antaḥsthaḥ sarva-bhūtānām ātmā yogeśvaro hariḥ |
sva-māyayāvṛṇod garbham vairāṭyāḥ kuru-tantave ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord, master of *yoga*, the soul dwelling within all beings, covered the embryo of Parīkṣit within Uttarā, in order to preserve the family of the Pāṇḍavas, using his *yoga-māyā*.

COMMENTARY

As the *paramātmā* Kṛṣṇa was situated within Uttarā already (*antaḥsthaḥ*), but by the power of his *yoga* (*yogeśvaraḥ*) he entered as Kṛṣṇa and covered the embryo. “Covered” means he protected it, for continuation of the Kuru family (*kuru-*

tantave). He used his *yoga-māyā* potency (*sva-māyayā*), so that even Uttarā was unaware of what he did. *Kuru* here means the Pāṇḍavas since they were also in the Kuru family.

|| 1.8.15 ||

*yadyapy astraṁ brahma-śiras tv amoghaṁ cāpratikriyam |
vaiṣṇavaṁ teja āsādyā samaśāmyad bhṛgūdvaha ||*

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! Though the *brahmāstra* is effective and cannot be prevented from acting, on meeting the weapon of Viṣṇu, it became completely ineffective.

|| 1.8.16 ||

*mā maṁsthā hy etad āścaryam sarvāścaryamaye 'cyute |
ya idam māyayā devyā sṛjaty avati hantya ajaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

You should not consider this so surprising for Kṛṣṇa who is full of all wonderful powers. He creates, maintains and destroys this universe by his power of Māyā-devī.

|| 1.8.17 ||

*brahma-tejo-vinirmuktair ātmajaiḥ saha kṛṣṇāya |
prayāṇābhimukhaṁ kṛṣṇam idam āha pṛthā sate ||*

TRANSLATION

The devotee Kuntī, along with Draupadī and her sons who were saved from the fire radiation of the *brahmāstra*, then spoke to Kṛṣṇa as he was about to depart for Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇayā means “with Draupadī.” *Satī* means a devotee.

|| 1.8.18 ||

*kunty uvāca
namasye puruṣam tvādyam īsvaram prakṛteḥ param |
alakṣyam sarva-bhūtānām antar bahir avasthitam ||*

TRANSLATION

I offer my respects to you, the Supreme Person, the original one, the controller, beyond the control of *prakṛti*, unseen by material senses, and existing inside and outside of all living beings.

COMMENTARY

Understanding everything that Kṛṣṇa had done recently, Kuntī was unable to tolerate the agitation caused by the great respect that arose in her heart. Thus she began praising Kṛṣṇa.

“But I am your nephew. Why are you offering respects?”

“But you are the Supreme Lord (*puruṣam*).”

“Of course I am a man (*puruṣam*). There is no doubt about that!”

“You are the first one (*ādyam*).”

“Well, all bodies come and go. All souls are original (*ādya*).”

“But you are supreme (*īśvaraḥ*).”

“Oh, in Svarga, Indra and the moon god, and on earth the kings are controllers (*īśvara*).”

“But you are superior to *prakṛti*.”

“Am I the *puruṣa* within, Paramātmā?”

“No, you are imperceptible (*alakṣyam*). The Paramātmā is subject to revelation by use of intelligence and other means.”

“Am I the imperceptible *brahman*?”

“No, you are situated internally and externally.”

|| 1.8.19 ||

*māyā-javanikācchannam ajñādhokṣajam avyayam |
na lakṣyase mūḍha-dṛśā naṭo nātyadharo yathā ||*

TRANSLATION

I do not know you, covered by the screen of *māyā*, beyond the knowledge of the material senses, and unaffected, just as the puppeteer behind the screen moving the puppets is not understood by the eyes of the ignorant.

COMMENTARY

Since internally, you protected the child in the womb of Uttarā and externally you protect us by being near us, should I understand that you are all pervading? I do not know. That is expressed in this verse.

“You are covered by the curtain (*javanikā*) of *māyā*.”

“Then *māyā* covers me?”

“It is like the fool who thinks that the sun is covered by a cloud. I see you as covered because my vision is covered by *māyā*, because you are beyond sense knowledge (*adhokṣajam*). Sense knowledge (*akṣajam jñānam*) is situated below you (*adhah*). I do not have the power to contact you, since my knowledge arises from my senses, like the knowledge of a fool. But even if despicable people like me do not know you, there is no loss for you. You remain unaffected by this (*avyayam*).

“But you see me directly and praise me. You know that I am beyond *prakṛti*. Then why do you criticize yourself as being ignorant?”

Though the dancer is endowed with rhythms and dance steps suitable to the *rasa*, the ignorant spectator, ignorant of the scriptures delineating performance, sees only a dancer dancing. Though he sees, he does not really see. Similarly though I see you, I really do not see you. The word *tathā* (similarly) should be understood from the context. Though you protect the Pāṇḍavas, your devotees, since you are the soul within all of us constantly, you personally counteracted a weapon of Aśvatthāmā meant for killing the Pāṇḍavas. Though you promised not to use weapons, you took up a weapon. Though you protect the righteous, you had Bhīṣma and other righteous persons destroyed. Though you are most affectionate to Draupadī and Subhadrā, you let their sons be killed. I do not know the truth about your pastimes.

|| 1.8.20 ||

tathā paramahaṁsānām muninām amalātmanām |
bhakti-yoga-vidhānārtham katham paśyema hi striyaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

How can we women hope to see you, the object of *bhakti* for the omniscient, liberated sages?

COMMENTARY

I am hopeless as a woman. Can even the omniscient sages, *paramahaṁsas*, who worship you with attraction for your sweet pastimes, being ignorant of the truth about your pastimes, know the intricacies of your pastimes? That is expressed in this verse.

Amalātmanām refers to those who are free from the contamination of material *guṇas*, liberated souls in this life. How can we see you, who are the object of *bhakti-yoga* practice (*bhakti-yoga-vidhānārtham*) for the *paramahaṁsas*? That the *paramahaṁsas* worship the Lord has been explained in the verse *ātmārāmas ca*

munayaḥ. (SB 1.7.10)

|| 1.8.21 ||

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya devakī-nandanāya ca |
nanda-gopa-kumārāya govindāya namo namaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I repeatedly offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, who gave joy to Devakī, who was the child of Nanda and satisfier of the senses of the *gopīs*.

COMMENTARY

Among all the *avatāras* you are the best. Though all those who have *prema* are fortunate, my brother Vasudeva was most fortunate, since you selected him as your father. That is the significance of the word Vāsudeva, son of Vasudeva. And your mother, endowed with even more *prema* is most fortunate. You made her more successful than all others by situating yourself in her womb alone. Thus Kuntī addresses Kṛṣṇa as *devakī-nandana*: he who gives joy to Devakī. Nanda, endowed with more *prema* is most fortunate. You let him alone experience the sweetness of your infant (*kumāra*) pastimes (*nanda-gopa-kumāra*). Yaśodā with abundant *prema* is most fortunate. This will be explained in verse 31. The pastimes of your *kaiśora* age have even more sweetness than the *kaumāra* pastimes. Thus Kuntī addresses Kṛṣṇa as Govinda. Kṛṣṇa got the name Govinda at the beginning of his *kaiśora* age after he was bathed by the Surabhi cow. You take possession (*vinda*) of all the senses (*go*) of all people. The enjoyers of this form of Kṛṣṇa are not mentioned because of their extraordinary nature, the esoteric nature of this love and the lack of qualification of others to taste it.

|| 1.8.22 ||

*namaḥ paṅkaja-nābhāya namaḥ paṅkaja-māline |
namaḥ paṅkaja-netrāya namas te paṅkajāṅghraye ||*

TRANSLATION

I offer respects to you, with lotus navel, wearing a lotus garland, having lotus eyes, and lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

I am also counted among the fortunate, for you give happiness to my eyes. My eyes, receiving the sight of your navel, garland, eyes and feet, become pleasantly cool.

|| 1.8.23 ||

*yathā hṛṣīkeśa khalena devakī
kaṁsena ruddhāticiraṁ śucārpitā |*

*vimocitāham ca sahātmajā vibho
tvayaiva nāthena muhur vipad-gaṇāt ||*

TRANSLATION

O master of the senses! O Lord! Just as you protected Devakī imprisoned by evil Kāmsa one time, you, my master, released me along with my sons repeatedly from even greater dangers, since I was afflicted with great suffering.

COMMENTARY

You protected me when I was helpless as if I were your mother.

O Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses! You alone know my heart since you are master of the senses. I was rescued from danger along with my sons. You showed special mercy to me (since you did not protect her (Devakī's) other children). What was the reason? I was more afflicted with suffering by my *karmas* (*śucārpitā*). I was suffering even more than Devakī. I was saved by you, my master (*nāthena*). She had a husband (*nātha*), Vasudeva and thus had the possibility of having more children. And since you were the crest jewel among all children, what need was there for her previous inferior children who were not saved? Moreover, I was again and again saved from a host of dangers, whereas she was saved from one little danger caused by Kāmsa. She had not even a trace of danger since she was happy with repeated expectations that the Supreme Lord would be born from her womb. And after you were born, she had no danger at all. I was in all ways wretched. You were merciful to me because you are the friend of the most fallen. I was not like fortunate Devakī who had *prema* for you.

|| 1.8.24 ||

*viṣān mahāgneḥ puruṣāda-darśanād
asat-sabhāyā vana-vāsa-kṛcchrataḥ |
mṛdhe mṛdhe 'neka-mahārathāstrato
drauṇy-astrataś cāsma hare 'bhirakṣitāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

You saved us from Bhīma getting poisoned, from the burning house of lac, from the sight of *rākṣasas* like Hidimbā, from the gambling den, from the hardships of living in the forest, from unlimited weapons thrown by great warriors in countless battlefields, and from the *brahmāstra* of Aśvatthāmā.

COMMENTARY

In this verse she shows the variety of dangers. *Viṣād* refers to the giving of poison to Bhīma. *Mahāgneḥ* means from the burning of the house of lac. *Puruṣāda* means the *rākṣasas* like Hidimbā. *Asat-sabhāyāḥ* refers to the gambling match.

|| 1.8.25 ||

*vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śaśvat tatra tatra jagad-guro |
bhavato darśanaṁ yat syād apunar bhava-darśanam ||*

TRANSLATION

O guru of the universe! May we have dangers in such situations continually, because in those dangers we will see you, and by that we will gain release from this material world.

COMMENTARY

These dangers are a great blessing to me. O *guru* of the universe! To give benefit to us, you destroy unsteadiness caused by intoxication with material comfort by giving the ointment of dangers arising out of your mercy. Through those dangers (*yad*) we can see you. By seeing you, we no longer will see the suffering of material existence.

|| 1.8.26 ||

*janmaīśvarya-śruta-śrībhir edhamāna-madaḥ pumān |
naivārhaty abhidhātum vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram ||*

TRANSLATION

A man swelling with pride because of birth, power, learning or money, cannot chant your names. You are available to those who have nothing except you.

COMMENTARY

The security of the material world is actually a danger. *Abhidhātum* means “to say the names of the Lord.”

|| 1.8.27 ||

*namo 'kiñcana-vittāya nivṛtta-guṇa-vṛttaye |
ātmārāmāya śāntāya kaivalya-pataye namaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I offer my respects to he whose treasure is unalloyed devotees, who is devoid of material interest, who is disinterested in those who are not devotees, who forgives his devotees, and helps the devotee desiring liberation.

COMMENTARY

Those who do not have anything materially speaking (*akiñcana*), but possess only you who have a body of complete knowledge and bliss, are alone your unalloyed devotees. They are the abodes of *prema*, and are thus like treasures, who should be hidden from everyone. I offer respects to you who possess these treasures of the *akiñcanas* (*akiñcana-vittāya*). But *akiñcanas* are poor. That is true. The devotees of the Lord do not have the wealth arising from the *guṇas* of *māyā* (*nivṛtta*). They have the Lord who is devoid of all material enjoyment (*nivṛtta-guṇa-vṛttaye*). The

Lord's attachment to the *akiñcana-bhaktas* was described. Now, his detachment from others is shown (*ātmārāmāya*). If the devotee makes offense to the Lord, the Lord does not become angry. He remains peaceful (*śāntāya*), showing mercy to his devotee. He also assists those devotees interested in liberation (*kaivalya-pataye*).

|| 1.8.28 ||

*manye tvām kālam īśānam anādi-nidhanam vibhum |
samam carantaṁ sarvatra bhūtānām yan mithaḥ kaliḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I consider you to be destroyer of the offenders, the controller, without beginning or end, the most powerful, equal to all, moving everywhere in all living beings, and the abode of conflicting qualities.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the Lord's destruction (*kālam*) of those who offend his devotees. You are not unjust (*samam*) because you show attachment to the devotee, indifference to matter, assistance to some and destruction to others. *Yad mithaḥ kaliḥ* means "in whom there is conflict because the Lord gives suffering and bliss, he is equal and prejudiced, is unmerciful and merciful."

|| 1.8.29 ||

*na veda kaścid bhagavañś cikīrṣitaṁ tavehamānasya nṛṇāṁ viḍambanam |
na yasya kaścid dayito 'sti karhicid dveṣyaś ca yasmin viṣamā matir nṛṇāṁ ||*

TRANSLATION

No one knows the intentions of the Lord who desires to hide himself in human form, who does not show favor or hatred to anyone, and about whom all men have different opinions.

COMMENTARY

"Who will decide the truth about you if there is a disagreement?" No one can decide. This is explained in two verses.

No one knows the plan of you who desire (*īhamānasya*) to make the knowledge of those who speculate about scripture useless. Or no one knows the plan of you who desire to play the role of human beings as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. Or no one knows the plan of you who desire to delude the fools by not letting them see your sweet qualities. All men have differing ideas about you (*yasmin viṣamā matir nṛṇāṁ*). The sun shows attachment to the sun stone by imparting its own qualities. It shows indifference to the blind people and is helpful to the Cakravāka birds (who become joyful when the sun rises and destroys darkness). The sun is harmful to the darkness used by thieves and owls. But the sun is not partial to anyone. It manifests the same light to all. The cause of difference is the good or bad qualities

of the specific object. It is the same with the Lord. Different people relate with the Lord in different ways according to their qualities.

|| 1.8.30 ||

*anma karma ca viśvātmann ajasyākartur ātmanaḥ |
tiryāṅ-nṛṣiṣu yādaḥsu tad atyanta-vidāmbanam ||*

TRANSLATION

O soul of the universe! You are unborn and perform no actions, but you take birth and perform activities in the forms of animals, men and aquatics. This is extremely deceptive.

COMMENTARY

Understanding the conclusions about your partiality or impartiality, your action or lack of action, your birth or lack of birth, one can relish your pastimes. You are born though you are unborn, and perform actions though you are not the doer. You manifest your attractive nature in various forms of animals, humans and aquatics. This is an extreme deception (*atyanta-vidāmbanam*) since it appears that you lessen your stature by accepting inferior forms. When you accepted the boar incarnation you sniffed out the earth. Though you are omniscient and omnipotent, you became a real boar. But seeing that form, the knowers of the truth will not laugh and say that you are simply a mortal animal, thinking that you are a *jīva* under the control of *karma*. Since you are actually without birth and material action, your pastimes with birth and action must not actually be true. But this is incompatible with the fact that the pastimes were attractive to *ātmārāmas* like Śukadeva. However, from the statement of the Lord himself *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo veti tattvataḥ*: he who knows the truth nature of my birth and activities (BG 4.9), the Lord's birth and activities are factual, not a fiction. This is incompatible with the statement that the Lord has no birth and no activities. Thus who can know the truth about the Lord possessing unlimited, inconceivable powers?

|| 1.8.31 ||

*gopy ādāde tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad
yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam |
vaktraṁ ninīya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya
sā mām vimohayati bhīr api yad bibheti ||*

TRANSLATION (from folio)

My dear Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā took up a rope to bind you when you committed an offense, and your perturbed eyes flooded with tears, which washed the mascara from your eyes. And you were afraid, though fear personified is afraid of you. This sight is bewildering to me.

COMMENTARY

Because of this I relish your pastimes. When you broke the yogurt pot, committing

offense against Yaśodā (*kṛtāgasi*), Yaśodā put a rope around your waist. The state at that moment astonishes me. Lowering your head with eyes filled with tears mixed with eye ointment, you stood there in fear of her punishment. It is astonishing because (*yad*) fear itself is afraid of you. This state shows that Yaśodā, having such *prema*, was more fortunate than Nanda, since you were brought under her control completely. By saying “fear is afraid of you” Kuntī shows her awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s power as the Lord. She also accepts as true that he was internally feeling fear. It would not be possible for her to be bewildered if she thought he was only imitating being fearful. Thus the word *viḍambanam* in the previous verse cannot mean imitation, that the Lord only took the various roles while pretending.

|| 1.8.32 ||

*kecid āhur ajam jātam puṇya-ślokasya kīrtaye |
yadoḥ priyasyānavavāye malayasyeva candanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Some say that you, though unborn, have taken birth in the Yadu family to give fame to Yudhiṣṭhira, just as sandalwood, originating in the Malaya Hills gives fame to those hills.

COMMENTARY

If you were not to appear in this world how would we be able to relish your enchanting pastimes? There are many opinions about the cause of your appearance. *Puṇya-śloka* here refers to Yudhiṣṭhira, since he was famous by that name at that time. *puṇya-śloko nalo rājā puṇya-śloko yudhiṣṭhirah: puṇya-śloka* means King Nala, a famous person or Yudhiṣṭhira. You appeared in the Yadu dynasty to glorify dear Yudhiṣṭhira. Or the sentence can mean “You appeared in that dynasty to glorify the famous Yadu.”

|| 1.8.33 ||

*apare vasudevasya devakyām yācito ’bhyagāt |
ajas tvam asya kṣemāya vadhāya ca sura-dviṣām ||*

TRANSLATION

Some say that you, though unborn, appeared as the son of Vasudeva in Devakī upon their request, in order to protect the world and kill the demons.

COMMENTARY

You are unborn yet you came as the son of Vasudeva. Using third person (*abhyagāt*) instead of second person verb ending with *tvam* is poetic license. Previously in the form of Sutapa and Pṛṣṇi they asked the Lord to be their son. You appeared for protecting the world (*asya*) and killing the demons.

|| 1.8.34 ||

*bhārāvatāraṇāyānye bhuvo nāva ivodadhau |
sīdantyā bhūri-bhāreṇa jāto hy ātma-bhuvārthitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Others say that you appeared at the request of Brahmā for lifting up the earth which had sunk like a boat overloaded with weight.

COMMENTARY

Another opinion is that you appeared mainly because of Brahmā's request.

|| 1.8.35 ||

*bhave 'smin kliṣyamānānām avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ |
śravaṇa-smaraṇārḥāṇi kariṣyann iti kecana ||*

TRANSLATION

Some say that you have appeared in this world to help those suffering due to their actions arising from material desires arising from ignorance by engaging them in hearing and remembering about you, so that they can attain *prema*.

COMMENTARY

This is the real reason for the Lord's appearance. First there is ignorance (*avidyā*) and then desire (*kāma*), and then action (*karmabhiḥ*). You come to engage those suffering due to actions arising from material desires which are due to ignorance in actions for attaining *prema*. The destruction of suffering is incidental, because it is said in the next verse that the result of hearing about the Lord is seeing the lotus of the Lord. By seeing the Lord one attains *prema*.

|| 1.8.36 ||

*śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanty abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
smaranti nandanti tavehitam janāḥ |
ta eva paśyanty acireṇa tāvakam
bhava-pravāhoparamam padāmbujam ||*

TRANSLATION

Persons who constantly hear, sing, speak, remember and sing to others about your activities—they alone, without delay, are able to see your lotus feet which destroy the influence of material existence.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows the actual reason for the Lord's appearance. They and not others (*eva*) see for certain. It is not that they do not see. They see without delay (*acireṇa*), not after a long time, your lotus feet, not the lotus feet of one of your expansions. Those lotus feet destroy the influence of material existence rather

than prolong material existence. Your form is not without qualities. In order to appreciate the beauty of the Lord, his six aspects need to be seen.

|| 1.8.37 ||

*apy adya nas tvam sva-kṛteḥita prabho
jihāsasi svit suhṛdo ’nujīvinaḥ |
yeṣāṁ na cānyad bhavataḥ padāmbujāt
parāyaṇaṁ rājasu yojitāmhasām ||*

TRANSLATION

O Lord! Do you, whose deeds are automatically accomplished, desire to reject us today, though we are your friends and depend on you? We, having created trouble with many kings, have no other shelter than your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

We, and not others, become happy on seeing you and suffer on not seeing you. The time of happiness has passed and the time of suffering has arrived.

“Do you desire to leave us today, since you desire to go to Dvārakā?”

“But I have stayed many days. Now I must go to Dvārakā. I have necessary work there. Please give your assent.”

To this Kuntī answers, “But you are the person whose necessary works are already accomplished. Your intentions fulfill themselves automatically (*sva-kṛteḥita*). Some versions have the word without the *visarga* (*ḥ*). Then it would be a vocative address to Kṛṣṇa, “O self-accomplisher!” The Pāṇḍavas had created suffering for many kings by killing their fathers or relatives. We depend on you (*anujīvinaḥ*). Therefore stay here and protect my sons.

|| 1.8.38 ||

*ke vyaṁ nāma-rūpābhyāṁ yadubhiḥ saha pāṇḍavāḥ |
bhavato ’darśanaṁ yarhi hṛṣīkāṇām iveśituḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Without your presence who are we, the Pāṇḍavas along with the Yadus with their fame and strength? We are like the senses without the *jīva*.

COMMENTARY

“But Bhīma and Arjuna, your sons, are very powerful. The king is *dharma* personified and the Yādavas are your friends. You have no worries.”

Who are we Pāṇḍavas with the Yadus having fame (*nāma*) and ability (*rūpa*) without your presence? Similarly, without the presence of the *jīva* the senses have no significance or power.

|| 1.8.39 ||

*neyam śobhiṣyate tatra yathedānīm gadādhara |
tvat-padair ankitā bhāti sva-lakṣaṇa-vilakṣitaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O holder of the club! When you go, this land, marked with the special signs on your feet, will not glow as it does now.

COMMENTARY

If you go there, this land (*iyam*) will not glow. The land is marked uniquely (*vilakṣitaiḥ*) with your signs -- the flag and thunderbolt.

|| 1.8.40 ||

*me jana-padāḥ svṛddhāḥ supakvausaḍhi-vīrudhaḥ |
vanādri-nady-udanvanto hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

This thriving land, filled with ripe herbs and fruit-laden trees, forests, mountains and rivers, has grown prosperous by your glance.

|| 1.8.41 ||

*atha viśveśa viśvātman viśva-mūrte svakeṣu me |
sneha-pāśam imaṁ chindhi dṛḍham pāṇḍuṣu vṛṣṇiṣu ||*

TRANSLATION

O Lord of all the universes! O life of all the universes! O form of all the universes! Please cut my strong bonds of affection for my relatives, the Pāṇḍavas and Yādavas.

COMMENTARY

Both your departure from here and coming here are unfortunate: departure for the Pāṇḍavas and coming here for the Yādavas. Since she ends up with a disturbed mind in either case, Kuntī prays to cut off her ties of affection with both parties. You are the Lord of all the universes (*viśveśa*). You give life to all the universes (*viśvātman*). Though you are the form of the universe, being an ocean of mercy, you are always attentive in regards to the welfare of the Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas. Will I die uselessly by thinking of their welfare?

|| 1.8.42 ||

*tvayi me 'nanya-viṣayā matir madhu-pate 'sakṛt |
ratim udvahatād addhā gaṅgevaugham udanvati ||*

TRANSLATION

Let my mind, with attention fixed on no other object, repeatedly carry its affection to you, chief of the Madhu dynasty, just as the Gaṅgā carries a full stream of water to the ocean.

COMMENTARY

“Then do you want realization of *brahman*? Because if you cut your affection for the Yādavas, you will cut your affection for me also.”

May my mind hold (*udvahatāt*) affection (*rati*) for you, without any obstacle. *Udvah* means to flow strongly. The mind should not think of anything else (*ananya-viṣayā*). Your devotees are non-different from you and thus without affection for them affection for you cannot take place. It is not possible that this could please you. This I know. Therefore let my mind have attraction for no one except you and your devotees. I prayed to cut affectionate bonds with the Pāṇḍavas and Yādavas who are your devotees. But since it is a prayer in front of you it means cutting only the material affection which arises from bodily identification. It is not cutting the affectionate relation with you. I want to cut that affection which causes bondage. Just as the Gaṅgā carries a full stream of water (*ogham*) to the ocean, the shelter of small and large rivers, may my mind also carry its affection to you, who are the shelter of all the devotees. Just as the Gaṅgā does not consider any obstacles on its course, my mind also should not consider any obstacles that may rise while thinking of you.

|| 1.8.43 ||

*śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa-sakha vṛṣṇy-ṛṣabhāvani-dhruḡ-
rājanya-vaṁśa-dahanānapavarga-vīrya |
govinda go-dvija-surārti-harāvatāra
yogeśvarākhila-guro bhagavan namas te ||*

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa! Of friend of Arjuna! Best of the Yādavas! Destroyer of the kings who harmed the earth! Lord of undiminished strength! Lord of all the cows! Destroyer of the suffering of the cows, *brāhmaṇas* and *devatās*! Master of *yoga*! Guru of all people! O Lord! I offer respects to you.

COMMENTARY

After offering her prayers she offers respects while remembering how the Lord gave happiness to all people. *Kṛṣṇa-sakha* means friend of Arjuna. You destroyed the dynasties of kings who injured the earth. You have undiminished strength (*anapavarga-vīrya*). You have a wealth of *kama-dhenus* (*govinda*).

|| 1.8.44 ||

sūta uvāca

*prthayettham kala-padaih pariṇūtākhilodayah |
mandam jahāsa vaikunṭho mohayann iva māyayā ||*

TRANSLATION

Suta said:

The Lord, whose greatness had been glorified by the sweet words of Kuntī, smiled softly as if bewildered by *prema*.

COMMENTARY

Pariṇūta comes from the verb *pariṇu* of the *tud* class. With the long vowel it means “to praise.” The Lord was bewildered, not by material *māyā* but by *prema*.

|| 1.8.45 ||

*tām bādham ity upāmantrya praviśya gajasāhvayam |
striyaś ca sva-puraṁ yāsyān premṇā rājñā nivāritāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Agreeing with her, Kṛṣṇa entered Hastināpura. Wanting to leave for his city, he took permission from Kuntī and the other women. He was prevented from leaving by Yudhiṣṭhira out his great love for Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Kuntī had prayed that her mind be concentrated only on the Lord. Kṛṣṇa accepted that. He then went away from the chariot stable and returned to Hastināpura. He then took permission to leave from Kuntī and the other women headed by Subhadrā. As he was about to go to Dvārakā, Yudhiṣṭhira prevented him, begging that he stay a little longer. This indicates that Kṛṣṇa was completely controlled by the love of the king.

|| 1.8.46 ||

*vyāsādyair īsvarehājñaiḥ kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmaṇā |
prabodhito 'pītihāsair nābudhyata śucārpitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Though instructed through stories by Vyāsa and other sages who did not know the Lord's intention, and though even instructed by Kṛṣṇa, who had performed the remarkable action of bewildering Yudhiṣṭhira at this moment, Yudhiṣṭhira became overcome with grief, and could not understand those instructions.

COMMENTARY

Since I am not staying here, I will make my devotee Bhīṣma happy by showing myself along with my followers to him since he does not want to die without seeing me, and his death is now approaching. I will have him instruct Yudhiṣṭhira in order to spread his glories to the world. This verse conveys this wish of the Lord.

Vyāsādyair īsvarehājñaiḥ means “by Vyāsa and other sages who either knew or did not know the above-mentioned intention of the Lord.” Kṛṣṇa performed a remarkable action (*adbhūta-karmaṇā*) of entering Yudhiṣṭhira’s heart and making him lose his sense of judgment. Kṛṣṇa made him completely incapable of understanding the teachings of himself and Vyāsa. By having Bhīṣma enlighten him, the Lord announced to the world that Bhīṣma, his pure devotee, had more knowledge of *dharma* than Vyāsa, other sages, or even Kṛṣṇa. But because Yudhiṣṭhira had even greater *prema* for Kṛṣṇa than Bhīṣma, Kṛṣṇa, though going to Dvārakā, stayed back with him because of his request. Having approached Yudhiṣṭhira, he then created this loss of judgment in Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 1.8.47 ||

*āha rājā dharma-sutaś cintayan suhrdām vadham |
prākṛtenātmanā viprāḥ sneha-moha-vaśam gataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*! Yudhiṣṭhira, thinking of the killing of his friends, overcome with bewilderment arising from affection, due to material thinking, then spoke.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes Yudhiṣṭhira’s loss of discrimination. Though his self was actually spiritual, he thought of himself materially (*prākṛtena ātmanā*). But this was only a temporary imposition, by the Lord’s desire, so that the Lord’s plan could be carried out.

|| 1.8.48 ||

*aho me paśyatājñānam hr̥di rūḍham durātmanah |
pārakyasyaiva dehasya bahvyo me ’kṣauhiṇīr hatāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Oh! Look at the ignorance spread over my evil heart. Just for my body which is fit for the jackals’ food, I have killed many armies.

COMMENTARY

For my body which is food for dogs and jackals (*pārakyasya*) I have killed many *akṣauhiṇīs*. Vyāsa has described the *akṣauhiṇī*.

*akṣauhiṇī prasamkhyātā rathānām dvija-sattamāḥ |
samkhyā-gaṇana-tattva-jñaiḥ sahasrāny eka-vimśatiḥ ||
śatāny upari caivāṣṭau tathā bhūyaś ca saptatiḥ |
gajānām ca prasamkhyānam etad eva prakīrtitam ||
jñeyam śata-sahasraṁ tu sahasrāni navaiiva tu |
nārāṇām api pañcāśacchatāni trīṇi caiva hi ||*

*pañca-ṣaṣṭhi-sahasrāṇi tathāśvānām śatāni ca |
daśottarāṇi ṣaṭ prāhuḥ saṁkhyā-tattva-vido janāḥ |
etām akṣauhiṇīm prāhur yathāvad iha saṁkhyayā ||*

O best of the *brāhmaṇas*! Those who understand counting know that an *akṣauhiṇī* consists of 21,870 chariots and the same number of elephants. It has 109,350 foot soldiers. It has 65,610 horses.

|| 1.8.49 ||

*bāla-dvija-suhṛn-mitra-pitr-bhrāṭṛ-guru-druhaḥ |
na me syān nirayān mokṣo hy api varṣāyutāyutaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Because I have killed children, *brāhmaṇas*, relatives, friends, paternal uncles, cousins, and *gurus*, I cannot be free from hellish punishments for ten thousand years.

COMMENTARY

Suhṛt here means relatives and *mitra* means friends. *Pitr* means paternal uncles.

|| 1.8.50 ||

*naino rājñah prajā-bhartur dharma-yuddhe vadho dviṣām |
iti me na tu bodhāya kalpate śāsanam vacaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

There is no sin for the king who kills the enemy in a righteous war, protecting the citizens. This rule does not apply to me.

COMMENTARY

Killing the enemy is not a sin. This rule does not apply, since it is an instruction for one who is protecting the people. One is permitted to kill those who are killing one's citizens. Since Duryodhana was protecting the citizens, I have committed sins, since I have killed only out of greed for a kingdom.

|| 1.8.51 ||

*strīṇām mad-dhata-bandhūnām droho yo 'sāv ihotthitaḥ |
karmabhir grhamedhīyair nāham kalpo vyapohitum ||*

TRANSLATION

I cannot counteract the injury I have inflicted on the women, whose husbands or sons I have killed, by household rituals.

COMMENTARY

Mad-dhata-bandhūnām means “women whose husbands I have killed.” *Kalpaḥ*

means capable.

|| 1.8.52 ||

*yathā pañkena pañkāmbhaḥ surayā vā surākṛtam |
bhūta-hatyām tathaivaikām na yajñair mārṣtum arhati ||*

TRANSLATION

Just as one cannot purify muddy water by using mud, or cannot purify what is contaminated with liquor by apply more liquor, it is not possible to purify oneself of killing even one living being by performance of animal sacrifices.

COMMENTARY

“Śruti says *sarvaṁ pāpmānaṁ tarati brahmahatyām yo ’śvamedhena yajate*: he who performs a horse sacrifice is purified of all sins, even the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore you can purify yourself by a horse sacrifice.”

Just as thick mud cannot purify muddy water, and an object made impure by contact with wine cannot become pure by washing it with a lot of wine, one cannot be purified of killing by the performance of many sacrifices which has intentional killing of animals as a major part.

Chapter Nine Passing of Bhīṣma

|| 1.9.1 ||

sūta uvāca—

*iti bhītaḥ prajā-drohāt sarva-dharma-vivitsayā |
tato vinaśanam²⁸ prāgād yatra deva-vrato ’patat ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Being fearful because of having committed violence against the population, Yudhiṣṭhira, desiring to examine all *dharmas*, went to Kurukṣetra where Bhīṣma had fallen.

COMMENTARY

In the ninth chapter Bhīṣma sees Kṛṣṇa, and at his request speaks on *dharma*. Being praised profusely, filled with devotion, he attains the Lord.

When all present agreed that the correct advice was to ask Bhīṣma - who knew all *dharmas* - whether Yudhiṣṭhira had lost his sense of judgment, Yudhiṣṭhira went to

²⁸ ‘viçasanam’ iti pāḍhau |

Kurukṣetra to meet Bhīṣma. *Vivitsayā* means with a desire to examine. *Vinaśanam* refers to Kurukṣetra. *Devavrataḥ* is Bhīṣma.

|| 1.9.2 ||

tadā te²⁹ bhrātaraḥ sarve sadaśvaiḥ svarṇa-bhūṣitaiḥ |
anvagacchan rathair viprā vyāsa-dhaumyādayas tathā ||

TRANSLATION

His brother and *brāhmaṇas* such as Vyāsa and Dhaumya followed behind with chariots decorated with gold and fine horses.

|| 1.9.3 ||

bhagavān api viprarṣe rathena sa-dhanañjayaḥ |
sa tair vyarocata nṛpaḥ kuvera iva guhyakaiḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! The Lord along with Arjuna also followed behind in his chariot. King Yudhiṣṭhira shone like the god of wealth Kuvera accompanied by the Guhyakas, guardians of his treasures.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa also followed behind Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 1.9.4 ||

dr̥ṣṭvā nipatitaṁ bhūmau divaś cyutam ivāmaram |
praṇemuḥ pāṇḍavā bhīṣmaṁ sānugāḥ saha cakriṇā ||

TRANSLATION

Seeing Bhīṣma lying on the ground like a fallen *devatā*, the Pāṇḍavas offered respects to him along with their followers and Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.9.5 ||

tatra brahmarṣayaḥ sarve devarṣayaś ca sattama³⁰ |
rājarsayaś ca tatrāsan draṣṭuṁ bhārata-puṅgavam ||

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! There the *brāhmaṇa* sages, the sages of the heavenly planets and the kings who were sages had gathered to see the best of the Bharata lineage.

|| 1.9.6-8 ||

²⁹ 'tadā tam' iti pāḍhau |

³⁰ 'sattamāu' iti pāḍhau |

parvato nārado dhaumyo bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ |
bṛhadaśvo bharadvājaḥ saśiṣyo reṇukā-sutaḥ ||
vasiṣṭha indrapramadas trito gr̥tsamado 'sitaḥ |
kākṣivān gautamo 'triś ca kauśiko 'tha sudarśanaḥ ||
anye ca munayo brahman brahmarātādayo 'malāḥ |
śiṣyair upetā ājagmuḥ kaśyapāṅgirasādayaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! Parvata, Nārada, Dhaumya, Vyāsa, Bṛhadaśva, Bharadvāja, Parāśurāma, Vasiṣṭha, Indrapramada, Trita, Gṛtsamada, Asita, Kākṣivān, Gautama, Atri, Kauśika, Sudarśana, along with their disciples, and as well many other pure sages such as Śuka, Kaśyapa and Bṛhaspati came along with their disciples.

COMMENTARY

Renukā-suta is Paraśurāma. *Brahma-rāta* is Śukadeva. *Āṅgirasa* is Bṛhaspati.

|| 1.9.9 ||

tān sametān mahā-bhāgān upalabhya vasūttamaḥ |
pūjayām āsa dharma-jño deśa-kāla-vibhāgavit ||

TRANSLATION

The best of the Vasus, Bhīṣma, endowed with great qualities, knowledgeable of *dharma* as applicable according to place and time, seeing that they had gathered, worshipped them.³¹

COMMENTARY

Vasūttama is Bhīṣma.

|| 1.9.10 ||

kṛṣṇam ca tat-prabhāva-jña āsīnam jagad-īśvaram |
hr̥di-stham pūjayām āsa māyayopātta-vigraham ||

TRANSLATION

Bhīṣma, understanding Kṛṣṇa's powers, worshipped Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the universe, situated within the heart, who was seated there and who had come before Bhīṣma out of great mercy.

COMMENTARY

Māyayopātta-vigraham can mean Kṛṣṇa who had a conflict (*vigraha*) with Yudhiṣṭhira by covering up his discrimination with his *yoga-māyā*. Or it means Kṛṣṇa who brought himself before the eyes of Bhīṣma (*upātta*) by his mercy

³¹ Črédhara Svāmé says that since he could not rise, Bhéṣma worshipped them mentally and with words.

(māyayā).

|| 1.9.11 ||

*pāṇḍu-putrān upāsīnān praśraya-prema-saṅgatān |
abhyācaṣṭānurāgāśrair andhībhūtena cakṣuṣā ||*

TRANSLATION

His eyes blinded by tears of love, he spoke to the Pāṇḍavas sitting there, filled with humility and love.

COMMENTARY

Abhyācaṣṭa means “he spoke.”

|| 1.9.12 ||

*aho kaṣṭam aho ’nyāyyam yad yūyam dharma-nandanāḥ |
jīvitum nārhattha kliṣṭam vipra-dharmācyutāśrayāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Having the shelter of *brāhmaṇas*, *dharma* and Kṛṣṇa, you should not live your life in suffering since that is dangerous and improper.

COMMENTARY

The words “dangerous” (*kaṣṭam*) and “improper” (*anyāyyam*) do not really apply to the king. To whom do the words refer? The improper situation has arisen because of Viṣṇu, the mover and maintainer of the whole universe. You should not live your life in suffering (*kliṣṭam* taken adverbially). If others live like that, that is their concern.

|| 1.9.13 ||

*saṁsthite ’tirathe pāṇḍau pṛthā bāla-prajā vadhūḥ |
yuṣmat-kṛte bahūn kleśān prāptā tokavatī muhuh ||*

TRANSLATION

When the great warrior Pāṇḍu died, his wife Kuntī with young children constantly underwent many difficulties in raising you since you were young at that time.

COMMENTARY

“What was the suffering?” This verse describes it. Being alone with young children causes much suffering. Though you are now grown up, she underwent great suffering with you as a young child.

|| 1.9.14 ||

*sarvaṁ kāla-kṛtaṁ manye bhavatāṁ ca yad apriyam |
sa-pālo³² yad-vaśe loko vāyor iva ghanāvaliḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I consider that this, which is unwelcome, has all been done to you by time, which controls the world and its protectors just as the wind controls the clouds.

COMMENTARY

What is the cause of our suffering? It cannot be said, since I do not see either recent or old *karmas* as the cause. Therefore Bhīṣma speaks words of the common people.

“But time is simply the substratum of the experience of happiness and distress which are *prārabdha-karmas*. Thus, when you say that time is the cause, time is acting as an assistant. Why do you not just say clearly that our suffering is our *prārabdha-karma* resulting from our sins?”

Yudhiṣṭhira is well known as the direct incarnation of *dharma*. If Dharma (Yudhiṣṭhira) has *prārabdha-karmas*, how can he have any sense of *dharma*? The cause is not *karma*, but time, which cannot be countered and cannot be explained.

|| 1.9.15 ||

*yatra dharma-suto rājā gadā-pāṇir vṛkodarah |
kṛṣṇo 'strī gāṇḍivam cāpaṁ suhṛt kṛṣṇas tato vipat ||*

TRANSLATION

You are lamenting where there is Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, Bhīma, holder of the club, Arjuna holder of the bow Gāṇḍiva, and your friend Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

“Kapila has said:

*na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe naṅśyanti no me 'nimiṣo leḍhi hetih
yeśāṁ ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca sakhā guruḥ suhṛdo daivam iṣtam*

The devotees in the spiritual world are deprived of any enjoyment. My wheel of time does not afflict those devotees, for whom I am a lover, the *ātmā*, son, friend, elder, companion or worshipable deity. SB 3.25.38

How then could time attack the Pāṇḍavas who were filled with *dāśya*, *sakhya* and

³² 'sa kālāi' ity api kvacit pāḍhau |

vātsalya for Kṛṣṇa? This is most astonishing! Without a cause, time has produced effects, whose cause we must infer, but which looks similar to *karma*.” That is the intention of this verse.

Kṛṣṇa means Arjuna, with his bow (*astrī*). Though you have strength of piety, strength of body, strength of skill, strength of scriptural knowledge, strength of friends and strength of wealth, still you lament.

|| 1.9.16 ||

*na hy asya karhicid rājan pumān veda vidhitsitam |
yad vijijñāsayā yuktā muhyanti kavayo 'pi hi ||*

TRANSLATION

O King! No one can understand the plan of Kṛṣṇa because even those engaged in reasoning and scripture are bewildered by that inquiry.

COMMENTARY

“So what should I conclude?” Here is the general conclusion. Everyone agrees that no one can interfere with the plans of the Kṛṣṇa and no one can even understand what his plans are, even today. No person, starting with Brahmā and Śiva, knows the plan of the Lord, what to speak of me!

Maybe no one knows. But inquiry is necessary. Does he want to give us suffering? Does he want to give us joy? Does he want to give us suffering and happiness? It cannot be the first, because then his quality of being affectionate to his devotee would be cancelled. It cannot be the second option, because we have not seen any happiness. It cannot be the third option because that would be a contradiction to his kind nature. It is finally decided that one cannot solve the problem by inquiry. Thus the verse says that even those who use their intelligence to discriminate and those use knowledge of scripture are bewildered by inquiry.

|| 1.9.17 ||

*tasmād idam daiva-tantram vyavasya bharatarṣabha |
tasyānuvihito 'nāthā nātha pāhi prajāḥ prabho ||*

TRANSLATION

O master! O controller! Of best of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, discerning that the suffering and happiness is dependent only on Kṛṣṇa, follow him and protect the helpless citizens.

COMMENTARY

Discern (*vyavasya*) that this happiness and suffering (*idam*) is dependent on the lord (*daiva-tantram*), but understand that the purpose of giving happiness and distress to his devotee is not easily understood, since it has already been said that his plan is hard to comprehend. Having discerned this, follow Kṛṣṇa (*tasya*

anuvihitaḥ) and protect the citizens who are without a guide (*anāthāḥ*) to lead them to Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.9.18 ||

*eṣa vai bhagavān sāksād ādyo nārāyaṇaḥ pumān |
mohayan māyayā lokam gūḍhaś carati vṛṣṇiṣu ||*

TRANSLATION

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the original Nārāyaṇa, the *puruṣa*, who bewilders the world with his energy, secretly moves in the Yādava family.

COMMENTARY

“But how can you say that it is all dependent on the Lord and that no one knows the plan of the Lord, when the Lord is at this moment right in front of you? How can you not know his plan when you can ask him?” In reply, Bhīṣma speaks this verse. “He bewilders us with his energy.” Even if asked by Bhīṣma, the Lord will not speak, but instead will evade him by answering, “Am I so intelligent?” Even if he says something, he still bewilders everyone. Therefore his plan is to be followed, but is not subject to inquiry.

|| 1.9.19 ||

*asyānubhāvam bhagavān veda guhyatamaṁ śivaḥ |
devarṣir nāradaḥ sāksād bhagavān kapilo nṛpa ||*

TRANSLATION

O king! Lord Śiva, Nārada, sage of the heavens, and Lord Kapila know the most secret *anubhāvas* of Kṛṣṇa, though not his intentions.

COMMENTARY

Śiva and others knows particular actions of Kṛṣṇa--those actions he chooses to reveal to them (*anubhāvam*), but not his intentions, his real form or his real powers. The knower of *rasa-śāstras* knows first of all *anubhāvas* and *sāttvika-bhāvas* - paralysis, perspiration, hair standing on end etc. By that he can understand the *sthāyi-bhāva*. By the particular qualities and intensity of the *anubhāvas*, he can understand the particular qualities and intensity of the *sthāyi-bhāva*. The knower of *rasa-śāstra* knows the *anubhāva* of Kṛṣṇa being tied by a rope by the *gopīs* like Yaśodā, and the dependent *anubhāva* of Kṛṣṇa being the charioteer for Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira and Ugrasena. These are *anubhāvas* of Kṛṣṇa indicating his dependence on others. The knower of *rasa* then infers that there exists something special in these cases which controls and melts the heart of even the Supreme Lord, the controller of all, the supremely independent entity. That object, which melts the hearts of the *viṣaya* and *āśraya*, which has many varieties, and which brings both parties under the control of the other is called *prema*. It is

the crest jewel of all goals for the human being and is described by terms such as *bhakti*, *sneha* and *anurāga*.

Seeing that Kṛṣṇa is controlled more when he sees his devotees, who generate *prema* in him, the knower of *rasa* infers that there is intense *prema* in the *siddha* and *sādhaka* devotees. He then concludes that the Kṛṣṇa is cause of difficulties for devotees, in order to increase their devotion to that level. Śiva, Nārada and Kapila know this. One sees an increase in *prema* in Draupadī and others when their difficulties increase.

*yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another. SB 10.88.8

Thus the difficulties the devotees experience are not *prārabdha-karmas* since they are given by the Lord alone, who wants to benefit the devotees. However, this is not an inclusive rule. Sometimes the Lord increases his devotee's *bhakti* without giving problems to him. Thus it is said that no one knows the plan of the Lord. Śiva and Nārada know the *anubhāvas* or symptoms in the Lord. Other foolish people do not know the *anubhāvas*, like Kṛṣṇa allowing himself to be tied up. They explain it as some sort of fake display.

|| 1.9.20 ||

*yaṁ manyase mātuleyaṁ priyaṁ mitraṁ suhr̥ttamam |
akaroḥ sacivaṁ dūtaṁ sauhṛdād atha sārathim ||*

TRANSLATION

You think of Kṛṣṇa as your cousin, as a dear friend, as your selfless helper, and out of affection made him your counselor, messenger, and charioteer.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows Kṛṣṇa's *anubhāvas* or actions performed out of deep love. Though Kṛṣṇa is the supreme lord he displays actions indicating that he is under your control by being your counselor and messenger. The verse is actually a continuation of the previous verse: no one knows the actions of Kṛṣṇa whom you consider your cousin and friend.

|| 1.9.21 ||

*sarvātmanaḥ sama-dṛśo hy advayasyānahaṅkṛteḥ |
tat-kṛtaṁ mati-vaiṣamaṁ niravadyasya na kvacit ||*

TRANSLATION

His actions are not a mistake of his judgment for he is faultless, he is the soul of all beings, he sees all equally, he is without a second, and is without pride.

COMMENTARY

“Becoming a messenger or charioteer because of being controlled by *bhakti* is a degradation of his position. If he is like that, how can the Lord’s *prema* give him real happiness?” This verse answers. Kṛṣṇa is without fault, and possesses faultless *prema* (*niravadyasya*). His actions like being a messenger (*tat-kṛtam*) are not a deviation of his mind, because he is at all times the possessor of great powers which accomplish everything automatically. He is the soul of everyone (*sarvātmanah*), even of Arjuna, since he acts as his charioteer and also fights in the chariot. Because he is the soul of everyone, he sees everyone as equal to himself (*sama-dṛśaḥ*). Because he is the soul of everyone, there is no one except him (*advayasya*). Because there is no one else, he has no pride (*anahaṅkṛteḥ*). Moreover, even a person without great powers, being filled with *prema*, does not consider his suffering, caused by sinful acts that he alone has performed, to be suffering, because of his *prema*. Thus the Lord who is full of all powers and is bliss personified can have no suffering from his actions of *prema*.

You are special examples of *prema* because this Lord has become your messenger (*tat-kṛtam*). He is brought under control by your *prema*.

|| 1.9.22 ||

*tathāpy ekānta-bhakteṣu paśya bhūpānukampitam |
yan me ’sūms tyajataḥ sākṣāt kṛṣṇo darśanam āgataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O king! See his mercy to his dedicated devotees! By that mercy he has come before me directly when I am about to leave my body.

COMMENTARY

Tathāpi here means “though it is not possible for me to be like you.” “Still see his mercy to me, by which that form of *brahman* which is filled with bliss has come near such a low person like me. This is another of his *anubhāvas*, for it is actually to show mercy to you that he comes to me.”

|| 1.9.23-24 ||

*bhaktyāveśya mano yasmin vācā yan-nāma kīrtayan |
tyajan kalevaram yogi mucyate kāma-karmabhiḥ³³ ||*

*sa deva-devo bhagavān pratīkṣatām
kalevaram yāvad idaṁ hinomy aham |*

³³ ‘kāmya-karmabhiḥ’ ity api pāṭhaḥ |

*prasanna-hāsārūṇa-locanollasan-
mukhāmbujo dhyāna-pathaś catur-bhujah ||*

TRANSLATION

The devotee whose mind is absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, whose voice chants his name, becomes freed from all *karmas* on giving up the material body. May that Kṛṣṇa, lord of lords, with glowing lotus face, red eyes and pleasing smile, with four arms, the object of my meditation, remain before me while I drink his beauty and praise him, before giving up this body.

COMMENTARY

May he remain here (*pratīkṣatām*) until I, after some time, after drinking the sweetness of his beauty with my eyes, after I praise him and reveal what is in my mind, give up my body. May he with four arms, who should at all times be the object of my meditation, since he is my object of worship, with his pleasing form and smile, remain directly in front of my eyes at the time of my passing from the body.

Bhīṣma addressed him as a form with four arms because that was the form of Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the *mantra* he used during meditation.

|| 1.9.25 ||

sūta uvāca—

*yudhiṣṭhiras tad ākarṇya śayānam śara-pañjare |
apṛcchad vividhān dharmān ṛṣiṇām cānuṣṛṇvatām ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said:

Yudhiṣṭhira, hearing what he had said, then asked Bhīṣma, lying on a bed of arrows, about various *dharmas* while the sages were listening.

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira, anxious about who would free him from delusion, began to ask Bhīṣma, lying on a bed of arrows. Though one should not ask questions when Bhīṣma is in such a situation, because he had no alternative, he asked.

|| 1.9.26 ||

*puruṣa-sva-bhāva-vihitān yathā-varṇam yathāśramam |
vairāgya-rāgopādhibhyām āmnātobhaya-lakṣaṇān ||*

TRANSLATION

He described *dharmas* suitable for men according to their natures, according to *varṇa* and *āśrama*, which have qualities of renunciation and enjoyment described according to a person's detachment or attachment.

COMMENTARY

He described the general *dharma* for humans according to their natures (*puruṣa-sva-bhāva-vihitān*). Three verses are joined in one sentence. *Yathā-varṇam* is an indeclinable, meaning “being qualified by *varṇa*.” *Yathāśramam* means “being qualified by *āśrama*.” The *āśramas* have qualities of renunciation and enjoyment, which are described respectively according to qualification of detachment or attachment. It is a rule that all the *āśramas*, such as *brahmacarī*, need not be undertaken one after the other by all *brāhmaṇas*. If they have constant renunciation they become *sannyāsis* and if they have constant attachment, they become *grhasthas*.

|| 1.9.27 ||

dāna-dharmān rāja-dharmān mokṣa-dharmān vibhāgaśaḥ |
strī-dharmān bhagavad-dharmān samāsa-vyāsa-yogataḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Within *varṇāśrama*, he described duties of charity, duties of the king, duties for attaining liberation, duties of women and *bhakti-yoga*, in brief and in detail.

COMMENTARY

And within *varṇāśrama*, more particularly he described *dāna* or charity, king’s duties and duties for attaining liberation, women’s duties and finally duties to the Lord (*bhagavad-dharmān*). This refers to the *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. It is placed at the end to indicate that it is the best. He described them in brief and in detail (*samāsa-vyāsa-yogataḥ*).

|| 1.9.28 ||

dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṁś ca sahopāyān yathā mune |
nānākhyānetihāseṣu varṇayām āsa tattvavit³⁴ ||

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka! Bhīṣma, knower of truth, accurately described *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* along with their methods, using various stories and histories as proof.

COMMENTARY

All the *dharmas* described can be placed ultimately in four categories of *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. He mentions these categories in order to strengthen what has been said. *Upāyān* means the means of attaining *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. *Yathā* means “accurately.” He proved what he said by showing instances in the histories.

|| 1.9.29 ||

³⁴ ‘*dharma-vit*’ ity *api pāṭhaū* |

*dharmam³⁵ pravadataḥ tasya sa kālaḥ pratyupasthitāḥ³⁶ |
yo yoginaś chanda-mṛtyor vāñchitas tūttarāyaṇaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The time of *uttarāyaṇa*, which was desired by Bhīṣma, who had finished speaking on *dharma* and could die when he chose, then arrived.

COMMENTARY

Chanda-mṛtyoḥ means “of he who could die when he pleased.”

|| 1.9.30 ||

*tadopasaṁhṛtya giraḥ sahasraṇīr
vimukta-saṅgaṁ mana ādi-pūruṣe |
kṛṣṇe lasat-pīta-paṭe catur-bhuje
puraḥ sthite 'mīlita-dṛg vyadhārayat ||*

TRANSLATION

At that time, withdrawing his words from other subjects, with eyes wide open, Bhīṣma, leader of a thousand chariots, concentrated himself, free of all material attachment, upon Kṛṣṇa, the original person, dressed in shining yellow garments, with four arms, standing before him.

COMMENTARY

Sahasraṇīḥ refers to Bhīṣma, who led (*nī*) or protected a thousand charioteers gathered for battle. Another version has *sahasriṇīḥ* which means “possessing a thousand treasures.” Withdrawing his words from other subjects (*giraḥ upasaṁhṛtya*), with eyes completely open without blinking, he completely absorbed his mind in Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.9.31 ||

*viśuddhayā dhāraṇayā hatāsubhas
tad-īkṣayaivāśu gatā-yudha-śramaḥ |
nivṛtta-sarvendriya-vṛtti-vibhramas
tuṣṭāva janyaṁ viśṛja janārdanam ||*

TRANSLATION

As Bhīṣma, free of all inauspiciousness by his pure concentration, free of physical fatigue from fighting and free of wandering senses by Kṛṣṇa's glance of mercy, left his body, he began to praise Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Tad-īkṣayā means by the glance of mercy of Kṛṣṇa. *Vibhramaḥ* means the various

³⁵ 'dharmān' iti pāḍhaḥ sa eva yukto 'neka-dharma-prakathanāt |

³⁶ 'paryupasthitau' iti pāḍhe 'pi sa evārthau |

wandeings (*vividha-bhramaṇa*) of the senses. *Janyam* means the material body, or the material world.

|| 1.9.32 ||

*śrī-bhīṣma uvāca—
iti matir upakalpitā vitṛṣṇā
bhagavati sātвата-puṅgave vibhūmni |
sva-sukham upagate kvacid vihartum
prakṛtim upeyuṣi yad bhava-pravāhaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Bhīṣma said:

At the end of my life I offer my thoughts to you, *bhagavān* full of six qualities, best of the Yadus, superior to all other forms of the Lord, absorbed in bliss with your associates, and who, as a pastime, in the form of the *puruṣāvatara*, sometimes accepts *māyā* by your glance, which produces the material world.

COMMENTARY

At the end of my life (*iti*), my thoughts are offered to the Lord. Since my master has come to me at the time of my passing away under the influence of his mercy, I must give him a gift. There is nothing suitable in this abode of possessiveness and ego. Therefore I make a gift of my thoughts alone.

“But in this world we see people who give also desire to take.”

“My thoughts are without desire (*vitṛṣṇā*). I offer them to *bhagavān*, who is full of six wondrous qualities.”

“But the Lord is famous as Nārāyaṇa.”

“No, he is famous as the best of the Yadu dynasty.”

“But Nārāyaṇa is greatly famous as *bhagavān* for all time.”

“There is no greatness superior to his (*vibhūmni*). He is the source of Nārāyaṇa.”

He attained (*gate*) profusely (*upa*) the highest bliss (*sukham*) with his own Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas (*sva*). The main qualities of the Lord have thus been described.

Next the secondary qualities are described. You contact *māyā* by glancing for evolving *mahattattva* from which arises the sequence of material creation. You do this in your forms of the *puruṣāvatāras*.

|| 1.9.33 ||

*tri-bhuvana-kamanam tamāla-varṇam
ravi-kara-gaura-varāmbaram dadhāne |
vapur alaka-kulāvṛtānanābjam
vijaya-sakhe ratir astu me 'navadyā ||*

TRANSLATION

Let me have pure *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, the friend of Arjuna, who possesses a body desired by all the inhabitants of the three worlds, which is clothed with intense yellow garments shining in the sun, whose complexion is dark like the tamāla tree, and whose lotus face is surrounded by locks of hair.

COMMENTARY

“What is the nature of your thoughts?”

Let me have pure *prema* (*ratih*) without desire for results, for the friend of Arjuna (*vijaya-sakhe*), who accepts a body which is desired by all persons in the upper, middle and lower planets, which is clothed in garments golden in the sun’s rays. I saw that intense yellow from his upper and lower cloth sparkling in the sun’s rays as he stood on the chariot of Arjuna. My thoughts take the form of a prayer to have this *prema* for the most beautiful Kṛṣṇa as the charioteer of Arjuna. In the prayers of following verses also there is no use of the second person, though Kṛṣṇa was present before him This indicates his attraction for the sweetness of the Lord absorbed in *vīra-rasa* during the battle, and his absorption in relishing it.

|| 1.9.34 ||

*yudhi turaga-rajo-vidhūmra-viṣvak-
kaca-lulita-śramavāry-alaṅkṛtāsye |
mama niśita-śarair vibhidyamāna-
tvaci vilasat-kavace 'stu kṛṣṇa ātmā ||*

TRANSLATION

May my mind concentrate on Kṛṣṇa, whose face was decorated with hair covered with the dust raised by horses, tossed all about because of the speed of his driving, and with perspiration because of his great effort in protecting Arjuna, whose armor shone brightly, pierced slightly by my sharp arrows.

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of Kṛṣṇa’s face surrounded by locks of hair, Bhīṣma cannot give up that sweetness. Again he describes more details. The face is decorated with hair thrown all about because of the speed of the chariot, and colored with the dust raised by the horses. Even in what is not beautiful, beauty can be found.³⁷ The face is decorated with perspiration arising from effort. This indicates Kṛṣṇa’s efforts because of his affection for Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa’s skin was pierced by Bhīṣma’s sharp arrows. Just as the man involved in love derives happiness from the bite marks of a

³⁷ *sundare kim asundaram nyāya.*

bold lover, Kṛṣṇa, the most courageous warrior, in the mood of fighting, derived pleasure from my strength in the form of the wounds from my arrows. One should not think that I, even overcome by the mood of fighting with Kṛṣṇa, was ever devoid of *prema*. Similarly the woman who inflicts deep wounds upon her beloved, dearer than a million of her lives, with her nails and teeth during the battle of love, cannot be said to be devoid of love for him. Kṛṣṇa's skin was not really pierced because he was wearing an armor, which shone brightly. It means that the arrows slightly pierced the armor. *Atmā* means mind.

|| 1.9.35 ||

*sapadi sakhi-vaco niśamya madhye
nija-parayor balayo ratham niveśya |
sthitavati para-sainikāyur akṣṇā
hṛtavati pārtha-sakhe ratir mamāstu ||*

TRANSLATION

May I have *prema* for the chariot driver of Arjuna, who placed the chariot between the two opposing armies immediately on hearing Arjuna's request, and, situated there, by his glance, took away the *prārabdha-karmas* of the opposing party.

COMMENTARY

And he immediately followed Arjuna's order.

*senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta |
yāvad etān nirīkṣye 'ham yoddhukāmān avasthitān ||*

O Acyuta please station my chariot between the two armies, so I can view at the commencement of the war those situated with a desire to fight, and can see my companions in battle. BG.1.21

Just by his glance (*akṣṇā*), showing to Arjuna "This is Bhīṣma, this is Droṇa, this is Karṇa," he took away their lives. This actually indicates he took away their *prārabdha-karma*, since it will be said later *yam iha nirīkṣya hatā gatāḥ sva-rūpam*: those who saw him on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra attained their original forms after death. (SB 1.9.39)

|| 1.9.36 ||

*vyavahita-pṛtanā-mukhaṁ nirīkṣya
sva-jana-vadhād vimukhasya doṣa-buddhyā |
kumatim aharad ātma-vidyayā yaś
caraṇa-ratiḥ paramasya tasya me 'stu ||*

TRANSLATION

May I have *prema* for the feet of the Supreme Lord who, by giving knowledge of Himself, destroyed the ignorance of Arjuna who, on seeing the heads of the opposing army at a distance, refused to fight because he thought it was a sin to kill his relatives.

COMMENTARY

Vyavahita-pṛtanā-mukhaṁ nirīkṣya means “seeing Bhīṣma and others standing in front of the army at a distance.” Arjuna became disinclined to kill his relatives.

*evam uktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat |
visṛjya saśaram cāpaṁ śoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ ||*

Speaking in this manner, Arjuna, giving up his bow and arrows, mind disturbed with lamentation, sat down on his chariot amidst the warriors assembled for battle. BG 1.46

This is described by the word *kumatim*. Arjuna’s loss of intelligence was caused by the Lord himself, like Yudhiṣṭhira’s present loss of intelligence, because loss of intelligence is impossible for the eternal associate of the Lord, who is also the *avatāra*, Nara. Kṛṣṇa did this in order to reveal *Bhagavad-gītā*, which delivers the whole world by showing the truth about Kṛṣṇa. *Ātma-vidyayā* means by knowledge fixed in Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.9.37 ||

*sva-nigamam apahāya mat-pratijñām
ṛtam adhikartum avapluto rathasthaḥ |
dhṛta-ratha-carāṇo ’bhyayāc caladgur
harir iva hantum ibhaṁ gatottarīyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Giving up his own promise not to fight, and making my vow to make him fight come true, Kṛṣṇa, situated on the chariot, quickly got down and holding the wheel of a chariot, ran towards me, like a lion coming to kill an elephant, while the earth shook and his top cloth fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY

“It is said that Kṛṣṇa elevates his devotee to a higher position than his own. I saw that directly.” This is explained in two verses. Kṛṣṇa made a promise (*sva-nigamam*) that he would not take up weapons, but would only assist Arjuna. I made a promise that I would make him give up that promise and take up weapons. To make sure that this would become true, Kṛṣṇa, situated on the chariot, quickly got down from the chariot in such a manner that no one could see his separation from the chariot. Or Kṛṣṇa, though he got down, remained on the chariot to protect it in another form invisible to others. This pastime was spontaneously carried out, and was not because of my request. He took the wheel of the chariot

and ran towards me. The earth trembled because of his great strength exerted through running in excitement. His cloth fell down. Because of his excited running he was not aware whether his cloth had fallen or not. Because Kṛṣṇa cannot give up his quality of affection for his devotee, when Arjuna would be unable to fight, Kṛṣṇa would give up his promise and use weapons to protect Arjuna. It is impossible for others to make Arjuna unable to fight. Thus overpowering Arjuna for a moment, I will see Kṛṣṇa fight as an indication of his affection for his devotee. Bhīṣma made this promise that Kṛṣṇa should take up weapons in order to fulfill this desire. Having seen Kṛṣṇa's *prema* for Arjuna when he broke his own promise, and satisfying Bhīṣma, Kṛṣṇa's excellence became famous in the world. That is the meaning of this incident.

|| 1.9.38 ||

*śīta-viśikha-hato viśīrṇa-damśaḥ
kṣataja-paripluta ātatāyino me |
prasabham abhisasāra mad-vadhārthaṁ
sa bhavatu me bhagavān gatir mukundaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa! Let my only goal be Mukunda, who, afflicted by my sharp arrows, armor broken, covered in blood, rushed towards me, his enemy, with great force, in order to kill me.

COMMENTARY

When Kṛṣṇa got down from the chariot he became covered with blood, because the earth was covered with rivers of blood from the slain warriors. How did his armor get pierced? It was struck by my sharp arrows. I fired the arrows to increase the thrill of his anger. In other words, he pierced the armor before Kṛṣṇa got down from the chariot. With force (*prasabham*) he protected Arjuna and came towards me with the intention "Today I will kill Bhīṣma with my own hands." The word *abhisasāra* is used to indicate a hero desiring to meet his lover. In a similar manner I became extraordinarily happy when Kṛṣṇa approached me in anger. May my goal be no one else, only Mukunda, giver of liberation, who acted in this way. O Kṛṣṇa! I have offered only this prayer to you.

|| 1.9.39 ||

*vijaya-ratha-kuṭumba ātta-totre
dhṛta-haya-raśmini tac-chriyekṣaṇīye |
bhagavati ratir astu me mumūrṣor
yam iha nirīkṣya hatā gatāḥ sva-rūpam³⁸ ||*

TRANSLATION

Desiring to die, may I have *prema* for the Lord who protected Arjuna's chariot

³⁸ 'sva-rūpam' iti pāṭhaḥ sa ca oḍkānanugaḍāu | tatra samānā rūpā gatā iti vyākhyānāt |

while holding a whip in his right hand, the reins in his left hand, whose beauty must be seen, and who bestowed liberation to those who died on the battle field after seeing him.

COMMENTARY

Bhīṣma has a desire that even the unrighteous should develop *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, who is eager to protect his devotees. Kṛṣṇa protected (*kutumbē*) Arjuna (*vijaya*) from the sinful. He held a whip (*totre*). He held the reins of the horses. I, and not Arjuna, saw with my eyes, his beauty as he held the reins in his left hand, the whip in his right hand, while saying “Hum, hum” to speed the horses. May I have *prema* for that Kṛṣṇa. I desire to die now (*mumūrṣoḥ*), for having died, I will constantly see that sweetness. If I am revived how will I see that, because the Lord has brought about an end to his pastimes on this earth? Bhīṣma does not say “I am dying” but “I want to die.” He could die when he chose, and now he had developed great greed for directly participating in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. From this it is understood that the fighting pastimes are also eternal, what to speak of other pastimes.

“True, you have great attachment to my pastime as a charioteer, and relish that in each of your verses, spout them from your mouth. You pray for *prema* for me in that pastime. But having died, what is your proof that you will attain that pastime?”

“There is a well known saying *maraṇe yā matiḥ sā gatiḥ*: whatever you think of when you die, you attain that. Seeing you at present is the highest proof. By seeing you those who die, even being killed by others in this battle, even if they are demons, attain liberation (*sva-rūpam*) of merging in *brahman* similar to the *jñānīs*. But I am a devotee, with thoughts just described, and dying while seeing you personally at the time of death, how can I not attain that pastime? The form of Kṛṣṇa as the charioteer bestowed liberation even to unqualified persons (demons). Simultaneously, at that time the most extraordinary of all the Lord’s forms, full of the greatest sweetness, characterized by no power and great power made its appearance (for the devotees).”

|| 1.9.40 ||

*lalita-gati-vilāsa-valgu-hāsa-
pranaya-nirīkṣaṇa-kalpitoru-mānāḥ |
kṛtam anukṛta-vatya unmadāndhāḥ
prakṛtim agan kila yasya gopa-vadhvaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The *gopīs* were worshipped by Kṛṣṇa’s expert actions, emotional displays, words and glances. Attaining those qualities, they responded in harmony to his most extraordinary displays of love, blinded by the madness of love. How amazing that these *gopīs* attained the nature of Kṛṣṇa himself.

COMMENTARY

“Though you are omniscient, the *prema* that you desire in my charioteer pastime is in Arjuna alone. It is understood that among all the associates with *prema*, he is the chief.” That is not so. Your dear *gopīs* have the most exalted *prema* among all devotees. They are superior to Arjuna. No one can dare to pray for their position. Let that be! I will be successful at my death just by indicating their nature. Thus he speaks this verse.

He was expert at physical arts such as dancing in the *rāsa-līlā*, expert in expressing mental qualities such as *dhira-lalita*, expert in words with joking, expert with the eyes at glancing to show all aspects of *prema*. The *gopīs* were to be worshipped by all these skilful actions of Kṛṣṇa. In order to please them, Kṛṣṇa endowed them with all the best, outstanding qualities of himself. The result of their extreme *prema*, was that Kṛṣṇa, in giving all his own qualities, attempted to please them with conciliating love. That display of love, which is without restraints for either party, showed extreme control of Kṛṣṇa by the *gopīs* and was filled with great bliss. Control of the Lord, manifested as a result of Arjuna’s *prema*, was that Kṛṣṇa became his messenger and charioteer. That role had restraints for both parties. Arjuna could thus not attain intimacy with the Lord.

He became compliant by offering all his qualities to them (*gopīs*). They had a mutual friendship filled with happiness because of mutual compliance. Then he bestowed an extraordinary fortune—the dancing, songs and speech during the *rāsa-līlā*. And in response, the *gopīs* did the same (*anukṛta-vatya*). In harmony with him, they offered him dancing, songs and speech in the *rāsa-līlā*. There was no need to teach them anything. They were blinded by the increase of great *prema* (*unmadāndhāḥ*). They did not need practice. How astonishing (*kila*)! They attained all his extraordinary qualities such as skills in dancing and singing. Kṛṣṇa did not give his unique, extraordinary power to Arjuna.

Kṛtam can also refer to Kṛṣṇa’s actions such as lifting Govardhana. They imitated those actions. Instead of *unmada* sometimes *unmāda* is seen. This indicates madness in separation. In that extreme state some of them even merged with the Lord. This is the highest level of exalted *prema*. Since I am situated between the two limits, why can I not attain your pastime as the charioteer, which I desire?

|| 1.9.41 ||

*muni-gaṇa-nṛpa-varya-saṅkule ’ntaḥ-
sadasi yudhiṣṭhira-rājasūya eṣām |
arhaṇam upapeda ikṣaṇīyo
mama dṛṣi-gocara eṣa āvir ātmā ||*

TRANSLATION

The lord of my life, worthy of being seen, who received the worship of all the

greatest sages and kings in the assembly during the *rājasūya* sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira, has become visible to my eyes.

COMMENTARY

Bhīṣma relates his great fortune which is directly visible now, to the necessity of attaining the Lord. Kṛṣṇa was seen with amazement by the sages exclaiming “O what beauty! What greatness!” In the midst of the gathering composed of the best sages and kings, during the *rājasūya* sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira, he received (*upapede*) worship. He, my soul, the lord of my life (*mama ātmā*), is now visible to my eyes. He has fulfilled my request.

|| 1.9.42 ||

*tam imam aham ajam śarīra-bhājām
hṛdi hṛdi dhiṣṭhitam ātma-kalpitanām |
pratidṛṣam iva naikadhārkam ekam
samadhigato 'smi vidhūta-bheda-mohaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Freed of the illusion of difference in the Lord's various forms, I have attained the Lord who is one though appearing to be many like the sun seen by many people, who is the charioteer, but who is also in my heart, the unborn and is situated in the hearts of all the *jīvas*, who create their own bodies.

COMMENTARY

Why do you not address the Lord directly but instead address him indirectly with word like *vijaya-sakhe vijaya-ratha-kutumba me ratir astu* and *caraṇa-ratiḥ paramasya tasya me 'stu* and *sa bhavatu me bhagavān gatiḥ*.” This verse answers, indicating that Bhīṣma desires the Lord as a charioteer.

I have attained that Lord (*tam*) who is the charioteer of Arjuna, holding the whip and bridle in his hands, who is now appearing in my heart (*imam*). But the charioteer is not the Lord in the heart. Because Kṛṣṇa the charioteer has already entered and pervaded my heart completely by practice, it is not possible for the *paramātmā* to enter. He does not make his appearance just at this time (*ajam*). Though he appeared to my eyes in this form at the time of battle, even before the battle he was already in my heart because of my spontaneous desire. He is unborn because he has always been visible to me. There is no fault on my part in this, but the Supreme Lord alone situated in the heart ordains good fortunate or misfortune of the *jīvas*. He is situated (*dhiṣṭhitam*) in the hearts of all *jīvas* (*śarīra-bhājām*), who create their own bodies. The missing “a” in (*dhiṣṭhitam*) is for meter. The *śruti* says *yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅga vyuccaranti*; the souls wander around like small sparks. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.1.20)

I know that the charioteer indicated by the word *tam* and the four-handed form in *Dvārakā* indicated by the word *imam* are not different. The one sun in the sky appears to individual seers to be not one but many, above each person's head. By

such distinctive seeing the sun appears to be many. Bhīṣma is free of such illusionary seeing (*vidhūta-bheda-moha*). Though Kṛṣṇa appears in my heart, and in the hearts of Yudhiṣṭhira, Vasudeva, Uddhava, Nanda and the *gopīs* with various degrees of *prema* and type of love, with different pastimes for each, I know that this is one Kṛṣṇa only. I know the various degrees of excellence of their *prema* and love. But I can never give up my natural attachment to the form of Kṛṣṇa as the charioteer. Even thinking of the four-handed form of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā is not interesting to me.

|| 1.9.43 ||

sūta uvāca—

*kṛṣṇa evaṁ bhagavati mano-vāg-dṛṣṭi-vṛttibhiḥ |
ātmany ātmānam āveśya so 'ntaḥśvāsa upāramat ||*

TRANSLATION

Suta said:

Thus Bhīṣma, absorbing himself in Kṛṣṇa, *bhagavān*, the charioteer situated in his heart, using his mind, words and sight, stopped his breathing and ceased external functions.

COMMENTARY

He absorbed himself (*ātmānam āveśya*) in Kṛṣṇa, the charioteer, situated in his heart (*ātmani*), and stopped his breathing (*antaḥśvāsaḥ*). *Upāramat* means he stopped external functioning.

|| 1.9.44 ||

*sampadyamānam ajñāya bhīṣmaṁ brahmaṇi niṣkale |
sarve babhūvus te tūṣṇīm vayāmsīva dinātyaye ||*

TRANSLATION

The ignorant, who were like birds who think that day has been destroyed at the approach of evening, thought that Bhīṣma had attained the *brahman*, and became silent.

COMMENTARY

Bhīṣma had attained his cherished form of Kṛṣṇa as the charioteer, but the common people, not knowing this though that he had entered into *brahman*. That is expressed in this verse. An example of ignorance is given. Birds, thinking that the day has been destroyed at the end of day because they cannot see it, become silent. The day has not actually be destroyed, because one understands that after some time, that day still exists, since after twelve hours daylight appears again. The ignorant think that when Bhīṣma passed away he attained liberation. The intelligent understand that at that very moment in an invisible form Bhīṣma fights on the ground with Kṛṣṇa holding the chariot wheel in his hand, and that in a

future appearance of Kṛṣṇa, Bhīṣma will also appear with him. Or *brahmaṇi niṣkali* can mean “into the *brahman* Kṛṣṇa, who wears a gold ornament.” One should not explain that Bhīṣma merged into the *brahman*, since by giving him something devoid of his goal, this would be cheating his eternal associate Bhīṣma of *prema*, since Bhīṣma did not desire liberation, and since it would be improper for the Lord to give undesired results forcibly.

|| 1.9.45 ||

tatra dundubhayo nedur deva-mānava-vāditāḥ |
śaśamsuḥ sādhave rājñām khāt petuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Drums played by *devatās* and men sounded, the kings without hatred praised him, and flowers fell from the sky.

COMMENTARY

Sādhave rājñām means “those who were without hatred among the kings.”

|| 1.9.46 ||

tasya nirharaṇādīni samparetasya bhārgava |
yudhiṣṭhiraḥ kārayitvā muhūrtaṁ duḥkhito 'bhavat ||

TRANSLATION

O Śaunaka of the Bhṛgu dynasty! Yudhiṣṭhira had last rites of the departed Bhīṣma performed and became sad for a moment.

COMMENTARY

Nirharaṇādīni means *samskāras*. Though Bhīṣma is an eternal associate of the Lord, his *aṁśa* had entered into Vasu (who then descended from the heavenly planets to earth.) Thus Bhīṣma is shown by the Lord to give up his body. His *aṁśa* was situated in Vasu, and he himself attained the spiritual world. *yāvad adhikāram avasthitir ādhikārikāṇām*: those designated by the Lord remain in their posts on earth as long as that Lord chooses. (*Vedānta-sūtra* 3.3.33) *Samparetasya* can be analyzed as *sam* for *samyak* (completely), *para* for *parameśvara* (supreme lord) and *itasya* for *prāptasya* (obtained). Thus the word means “of the person who attained the Supreme Lord completely.” This is supported by the *śruti* explaining the details of liberation. *Tasya sarveṣu lokeṣu kāma-caṛo bhavati*: the liberated soul is free to travel in all the planets as he pleases. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.25.2) It has been said that Bhīṣma, an eternal associate of the Lord, attained Kṛṣṇa as the charioteer in *aprakāṣa-līlā*. Thus in the previous description of Bhīṣma stopping his breath and giving up his body, one should say that he simply became detached from (*upāramat*) his manifested body on earth. One should not say that he gave up a material body and gave up breathing. Yudhiṣṭhira was sad for a short period. This he did to follow the custom of the people (since he understood that Bhīṣma

did not have a material body).

|| 1.9.47 ||

*tuṣṭuvur munayo hr̥ṣṭāḥ kṛṣṇam tad-guhya-nāmabhiḥ |
tatas te kṛṣṇa-hṛdayāḥ svāśramān prayayuh punaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The sages in joy praised Kṛṣṇa with his confidential names and then with Kṛṣṇa in their hearts departed again for their hermitages.

COMMENTARY

Tad-guhya-nāmabhiḥ indicates that they said, “O Kṛṣṇa, affectionate to the devotees, controlled by *prema*! We offer respects to your affection nature.”

|| 1.9.48 ||

*tato yudhiṣṭhiro gatvā saha-kṛṣṇo gajāhvayam |
pitaram sāntvayām āsa gāndhārīm ca tapasvinīm ||*

TRANSLATION

Then Yudhiṣṭhira went to Hastināpura with Kṛṣṇa and consoled Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī, who was overcome with grief.

COMMENTARY

Pitaram means Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

|| 1.9.49 ||

*pitṛā cānumato rājā vāsudevānumoditaḥ |
cakāra rājyam dharmeṇa pitṛ-paitāmahaṁ vibhuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

With the permission of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and agreement of Kṛṣṇa, powerful Yudhiṣṭhira ruled the ancestral kingdom according to *dharma*.

Chapter Ten

śrī-kṛṣṇa-dvārakā-gamanam nāma

Kṛṣṇa goes to Dvārakā

|| 1.10.1 ||

śaunaka uvāca—

*hatvā svariktha-spr̥dha ātatāyino
yudhiṣṭhiro dharma-bhṛtām variṣṭhaḥ |
sahānujaiḥ pratyavaruddha-bhojanaḥ
katham pravṛttaḥ kim akāraṣīt tataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said:

After killing the enemy desiring his rightful kingdom, how did Yudhiṣṭhira, the best of righteous men, while enjoying what he had won back, take up ruling the kingdom along with his younger brothers? What did he do?

COMMENTARY

In tenth chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa after placing the Pāṇḍavas in the kingdom without obstacles went to Dvārakā and was praised by the Yādavas.

Since it was mentioned in a general way that with the agreement of Kṛṣṇa the Pāṇḍavas ruled the kingdom, the inquisitive sages ask about this. The enemies desired his wealth (*svarikthe*). They obtained it, and then he took it back from them (*pratyavaruddha*) and was able to enjoy it.

|| 1.10.2 ||

*sūta uvāca —
var̥ṣam kuror var̥ṣa-davāgni-nirhṛtam
samrohayitvā bhava-bhāvano hariḥ |
niveśayitvā nija-rājya īśvaro
yudhiṣṭhiram prīta-manā babhūva ha ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Kṛṣṇa, upon whom Śiva meditates, became pleased, having increased the Kuru family which was destroyed by the forest fire of anger, by protecting Parīkṣit, and by installing Yudhiṣṭhira in his rightful kingdom.

COMMENTARY

The answer shows that he took up the ruling of the country only after seeing that Kṛṣṇa was pleased. Kṛṣṇa increased the Kuru family, which had been destroyed by the fire (of anger) in the bamboo forest, by saving Parīkṣit. Just as the bamboo burns by the fire ignited by rubbing of the bamboos, the Kuru family was destroyed by a war which arose from mutual anger. Kṛṣṇa makes even Śiva (*bhava*) meditate on his pastimes (*bhāvanah*).

|| 1.10.3 ||

*niśamya bhīṣmoktam athācyutoktam
pravṛtta-vijñāna-vidhūta-vibhramaḥ |
śāsāsa gām indra ivājitāśrayaḥ
paridhyupāntām anujānuvartitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

After hearing the words of Bhīṣma and Kṛṣṇa, and thereby gaining knowledge and removing ignorance, Yudhiṣṭhira, having taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, ruled the earth extending to the oceans with the cooperation of his brothers, just as Indra, having taken shelter of Upendra, rules over heaven extending in all directions with the compliance of Upendra.

COMMENTARY

The knowledge which appeared (*pravṛtta-vijñāna*) was that the world is dependent on the Lord, and is not independent. He was free of the illusion that “I am the doer (*vidhūta-vibhramah*).” *Gām* means earth and heaven. *Ajita* refers to Kṛṣṇa and Upendra (Indra takes shelter of Upendra.) *Paridhi* means ocean and also all directions upwards as well (in the case of Indra). *Anujānuvartitaḥ* means with the compliance of his younger brothers, or with the compliance of his younger *brother* Upendra (in the case of Indra).

|| 1.10.4 ||

kāmaṁ vavarṣa parjanyaḥ sarva-kāma-dughā mahī |
siṣicuḥ sma vrajān gāvāḥ payasodhasvatīr mudā ||

TRANSLATION

The clouds rained sufficient water, the earth yielded all desired products and the cows with full udders in joy sprinkled milk in the cow pens.

COMMENTARY

Udhasvatī means full udders.

|| 1.10.5 ||

nadyaḥ samudrā girayaḥ savanaspati-vīrudhaḥ |
phalanty oṣadhayaḥ sarvāḥ kāmam anvṛtu tasya vai ||

TRANSLATION

The rivers, oceans, mountains, trees, shrubs, and herbs of that kingdom yielded their products in every season.

|| 1.10.6 ||

nādhayo vyādhayaḥ kleśā daiva-bhūtātma-hetavaḥ |
ajāta-śatrāv abhavan jantūnām rājñi karhicit ||

TRANSLATION

While Yudhiṣṭhira ruled, the living beings suffered no anxieties, sickness or inconveniences caused by nature, by other living beings or by themselves.

|| 1.10.7-8 ||

*uṣṭivā hāstinapure māsān katipayān hariḥ |
suhṛdām ca viśokāya svasuś ca priya-kāmyayā ||*

*amantrya cābhyanujñātaḥ pariṣvajyābhivādya tam |
āruroha rathaṁ kaiścit pariṣvaktō 'bhivāditaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Staying for several months in Hastināpura to console his friends and please Subhadrā, Kṛṣṇa, after taking permission to leave, addressing and embracing Yudhiṣṭhira, bid farewell and mounted his chariot, while being addressed and embraced by others.

|| 1.10.9-10 ||

*subhadrā draupadī kuntī virāṭa-tanayā tathā |
gāndhārī dhṛtarāṣṭraś ca yuyutsur gautamo yamau ||*

*vṛkodaraś ca dhaumyaś ca striyo matsya-sutādayaḥ |
na sehire vimuhyanto virahaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Subhadrā, Draupadī, Kuntī, Uttarā, Gāndhārī, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Yuyutsu, Kṛpācārya, Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhīma, Dhaumya, Satyavatī and other women, falling into confusion, could not bear separation from Kṛṣṇa

COMMENTARY

Yuyutsu was Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son by a vaiśya wife. Gautama is Kṛpa. Matsya-sutā refers to Uttarā. Her name is repeated because of the confusion arising on thinking of how her embryo was saved by Kṛṣṇa. Or it can refer to Satyavatī.

|| 1.10.11-12 ||

*sat-saṅgān mukta-duḥsaṅgo hātuṁ notsahate budhaḥ |
kīrtiyamānaṁ yaśo yasya sakṛd ākarṇya rocanam ||*

*tasmin nyasta-dhiyaḥ pārthāḥ saheran virahaṁ katham |
darśana-sparśa-samlāpa- śayanāsana-bhojanaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The intelligent person, freed of bad association by good association, cannot give up the pleasing qualities of Kṛṣṇa which have been recited, even if he hears them once.

How could the Pāṇḍavas, who were absorbed in him while eating, sitting, sleeping, talking, touching and seeing, tolerate separation from him?

COMMENTARY

The two verses are connected. How could the Pāṇḍavas tolerate separation from the Lord, whose glories the intelligent person cannot give up, even if he hears them only once? *Rocanam* means pleasing. The intelligent person is described as he who has given up bad association by taking good association. Without the association of devotees, bad association which causes attachment, hatred and other bad qualities will not disappear. Without the disappearance of bad qualities, a person will not become strongly attached to the pleasing qualities of the Lord. This is implied in the sentence. The Pāṇḍavas were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa while seeing, touching etc.

|| 1.10.13 ||

*sarve te 'nimiṣair akṣais tam anu druta-cetasah |
vīkṣantaḥ sneha-sambaddhā vicelus tatra tatra ha ||*

TRANSLATION

Looking upon him with unblinking eyes, their hearts melted, they became filled with affection, and moved wherever he moved.

COMMENTARY

They looked at him with unblinking eyes. After looking, their hearts melted. Then they became filled with affection. Then they followed him wherever he went.

|| 1.10.14 ||

*nyarundhann udgalad bāṣpam autkaṅṭhyād devakī-sute |
niryāty agārān no 'bhadram iti syād bāndhava-striyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When Kṛṣṇa left the house all the wives of his friends blocked the tears flowing from their eyes because of their attachment to him, thinking “There should be no inauspiciousness for him.”

COMMENTARY

When he left the house, because of attachment to him they stopped their flowing tears, because they thought there should be nothing inauspicious for him. *Udgalad* is a present participle with the prefix *ud*. With great effort they stopped the tears, but the tears still flowed. They hid those tears with the edges of their garments in order to prevent any inauspiciousness from being seen.

|| 1.10.15 ||

*mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-bheryaś ca vīṇā-paṇava-gomukhāḥ |
dhundhury-ānaka-ghaṅṭādyā nedur dundubhayas tathā ||*

TRANSLATION

Mṛdaṅgas, conches, bheris, vīṅas, paṅavas, gomukhas, dhundhuris, ānakas, bells and dundubhis began to sound.

COMMENTARY

These are various instruments.

|| 1.10.16 ||

*prāsāda-śikharārūḍhāḥ kuru-nāryo didṛkṣayā |
vavṛṣuḥ kusumaiḥ kṛṣṇam prema-vrīḍā-smitekṣaṇāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The Kuru women, climbing on the roofs of the palace to see, glancing at him to convey smiles, shyness and love, showered Kṛṣṇa with flowers.

COMMENTARY

Kusumaiḥ should actually be in the accusative case *kusumāni*. They conveyed through their glances smiles, shyness and love.

|| 1.10.17 ||

*sitātapatram jagrāha muktādāma-vibhūṣitam |
ratna-daṇḍam guḍākeśaḥ priyaḥ priyatamasya ha ||*

TRANSLATION

Arjuna, conqueror of sleep and dear to the Lord, held a white umbrella decorated with pearls and a jewel-studded handle for his dearest friend.

COMMENTARY

Guḍākeśaḥ means Arjuna, who had conquered sleep.

|| 1.10.18 ||

*uddhavaḥ sātyakiś caiva vyajane paramādbhute |
vikīryamāṇaḥ kusumai reje madhu-patiḥ pathi ||*

TRANSLATION

Uddhava and Sātyaki held astonishing fans. The lord of the Madhus appeared splendid on the road when sprinkled with flowers.

|| 1.10.19 ||

*aśrūyantāśiṣaḥ satyās tatra tatra dvijeritāḥ |
nānurūpānurūpās ca nirguṇasya guṇātmanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

On the road, he heard the factual blessings uttered by *brāhmaṇas*, which were

not appropriate for the Lord who is beyond all qualities of this world, but which were appropriate for the Lord who has spiritual qualities relished by his devotees.

COMMENTARY

The blessings are described as *satya* or true because Kṛṣṇa never deviates from those descriptions, but the blessings were both inappropriate (*nānurūpāḥ*) and appropriate (*anurūpāḥ*). The *sandhi* is poetic license. From the point of view of the Lord's powers, blessings such as "Be happy!" are inappropriate for one who is without material qualities (*nirguṇasya*) and full of spiritual bliss. From the point of view of sweetness, the same blessings are appropriate for the Lord who has spiritual qualities such as being controlled by the devotee's *prema* and being devoted to *brāhmaṇas* (*guṇātmaṇaḥ*). The words are appropriate because the Lord's words in reply "I am always happy with your blessings" which describe his qualities should not be false. As well since Kṛṣṇa is both the *viṣaya* and *āśraya* of *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya rasas*, he is actually filled with spiritual qualities of happiness and distress arising from meeting and separating from his devotees.

|| 1.10.20 ||

anyonyam āsīt sañjalpa uttama-śloka-cetasām |
kauravendra-pura-strīṇām sarva-śruti-mano-haraḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Kuru women, fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, conversed about him with words attractive to all ears and minds.

COMMENTARY

Their conversation was attractive to all ears and minds (*sarva-śruti-mano-haraḥ*). Another meaning is "their conversation was attractive to all the *śruti* scriptures." Since their words were the embodiment of the Upaniṣads, the *śrutis* were happy with the conversation.

|| 1.10.21 ||

sa vai kilāyaṁ puruṣaḥ purātano
ya eka āsīd aviśeṣa ātmani |
agre guṇebhyo jagad-ātmanīśvare
nimīlītātman niśi supta-śaktiṣu ||

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa is certainly that ancient *puruṣa* who alone existed without expansions before the agitation of the *guṇas* and during devastation, when all the *jīvas* along with their identities were merged within him, the soul of *prakṛti*..

COMMENTARY

First they spoke with reverence in *śānta-rati* He is the ancient *puruṣa*, without expansions (*aviśeṣaḥ*). Or *aviśeṣaḥ* can mean that he is without any comparison, since he only existed in the beginning. This we have heard from Vyāsa. Certainly (*vai*) Kṛṣṇa is that *puruṣa*. They point at him with their forefinger when they say this. He is the one who existed before all else, before the disturbance of the *guṇas*, during the devastation (*niśi*), when all the *jīvas* (*jagad-ātmani*) were merged (*nimīlitātman*) in the Lord (*īśvare*), who is the soul of *prakṛti* (*ātmani*). *Jagad-ātmani* is in singular form because it represents a class.

“At the time of devastation the destruction is not complete because the ignorance of the *jīvas* has not been destroyed.” Therefore it is said at that time there is destruction of the identification of the *jīvas* (*sputa-śaktiṣu*). This is an accessory to the *jīvas* merging.

Or another meaning of the sentence is as follows. Kṛṣṇa is that ancient *puruṣa* who before the agitation of the *guṇas* at the time of devastation, existed in his *svarūpa* all alone (*ātmani aviśeṣe*). He who is now performing various pastimes with his associates was at that time alone in his *svarūpa*. He alone existed and no others. Not even Brahmā existed. The rest of the verse would be the same in meaning.

|| 1.10.22 ||

sa eva bhūyo nija-vīrya-coditām
sva-jīva-māyām prakṛtiṁ sisṛkṣatīm |
anāma-rūpātmani rūpa-nāmanī
vidhitsamāno ’nusasāra śāstra-kṛt ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord, after manifesting the scriptures, and desiring to make names and forms for the *jīvas*, then followed *prakṛti*, who desired to create the universe, but who moves only by his power, and by his will alone bewilders the *jīvas*.

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of the Lord’s situation during the devastation and before the creation, with his unfailing form, qualities and pastimes, they describe another pastime involving his expansion at the beginning of creation, in order to describe the Lord’s eternal condition even at that time. Mahā-viṣṇu, manifesting the Vedas at the first moment of his breathing (*śāstra-kṛt*), followed *prakṛti*. “But if he follows *prakṛti*, that is a fault, because that shows he is dependent on *prakṛti*.” No. *Prakṛti* is instigated by his power (*nija-vīrya-coditām*). Engaged in activity under his control, *prakṛti* is the controller or bewilderer of the *jīva* (*jīva-māyām*) who are also his energies (*sva*). Why does he follow *prakṛti*? He follows her because he desires to make names and forms such as *devatās*, humans and animals, for the *jīvas* with no names and forms, by creating gross and subtle bodies and imposing

them on the *jīvas*. In order to accomplish performance of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, the Lord created the scriptures before following *prakṛti*.

|| 1.10.23 ||

*sa vā ayam yat padam atra sūrayo
jīvendriyā nirjita-mātariśvanah |
paśyanti bhakty-utkalitāmalātmanā
nanv eṣa sattvaṁ parimārṣṭum arhati ||*

TRANSLATION

He is that person whose form the sages who have controlled their senses by controlling their life air see with intelligence purified by intense *bhakti*. Certainly he can purify the intelligence completely.

COMMENTARY

“The *puruṣāvatāras* present at the beginning of creation have been described, but Kṛṣṇa is not of that type. He is perceivable now, during Dvāpara-yuga in the twenty-eighth cycle of Vaivasvata-manvantara.” That is true. But though his eternal pastimes and eternal form, perceived by *bhakti*, have appeared in Dvāpara-yuga, his pastimes can always be perceived by those having devotion. That is expressed in this verse.

Those who control the life air (*nirjita-mātariśvanah*), or those who control the senses because of controlling the life air, by intelligence (*ātmanā*) purified and enlivened by *bhakti*, see the lotus feet or the form (*padam*) of the Lord. *Mātariśvanah* becomes *mātariśvanah* by poetic license. Because the senses are dependent on the life air, if one controls the life air, one controls the senses. *Śruti* says *drśyate tv agryayā buddhyā*: the Lord is seen by eager intelligence. (*Katha Upaniṣad* 3.12) Next they explain that he is the cause of the purity of their intelligence. Certainly (*nanu*) he, and not *yoga* or other processes, can purify completely (*parimārṣṭum*) the intelligence (*sattvaṁ*). The implication is that being a sage and conquering the senses and the life air is accomplished by their *bhakti* alone, not by *prāṇāyama* or other processes. The sages, being eager with *bhakti*, see the Lord. This is in the present tense to indicate that his pastimes are visible at all times. Brahmā says *ataḥ parārdhyante so 'budhyata gopa-veśo me pūruṣaḥ purastād āvirbabhūva*: after a half of my life time, I perceived him; he appeared before me with the dress of a cowherd. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*) Also in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Kṛṣṇa appeared at the beginning of creation to Brahmā and Brahmā praised him.

|| 1.10.24 ||

*sa vā ayam sakhy anugīta-sat-katho
vedeṣu guhyeṣu ca guhya-vādibhiḥ |
ya eka īśo jagad-ātma-līlayā*

srjaty avaty atti na tatra sajjate ||

TRANSLATION

O friend! He is Kṛṣṇa with human form, friend of Arjuna, who is the subject of pure topics sung by some who discern the secrets in the confidential scriptures, who, though the one Lord, creates, maintains and destroys without being attached, as the soul of the universe.

COMMENTARY

His secret pastimes are known by confidential persons. He, the friend of Arjuna, with human form, is the subject of pure discussion sung by some people who can discern the secrets (*guhya-vādibhiḥ*) in the secret scriptures. He is indeed the one Lord, who creates, maintains and destroys without being attached, but he does not do this directly with that form.

|| 1.10.25 ||

*yadā hy adharmeṇa tamo-dhiyo nṛpā
jīvanti tatraiṣa hi sattvataḥ kila |
dhatte bhagaṁ satyam ṛtaṁ dayāṁ yaśo
bhavāya rūpāṇi dadhad yuge yuge ||*

TRANSLATION

When kings whose minds are affected by ignorance live by irreligion, then Kṛṣṇa, accepting forms for the welfare of the world in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā, in every day of Brahmā, displays his six powers, truth, pleasing words, mercy and good qualities endowed with pure *sattva*.

COMMENTARY

For those asking about the time, place and persons for the *avatāras*' appearances, they first speak of the time. Kings (*nṛpāḥ*) refers to person like Kamsa. When these kings appear, the Lord assumes his six powers (*bhagam*), truth (*satyam*), pleasant words (*ṛtam*), mercy and good qualities, endowed with the highest *sattva* (*sattvataḥ*). He accepts beautiful forms in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā in every day of Brahmā (*yuge yuge*), or in every Dvāpara-yuga of the twenty-eighth cycle in Vaivasvata-manvantara in each day of Brahmā.

|| 1.10.26 ||

*aho alaṁ ślāghyatamaṁ yadoḥ kulam
aho alaṁ puṇyatamaṁ madhor vanam |
yad eṣa puṁsām ṛsabhaḥ śriyaḥ patiḥ
sva-janmanā caṅkramaṇena cāñcati ||*

TRANSLATION

Oh! Most praiseworthy is the family of Yadu! Most purifying is Mathurā-

maṇḍala, which Kṛṣṇa, the best of men, the Lord of auspiciousness, respects by taking birth there, moving about and performing pastimes.

COMMENTARY

Now they speak about the recipients and place of the Lord's appearance. Though the excellence of both the recipients and place is accomplished by saying that both are praiseworthy (*ślāghyatamam*), a separate statement is made about the purity of the area around Mathurā in the second line, since the place is well known for its purifying powers. The extreme nature of this purity is expressed by *alam* (can this be so?) which expresses disbelief. Furthermore the word *aho* expresses the greatest astonishment. By his birth, by his walking about the place, and by other various astonishing activities (*ca*), Kṛṣṇa respected the area of Mathurā. By the use of the present tense without saying *alam* (no disbelief), they indicate that the birth and activities of Kṛṣṇa are eternal. Their intention can be understood by comparing their first statement describing the pastime of creation in the past tense *ya eka āsīt* (SB 1.10.21) and the vision of the sages in the present tense (SB 1.10.23).

“How can the birth and activities be eternal? Those are actions, and any action or its part has a beginning and an end. Without beginning and end there will be a deficiency in the very nature of action.” No, this is not a fault. Since the Lord has unlimited forms at all times, he has unlimited manifestations. Because of that he has unlimited pastimes of birth and activities. And thus he has unlimited manifestations of places and associates in this world and the spiritual world for those pastimes. Thus though there are beginning and endings of his birth and activities for each of these manifested forms in each of these places, the moment a portion of the birth or activities ends or even before it ends, the birth and activities begin in other places. Because there is no lack of continuity in the Lord, his birth and activities are eternal. Sometimes the birth and activities take place in a slightly different manner and sometimes in exactly the same manner, because of difference or oneness of different conditions. And as well one form becomes many for performing different actions at once. This will be explained in relation to Kṛṣṇa's expansions in Dvārakā. (SB 10.69.3) At that time it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa has different identities in each of these different active forms because they perform different actions. And there is a particular appearance of *rasa* caused by the particular pastime in the particular place.

“Why did you speak of the birth and activities as one item? Because they begin separately, they should be considered separately.” No, there is oneness of similar forms of actions even though they appear at different times. *Śaṅkara-śārīrika* says:

dvirgo-śabdo 'yam uccarito na tu dvau go-śabdāv iti pratīti-nirṇītaṁ
śabdaikatvam tathaiva dviḥ pākaḥ kṛto'nena na tu dvau pākāv

When one says the word *dvirgo* one does not perceive two different words but one. Similarly we do conceive of *dviḥ pākaḥ* as one, not two words.

Therefore it is correct to say that the birth and pastimes together are eternal. Thus in various scriptures it is recommended to perform meditation on the pastimes which took place previously (since they are eternal). This is also stated in Madhva's commentary relating to Paramātmā. Thus, because they are eternal, forms such as Trivikrama can disappear with no contradiction. *Śruti* agrees with this. *Yad bhūtaṁ bhavaḥ ca bhaviṣyati ca*: the Lord was present in the past, is present now and will be present in the future. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.8.3) This means that though the Lord disappears, he is still recommended as the best object of worship. It should be understood that the Lord's birth is different from our material birth. The Lord makes an appearance in the likeness of a material birth or somewhat similar. This is explained in *Bhagavat-sandarbhā*. Some say that the pastimes as well as the devotees and *dhāmas* are called eternal simply because there are many manifestations of his birth and activities in infinite, eternal *dhāmas* in the material world.

|| 1.10.27 ||

*aho bata svar-yaśasas tiraskarī
kuśasthalī puṇya-yaśaskarī bhuvah |
paśyanti nityaṁ yad anugraheṣitam
smitāvalokaṁ sva-patiṁ sma yat-prajāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Oh! Dvārakā derides the fame of Svarga. It gives fame to purity on this earth, because the inhabitants constantly see Kṛṣṇa with smiling face, who was sent here by mercy!

COMMENTARY

Having glorified Mathurā-maṇḍala, they now remember Dvārakā. Oh! Dvārakā (*kuśasthalī*) surpasses the fame of Svarga. This is a statement in deference to common attitudes, not scriptural truth (since there is no comparison to Svarga at all). If it is *sva-yaśasaḥ* it means that Dvārakā surpasses Vaikuṅṭha. This is because (*yat*) the residents there (*yat-prajāḥ*) see Kṛṣṇa (*sva-patiṁ*) who by mercy was dispatched (*iṣitam*) from Hastināpura or from his inner palace in order to give happiness to the citizens. Or the phrase can mean “they see Kṛṣṇa who is sought in order to attain his mercy.” *Anugraheṣitam* is also seen in some versions. This mean “they see Kṛṣṇa who resided there to give mercy.” This situation does not occur in Svarga.

|| 1.10.28 ||

*nūnaṁ vrata-snāna-hutādineśvaraḥ
samarcito hy asya grhīta-pāṇibhiḥ |
pibanti yāḥ sakhy adharāmṛtaṁ muhur
vraja-striyaḥ sammumuhur yad-āśayāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O friend! The wives of Kṛṣṇa who drink the nectar of his lips constantly must have certainly worshipped him by austerities, bathing in sacred places and sacrifices in previous lives to attain their present status. But the women of Vraja whose minds were completely absorbed in that nectar fainted in bliss simply because of remembering it.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes the women with *mādhurya-rasa*. Certainly Kṛṣṇa was worshipped by vows, bathing and sacrifices by his wives who drink the nectar of his lips constantly. Let us also, not having performed vows or bathing, drink the nectar of his beauty right now. Those wives are much superior to us, even with our millions of good qualities. But they are much inferior to the women of Vraja! Those whose minds were absorbed (*āśayāḥ*) in the sweetness of those lips fainted in bliss (*sammumuhuh*) by remembering that sweetness in the morning. What kind of condition they attained on actually drinking that nectar at night we do not know! In this way the gopīs' extreme bliss arising from their extreme *prema* is indicated.

|| 1.10.29-30 ||

*yā vīrya-śulkena hṛtāḥ svayamvare
pramathya caidyā-pramukhān hi śuṣmīnaḥ |
pradyumna-sāmbāmba-sutādayo 'parā
yāś cāhṛtā bhauma-vadhe sahasraśaḥ ||*

*etāḥ param strītvam apāstapeśalam
nirasta-śaucam bata sādhu kurvate |
yāsām grhāt puṣkara-locanaḥ patir
na jātv apaity āhṛtibhir hṛdi spṛśan ||*

TRANSLATION

Rukmiṇī, Jāmbavatī, Nāgnajitī and others, who were taken away at the price of valor after Kṛṣṇa defeated strong kings headed by Śiśupāla and others in the thousands, who were accepted by him on killing Narakāsura, and who had been impure and had lost all auspiciousness, then became the best of women, because lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, increasing the bliss in their hearts by bringing things to them, never left their houses.

COMMENTARY

Two verses elaborate on what has been said. *Vīrya-śulkena* means “by the price of valor.” *Śuṣmīnaḥ* means “strong.” Those who had Pradyumna, Sāmba and Āmba as sons refers to Rukmiṇī, Jāmbavatī and Nāgnajitī. “Others” includes Satyabhāmā. *Apāsta-peśalam* means “having lost auspiciousness or independence.” *Nirasta-śaucam* means “having lost purity.” Kṛṣṇa never left their houses. He touched their hearts, or increased their bliss by bringing various beautiful gifts like the Pārijāta tree.

|| 1.10.31 ||

*sūta uvaca
evamvidhā gadantīnām sa girah pura-yoṣitām |
nirīkṣaṇenābhinandan sasmitena yayau hariḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Acknowledging the words of the women of Hastināpura who had spoken in this way, with smiles and glances, Kṛṣṇa departed.

COMMENTARY

By his glances he pleased the women who had *śānta-rati*, and by his smiles he pleased those with *mādhurya-bhāva*.

|| 1.10.32 ||

*ajāta-śatruḥ pṛtanām gopīthāya madhu-dviṣaḥ |
parebhyaḥ śaṅkitaḥ snehāt prāyuṅkta catur-aṅgiṇīm ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira, worried about enemies, out of affection engaged an army of four parts³⁹ for the protection of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Gopīthāya means “for protection.”

|| 1.10.33 ||

*atha dūrāgatān śauriḥ kauravān virahāturān |
sannivartya dṛḍham snigdhan prāyāt sva-nagarīm priyaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Leaving the Pāṇḍavas who were most affectionate, who were afflicted by separation, and who had accompanied him for a long way, Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY

Kauravān means the Pāṇḍavas.

|| 1.10.34-35 ||

*kuru-jāṅgala-pāñcālān śūrasenān sayāmunān |
brahmāvartam kurukṣetram matsyān sārasvatān atha ||
maru-dhanvam atikramya sauvīrābhīrayoḥ parān |*

³⁹ According to Çrédhara Svāmé the four parts are elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers.

ānartān bhārgavopāgāc chrānta-vāho manāg vibhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O son of Bhṛgu! Passing through the provinces of Kuru-jāṅgala, Pāñcāla, and Śūrasena on the banks of the Yamunā River, Brahmāvarta, Kurukṣetra, Matsya, Sārasvata, and the deserts and arid regions, and then Sauvīra and Abhīra, the Lord arrived at Ānarta with slightly tired horses.

COMMENTARY

The places are not listed in proper sequence. *Maru* is a place without water and *dhanva* is a place with little water. He arrived at Ānarta, the area of Dvārakā with slightly tired horses (*manāk śrānta vāhaḥ*).

|| 1.10.36 ||

*tatra tatra ha tatratyair hariḥ pratyudyatārhaṇaḥ |
sāyam bheje diśam paścād gaviṣṭho gām gatas tadā ||*

TRANSLATION

At all the places along the way devotees offered gifts to the Lord. He arrived at Dvārakā in the afternoon. Then the sun entered the western ocean.

COMMENTARY

The states situated on the road from Hastināpura to Dvārakā also worshipped him. The Lord was offered gifts by the devotees living in all those places (*tatratyaiḥ*) as he proceeded on the road, in order to bring him to their place. To fulfill their desires he went to all these places one after the other and after staying a few days in each place continued on the road. He arrived at Dvārakā (*paścād diśam*) in the afternoon (*sāyam*). At that time the sun (*gaviṣṭhaḥ*) had entered the water (*gām*) of the western ocean.

Chapter Eleven Kṛṣṇa arrives at Dvārakā

|| 1.11.1 ||

*sūta uvāca
ānartān sa upavrajya svṛddhāñ jana-padān svakān |
dadhmau daravaram teṣām viśādam śamayann iva ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Arriving at his own prosperous city of Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa, somewhat allaying the suffering of the inhabitants, blew the best of conch shells.

COMMENTARY

In the eleventh chapter, Kṛṣṇa, arriving at Dvārakā, is praised by the inhabitants,

meets with his friends and satisfies his wives.

Daravaram is his conch Pāñcājanya. Without seeing Kṛṣṇa directly their lamentation could not be completely dissipated. Thus the word *iva* (somewhat) is used.

|| 1.11.2 ||

*sa uccakāṣe dhavalodaro daro 'py
urukramasyādharāṣoṇa-ṣoṇimā ||
dādhmāyamānaḥ kara-kañja-samputē |
yathābja-ṣaṇḍe⁴⁰ kala-haṁsa utsvanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The white-bellied conch, continually blown in his lotus hands, like a bellowing swan amidst a lotus grove, reddened by the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lips, appeared most attractive.

COMMENTARY

That conch appeared beautiful (*uccakāṣe*), being reddened by the red of his lips. He continually blew it (*dādhmāyamānaḥ*). The conch held in his hands was like a swan in a group of lotuses (*abja-ṣaṇḍe*).

|| 1.11.3 ||

*tam upaśrutya ninadam jagad-bhaya-bhayāvaham⁴¹ |
pratyudyayuḥ prajāḥ sarvā bharṭṛ-darśana-lālasāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing that sound of the conch, which gives fear to the dangers of material existence, all the citizens, desiring to see their master, went out to meet him,

COMMENTARY

The conch gives fear to the fear of this material existence.

|| 1.11.4-5 ||

*tatropanīta-balayo raver dīpam ivāḍṛtāḥ |
ātmārāmaṁ pūrṇa-kāmaṁ nija-lābhena nityadā ||
prīty-utphulla-mukhāḥ procur harṣa-gadgadayā girā |
pitaram sarva-suhṛdam avitāram ivārbhakāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Offering him gifts like offering a lamp to the sun, faces blossoming in affection, they began to speak with words choked up with joy to Kṛṣṇa, who is always

⁴⁰ Another version has *khaēḍe* instead of *ñāēḍe*.

⁴¹ 'jagad-bhava-bhayāpaham' ity api pāḥau |

satisfied with his own qualities, who is satisfied with himself, and who is always their friend and protector, like a father protecting his children.

COMMENTARY

They offered gifts (*upanītāḥ balayaḥ*), which were given out of adoration, though he did not need them, just like a sun worshipper offers a lamp to the sun. They spoke to Kṛṣṇa who was their protector, like a father protecting children. *Ātmārāmam* (self-satisfied) indicates that he was not dependent on the gifts.

|| 1.11.6 ||

*natāḥ sma te nātha sadāṅghri-pankajam
viriñca-vairiñcyā-surendra-vanditam |
parāyaṇam kṣemam ihecchatām param
na yatra kālaḥ prabhavet paraḥ prabhuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O master! We continually offer respects to your lotus feet, the supreme shelter for those desiring the highest benefit, which are worshipped by Brahmā, the Kumāras, Indra, which cannot be influenced by time, though time controls even Brahmā.

COMMENTARY

Vairiñcyāḥ means the Kumāras. *Param parāyaṇam* means the supreme shelter. In the shelter of these lotus feet, the master of Brahmā and others (*paraḥ prabhuḥ*), time, does not have power.

|| 1.11.7 ||

*bhavāya nas tvam bhava viśva-bhāvana
tvam eva mātātha suhṛt-patiḥ pitā |
tvam sad-gurur naḥ paramam ca daivatam
yasyānuvṛtṭyā kṛtino babhūvima ||*

TRANSLATION

Protector of the universe! Work for our best interests! You alone are our mother, father, friend and master. You are our *guru* and supreme deity, by following whom we have become successful.

COMMENTARY

Bhavāya means “for welfare.” *Medinī* says *bhavaḥ kṣeme saṁsāre*: *bhava* means welfare and material existence.

|| 1.11.8 ||

*aho sanāthā bhavatā sma yad vayam
traiviṣṭapānām api dūra-darśanam |*

*prema-smīta-snigdha-nirīkṣaṇānanaṁ
paśyema rūpaṁ tava sarva-saubhagam ||*

TRANSLATION

In you we have found our master. We have become successful, because we can see your form endowed with all good qualities, with a face smiling in love and glancing in affection, which is difficult to see for the *devatās*.

COMMENTARY

Triaviṣṭapānām means “of the *devatās*.”

|| 1.11.9 ||

*yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān
kurūn madhūn vātha suḥṛd-didrṣayā |
tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved
ravim vinākṣnor iva nas tavācyuta ||*

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed Lord! When you go to Hastināpura or Vraja to see your friends, one moment becomes like a trillion years for us, who belong to you, and who become like eyes without the sun.

COMMENTARY

O lotus-eyed Lord! A version which has *no bhavān* is not accepted. *Kurūn* means Hastināpura and *madhūn* means Vraja, not Mathurā, because at that time none of his friends resided there. This is understood from the word “all” in the statement *tatra yoga-prabhāvena nītvā sarva-janaṁ hariḥ*: the Lord by his power of *yoga* brought all the inhabitants of Mathurā to Dvārakā. (SB 10.50.57) He sent messengers back to the *gopīs* when he was leaving, saying “I will come back.” (SB 10.39.35) And he sent Nanda back to Vraja saying, “I will come to see you.” (SB 10.45.23) Though it is clearly mentioned in *Padma Purāṇa* and other *Purāṇas* that he did return, it can be understood from this verse of *Bhāgavatam* as well. When you leave, a moment becomes like a trillion years for us (*naḥ*) who belong to you (*tava*).

|| 1.11.10 ||⁴²

*kathaṁ vyaṁ nātha ciroṣite tvayi
prasanna-dṛṣṭyākhila-tāpa-śoṣaṇam |
jīvema te sundara-hāsa-śobhitam
apaśyamānā vadaṇaṁ manoḥaram ||*

TRANSLATION

⁴² This verse is not found in all editions of Sridhar’s *tika*.

O Lord! When you leave, how can we maintain our lives, not seeing your attractive face decorated with a pleasing smile, which dries up all miseries with its joyful glances?

|| 1.11.11 ||⁴³

*iti codīritā vācaḥ prajānām bhakta-vatsalaḥ |
śṛṅvāno'nugrahaṁ dṛṣṭyā vitanvan prāviśat puram ||*

TRANSLATION

After hearing these words from the citizens, Kṛṣṇa, affectionate to his devotees, spreading mercy by his glance, entered the city.

COMMENTARY

He glanced at the citizens.

|| 1.11.12 ||

*madhu-bhoja-daśārha-kukurāndhaka-vṛṣṇibhiḥ |
ātma-tulya-balair guptām nāgair bhogavatīm iva ||*

TRANSLATION

He entered the city, protected by the Madhus, Bhojas, Daśārhas, Arhas, Kukuras, Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis, similar in strength to himself. The city appeared like the city of Bhogavatī protected by the Nāgas.

COMMENTARY

Dvārakā is described in five verses.

|| 1.11.13 ||

*sarvartu-sarva-vibhava-puṇya-vṛkṣa-latāśramaiḥ |
udyānopavanārāmair vṛta-padmākara-śriyam ||*

TRANSLATION

The city appeared splendid with lakes surrounded by pleasure gardens and plantations, with groves of pious trees and creepers giving fruit and flowers of all seasons.

COMMENTARY

The city appeared splendid with lakes or lotus pools (*padmākara*) surrounded by forests for recreation giving flowers, and groves giving fruit, and with groves of pious creepers and trees giving flowers of all seasons.

|| 1.11.14 ||

⁴³ This is part of verse 10 in the folio. Thus verse numbers hereafter are different.

*gopura-dvāra-mārgeṣu kṛta-kautuka-toraṇām |
citra-dhvaja-patākāgrair antaḥ pratihatātapām ||*

TRANSLATION

Festoons had been placed over the gates and doors. The multitude of colorful flags with insignias and with auspicious patterns prevented the heat from entering.

COMMENTARY

Gopuras are city gates. *Dvāras* are doors to houses. The heat of the sun was stopped from entering within by the flags.

|| 1.11.15 ||

*sammārjita-mahā-mārga-rathyāpaṇaka-catvarām |
siktām gandha-jalair uptām phala-puṣpākṣatāṅkuraiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The major roads, lanes, market roads and footpaths were sprinkled with scented water and spread with flowers, fruit, rice and sprouts.

COMMENTARY

Mahā-mārga means main road. *Rathya* are other roads. *Āpaṇaka* means shopping street. *Catvara* is a footpath. *Uptām* means sprinkled.

|| 1.11.16 ||

*dvāri dvāri grhāṇām ca dadhy-akṣata-phalekṣubhiḥ |
alāṅkṛtām pūrṇa-kumbhair balibhir dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The city was adorned with full water pots, incense, lamps, offerings, yogurt, rice, fruits and sugar cane stalks at the door of every house.

|| 1.11.17-20 ||

*niśamya preṣṭham āyāntām vasudevo mahā-manāḥ |
akrūras cograsenaś ca rāmaś cādbhuta-vikramah ||*

*pradyumnaś cārudeṣṇaś ca sāmbo jāmbavatī-sutaḥ |
praharṣa-vegocchaṣita- śayanāsana-bhojanāḥ ||*

*vāraṇendram puraskṛtya brāhmaṇaiḥ sasumaṅgalaiḥ |
śaṅkha-tūrya-ninādena brahma-ghoṣeṇa cādṛtāḥ |
pratyujjagmū rathair hr̥ṣṭāḥ praṇayāgata-sādhvasāḥ ||*

*vāramukhyāś ca śataśo yānais tad-darśanotsukāḥ |
lasat-kunḍala-nirbhāta-kapola-vadana-śriyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing that their dear Lord was coming, liberal Vasudeva, Akrūra, Ugrasena, Balarāma of astonishing prowess, Pradyumna, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, the son of Jāmbavatī, overlooking eating, sitting, and sleeping out of great bliss, overjoyed and enthusiastic, excited from love, putting the best elephants in front, went out with *brāhmaṇas* decorated auspiciously, accompanied by chanting of *mantras* and the sounds of conches and *tūryas*. Hundreds of beautiful dancing girls, eager to see the Lord, with glittering earrings lighting up their cheeks, also came on vehicles,

COMMENTARY

Four verses are one sentence. The word *preṣṭham* can be taken either with conventional meaning of “husband” (for the queens) or with its etymological meaning “dear.” Out of joy they overlooked (*ucchaśita*) eating etc. The verb *śaś* means to jump up. *Sādhvasam* means zeal.

|| 1.11.21 ||

naṭa-nartaka-gandharvāḥ sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ |
gāyanti cottamaśloka-caritāny adbhutāni ca ||

TRANSLATION

The actors, dancers, singers, reciters, bards and eulogists sang about the astonishing activities of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Naṭas (actors) are those who are skillful at portraying *rasa*. *Nartakas* (dancers) are those who dance to the rhythms of the songs. *Gandharvās* are singers. *Sūtas* recite *Purāṇas*. *Māgadhas* praise the lineage of families. *Vandis* of pure intelligence sing praises.

|| 1.11.22 ||

bhagavāms tatra bandhūnām paurāṇām anuvartinām |
yathā-vidhy upasaṅgamy sarveṣāṃ mānam ādadhe ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord met them all and suitably respected all friends, relatives, and citizens who had come.

COMMENTARY

Yathāvidhi means “as suitable.”

|| 1.11.23 ||

prahvābhivādanāśleṣa-kara-sparśa-smitekṣaṇaiḥ |
āśvāsya cāśvapākebhyo varaiś cābhimatair vibhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Removing all fear from fathers and *gurus* by bowing his head, greeting the elders of the Yadus with words, others with embraces, the touch of his hands, smiles and glances, he respected all, down to the outcastes with desirable gifts.

COMMENTARY

Prahvā means to bow the head. He did this to fathers and other elder relatives and to sages like Garga. He greeted elders of the Yadu clan with words. Down to the outcastes he comforted all, giving them fearlessness. *Varaiḥ* means “by desirable gifts.”

|| 1.11.24 ||

svayaṁ ca gurubhir vipraiḥ sadāraiḥ sthavirair api |
āśīrbhir yujyamāno 'nyair vandibhiś cāviśat puram ||

TRANSLATION

Receiving blessings from fathers and teachers, *brāhmaṇas*, elders with their wives, eulogists and others, he entered the city.

COMMENTARY

Gurubhiḥ means “by grandfathers and others.”

|| 1.11.25-26 ||

rāja-mārgaṁ gate kṛṣṇe dvārakāyāḥ kula-striyaḥ |
harmyāṇy āruruhur viprās⁴⁴ tad-īkṣaṇa-mahotsavāḥ ||
nityaṁ nirīkṣamāṇānām yad api dvārakaukasām |
na vitṛpyanti hi dṛśaḥ śriyo dhāmāṅgam acyutam ||

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*! When Kṛṣṇa arrived at the main road, the women of Dvārakā, overjoyed on seeing him, climbed to the top of the palaces, because the eyes of the inhabitants of Dvārakā could not be satisfied even with constantly gazing upon Acyuta, whose limbs were the abode of beauty.

COMMENTARY

Viprāḥ means “O *brāhmaṇas*!” They went to the tops of the palaces because (*yat*) their eyes, even gazing at him constantly, were not satisfied. His limbs were the abode of beauty.

|| 1.11.27 ||

*śriyo nivāso yasyoraḥ pāna-pātram mukhaṁ dṛśām |
bāhavo loka-pālānām sāraṅgāṇām padāmbujam ||*

TRANSLATION

His chest is the shelter of Lakṣmī, his face, the drinking vessel, is the shelter for the eyes, his arms are the shelter of the protectors of the word, and his lotus feet are the shelter of the bee-like devotees.

COMMENTARY

His face, a cup full of sweet beauty, is the shelter for the eyes. His arms are the shelter for protectors of the planets such as Indra. Taking shelter of their strength, they become fearless of the demons and live comfortably. *Sāraṅga* can mean those who sing (*ga*) the glories of the Lord (*sāram*), the devotees. As a pun, it means a bee, which takes shelter of the lotus.

|| 1.11.28 ||

*sitātapatra-vyajanaḥ upaskṛtaḥ
prasūna-varṣair abhivarṣitaḥ pathi |
piśaṅga-vāsā vana-mālayā babhau
ghano yathārkoḍupa-cāpa-vaidyutaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

On the road, furnished with umbrella and *cāmaras*, showered with flowers, wearing yellow cloth with a garland, he appeared to be a cloud with the sun, moon, rainbow and lightning.

COMMENTARY

Vaidyutam is lightning. A comparison is made between Kṛṣṇa and a cloud. The umbrella is like the sun, and the waving of two *cāmaras*, with their circular movements, are like two moons. The showers of flowers are like stars. The flower garland is like two rainbows. His yellow cloth is like lightning. It is astonishing that the sun and two moons simultaneously shine on a cloud with the stars, two rainbows and stationary lightning. This is how the Lord appeared.

|| 1.11.29 ||

*praviṣtas tu grhaṁ pitroḥ pariṣvaktāḥ sva-mātṛbhiḥ |
vavande śirasā sapta devakī-pramukhā mudā ||*

TRANSLATION

Entering the house of his parents, embraced by seven mothers, headed by Devakī, he offered respects with his head to them.

COMMENTARY

This is mentioned to show that he greatly respected the seven because they were

sisters of his mother Devakī. Vasudeva actually had eighteen wives and he offered respects to all of them as his mothers.

|| 1.11.30 ||

*tāḥ putram aṅkam āropya sneha-snuta-payodharāḥ |
harṣa-vihvalitātmānaḥ siṣicur netrajair jalaiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearts trembling with joy, milk flowing from their breasts, they put Kṛṣṇa on their laps, and moistened them with their tears.

|| 1.11.31 ||

*athāviśat sva-bhavanam sarva-kāmam anuttamam |
prāsādā yatra patnīnām sahasrāṇi ca ṣoḍaśa ||*

TRANSLATION

He then entered his own incomparable quarters which satisfied all desires, where there were sixteen thousands one hundred and eight palaces for his queens.

COMMENTARY

Sva-bhavanam means his own quarters. *Ca* with sixteen thousand indicates an additional one hundred and eight.

|| 1.11.32 ||

*patnyaḥ patim prośya grhānupāgataḥ
vilokya sañjāta-mano-mahotsavāḥ |
uttasthur ārāt sahasāsanāśayāt
sākam vratāir vrīḍita-locanānanāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing from a distance their husband arrive after absence, with great desire in their minds, with bent heads and shy glances, they quickly rose from their seats and their minds, along with their penances.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa entered each of the palaces of the queens simultaneously in many forms. When each saw him, they thought “Kṛṣṇa has come to me first.” This verse describes the reactions of the queens. Their mind became filled with great joy (*sañjāta-mano-mahotsavāḥ*). This is the initial desire. Then they rose from their seats (*āsanaā*) and from their hearts (*āśayāt*). Then they glanced at him from the sides of their eyes with bent heads (*vrīḍita-locanānanāḥ*). This means that they first gave up their seats to embrace their Lord, using the body. They then noticed an obstacle in the form of their bashfulness. They therefore gave up their minds,

which were the dwelling place of that bashfulness, and embraced him with their souls. They completely overlooked their bodies and minds. Seeing their beloved, suddenly they fainted out of the bliss of *prema* arising from desire to touch him, because in fainting, as with deep sleep and loss of consciousness, there is no obstruction of the mind. Yājñavalkya speaks of *vratas*:

krīḍām śarīra-saṁskāram samājotsava-darśanam |
hāsyam para-gr̥he yānam tyajet proṣita-bhartṛkā ||

In absence from her husband the wife should give up recreation, cleaning the body, seeing festivals in society, laughing and going to other houses.

They rose along with their *vratas*. Though it was improper for them to be seen by their husband in a state of *vrata*, because they could not suddenly give up those *vratas*, they rose along with their *vratas*. Seeing them in an unkempt state because of separation, he became more affectionate to them.

|| 1.11.33 ||

*tam ātmajair dṛṣṭibhir antarātmanā
duranta-bhāvāḥ parirebhire patim |
niruddham apy āsavad ambu netrayor
vilajjatīnām bhṛgu-varya vaiklavāt ||*

TRANSLATION

The queens first embraced the Lord with their eyes, full of desire, and then they embraced with their subtle bodies so that no one could see. O chief amongst the Bhṛgus, though they tried to restrain their tears because of embarrassment, they inadvertently shed some tears.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes how they embraced Kṛṣṇa in spite of the obstacle of their shyness. *Ātma-jaiḥ* refers to Cupid born of the mind or conjugal desire. *Amara-koṣa* says *makaradhvaja ātma-bhūḥ*: *ātma-bhūḥ* means Cupid. They saw him with intense desire. First they embraced him with their eyes filled with desire. This is enjoyment through the eyes. Having him enter within the holes of their eyes, they embraced him with their subtle body (*antar-ātmanā*) because they did not want others to understand what they were doing. This method of women in love is described later

*tam kācin netra-randhreṇa hṛdi kṛtvā nimīlya ca |
pula-kāṅgy upaguhyāste yogivānanda-samplutā ||*

One *gopī* took the Lord through the aperture of her eyes and placed Him within her heart. Then, with her eyes closed and her bodily hairs standing on end, she continuously embraced him within. Thus immersed in

transcendental ecstasy, she resembled a *yogī* meditating upon the Lord. SB
10.32.8

But seeing that their most clever husband understood what they were doing, they became embarrassed, and though they stopped the tears from flowing in their eyes, some tears flowed anyway beyond their control, O best of the Bhr̥gu dynasty!

|| 1.11.34 ||

*yadyapy asau pārśva-gato raho-gatas
tathāpi tasyāṅghri-yugaṁ navam navam |
pade pede kā virameta tat-padāc
calāpi yac chr̥r na jahāti karhicit ||*

TRANSLATION

Though Kṛṣṇa's feet were next to them and in private, those feet appeared more and more beautiful at every moment. Which woman could give up those feet which Lakṣmī never gives up?

COMMENTARY

At every moment (*pade pede*) the feet appeared newer and newer to them. If Lakṣmī who is fickle in nature, the embodiment of all beauty, finds those feet ever fresh, then what to speak of anyone else being able to give them up.

|| 1.11.35 ||

*evam nr̥pāṇām kṣiti-bhāra-janmanām
akṣauhiṇībhiḥ parivṛtta-tejasām |
vidhāya vairam śvasano yathānalām
mitho vadhenoparato nirāyudhaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, without weapons, by creating enmity between kings powerful with armies, who had created a burden on the earth, destroyed them by having them kill each other, just as the wind, by creating friction between bamboos, destroys them by fire.

COMMENTARY

In order to express the unimpeded nature of his love for the queens another type of activity lacking that excitement is described. Just as wind produces fire by rubbing the bamboos together and then destroys them by burning, the Lord without weapons, by creating enmity between kings, who were powerful with their vast armies and who created a burden for the earth, destroyed them by having them kill each other.

|| 1.11.36 ||

*sa eṣa nara-loke 'sminn avatīrṇaḥ sva-māyayā |
reme strī-ratna-kūṭastho bhagavān prākṛto yathā ||*

TRANSLATION

Having appeared on this earth the Lord enjoyed among the best of women by expanding himself through his *yoga-māyā*, according to his nature.

COMMENTARY

By his *yoga-māyā* (*sva-māyayā*) he resided with each of his many wives by expanding his form into many. Thus according to his nature (*yathā prākṛtaḥ*) the Lord enjoys. The causes of the Lord's enjoyment, the desire to enjoy and the activities of enjoyment are all beyond the material *guṇas* because he is not material.

|| 1.11.37 ||

*uddāma-bhāva-piśunāmala-valgu-hāsa-
vrīḍāvaloka-nihato madano 'pi yāsām |
sammuhya cāpam ajahāt pramadottamās tā
yasyendriyaṁ vimathituṁ kuhakair na śekuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Although the queens' beautiful smiles and furtive glances were all spotless and exciting, and signified deep love, and although they could conquer Cupid himself by making him give up his bow in frustration, those who approached him with false smiles and glances could not agitate the senses of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

“How can Kṛṣṇa be beyond matter when he enjoys sense objects with his senses?” This verse answers.

With their pure, beautiful smiles (*amala-valgu-hāsa*) and bashful glances (*vrīḍāvaloka*) indicating deep *prema* (*uddāma-bhāva*) directed towards Kṛṣṇa, which arose from their own pain of love, they defeated Cupid. Cupid first considered, “Hey, they are glancing at their beloved Kṛṣṇa with desire without even being struck by my arrows!” Then he became struck with wonder on seeing Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. The material Cupid, who had come to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, himself became bewildered and threw down his bow. In the presence of their arched bow-like eyebrows and the arrows of their bashful glances, what is the use of my bow and arrows? Thus he gave them up.

Though they were the best of women, they could not disturb his senses with their beautiful smiles and glances endowed with deception (*kuhakaiḥ*) to bring him under control. However, if those glances were endowed with *prema*, then they could disturb his senses. Because they did possess the proper type of love, their glances and smiles were certainly endowed with *prema*, though it was conjugal *prema*. They are described in the verse as having *prema* (*bhāva-piśuna*) and others

are described as having deception (*kuhakaiḥ*). In the first case, though the Lord is under the control of his wives, the Lord is still beyond *prakṛti* and the *guṇas* of matter, because he is under the control of *prema*, which is a function of the *cit-śakti* (not material *māyā*), and because their glances and smiles are composed of *prema*, the love that appears in them, and the pastimes of love that arise from that love are all spiritual. It is therefore impossible to say that the Lord has enjoyment of material sense objects, such as material sound and touch. In the second case, because it is impossible for a person without *prema* to control the Lord, the verse says that his senses cannot at all be disturbed by deception. Therefore the previous statement *reme strī-ratna-kūṭa-stho bhagavān prakṛto yathā* cannot mean that the Lord is attracted to material enjoyment.

One cannot say that the queens are material if sometimes their love-filled glances do not bring the Lord under control, because all the queens belong to the *cit-śakti* and none of their glances or smiles can ever be material. Nor should one say that the Lord is controlled by the general *cit-śakti*, arising from his *svarūpa*. He is actually controlled by *prema* alone which is a special function of the *cit-śakti*. From this conclusion, there are no more objections.

|| 1.11.38 ||

tam ayam manyate loko hy asaṅgam api saṅginam |
ātmaupamyena manujam vyāpṛṇvānam yato 'budhaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Ignorant people think of the Lord, though uncontaminated by matter, as a human being, one of themselves, contaminated by matter because of seeing unappealing behavior such as his compliance with Satyabhāmā's attachment to getting the Pārijāta tree.

COMMENTARY

Though the Lord is without material contamination, ignorant people think that he is associated with matter by looking at externals. They think of him in terms of themselves (*ātmaupamyena*) because of unappealing behavior (*vyāpṛṇvānam*) such that related to Satyabhāmā's attachment to getting the Pārijāta tree. The fool (*abudhaḥ*) devoid of discrimination of true and false thinks that *prema* is material attachment, just as a fool thinks that a sapphire is glass.

|| 1.11.39 ||

etad īsanam īsasya prakṛti-stho 'pi tad-guṇaiḥ |
na yujyate sadātma-sthair yathā buddhis tad-āśrayā ||

TRANSLATION

This is the power of the Lord: though he is situated in *prakṛti*, his is not affected by the *guṇas* which are situated in him, just as the intelligence of the devotee

remembering the Lord is not affected by the *guṇas*.

COMMENTARY

“Well, let us agree that the Lord’s pastimes with women are non-material because the women belong to the *cit-śakti*. But he appeared in the material Yadu family in the material world and perceived with his senses material objects such as form and sound belonging to demons like Jarāsandha who are material. Therefore it cannot be denied that he is associated with the *guṇas*.” This verse answers.

The power (*īśanam*) of the Lord is this: though situated in *prakṛti* he has no contact with the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. What are these *guṇas*? They are situated in him (*ātma-sthaiḥ*). He is situated in the *guṇas*, and the *guṇas* are also situated in him. But he has no contact with the *guṇas*. The Lord is said to be without *guṇas* though he is the basis of the whole material realm and the controller of it. *Sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca*: the Lord is the witness, the consciousness, and completely without *guṇas*. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.11) *Sattvādayo na santiṣe yatra ca prākṛtā guṇāḥ*: the material *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* do not exist in the Lord. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.9.44) *Harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ*: the Lord is devoid of the *guṇas*, completely beyond *prakṛti*. (SB 10.88.5) It is just like the intelligence of the greatest devotees, which has as its object the Lord (*tad-āśrayā buddhiḥ*), and always remembers him. Though the intelligence is situated in *prakṛti*, and is situated in the *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* while being contented, praising or criticizing, while being full or afflicted with hunger and thirst, and while waking, sleeping and in deep sleep, it is not connected to the *guṇas* because of its indifference to the *guṇas*. In the same way, though the Lord accepts the material objects of the senses, he is not affected by them at all because he is devoid of attachment to them

|| 1.11.40 ||

taṁ menire ’balā mūḍhāḥ strainam cānuvratam rahaḥ |
apramāṇa-vido bhartur īśvaram matayo yathā ||

Those wives, bewildered by the Lord’s *yoga-māyā*, not capable of estimating the powers of their husband, considered the Lord to be under the control of their love and their womanly natures, just as intelligence by itself cannot know the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Then do the queens, to whom he is always attached, being full of knowledge, know everything about Kṛṣṇa? No. They also do not know him because perfect knowledge of those women, arising from his *svarūpa*, is covered by the *yoga-māyā* of the Lord in order to nourish *rasa*. That is explained in this verse. These women consider their husband (*taṁ*) to be controlled by their love (*rahaḥ anuvratam*), controlled by their womanly nature (*strainam*), because they have been bewildered (*mūḍhāḥ*) by the Lord to nourish *mādhurya-rasa*. Just as people playing in the

ocean do not know the extent of the ocean, they do not know the extent (*apramāṇam-vidah*) of their husband. The intellectual functions of those who write scriptures (*matayah*), engaged in defining the Lord, know very little because of various opinions such as “the Lord is the material cause of the universe, the Lord is the controlling cause or efficient cause of the universe.” Thus such intelligent conclusions are actually ignorance. But one cannot consider those women material because they are endowed with *prema* and the Lord is controlled by their *prema*, since it has been said that they serve the Lord with *prema*.

Chapter Twelve

Birth of Parīkṣit

|| 1.12.1 ||

*śaunaka uvāca—
aśvatthāmnopasṛṣṭena brahma-śīrṣṇoru-tejasā |
uttarāyā hato garbha īsenājīvitaḥ punaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: The embryo killed by the intense heat of the *brahmāstra* thrown by Aśvatthāmā was revived by the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The twelfth chapter describes how the King celebrated the birth of Parīkṣit, and heard his future life from the *brāhmaṇas*. No one had ever heard of such a devotional king, who saw Kṛṣṇa when he was in the womb and punished Kali.

Sūta had promised to tell about Parīkṣit’s birth, but was sidetracked in reciting the sweet topics of how Parīkṣit was protected in the womb, the prayers of Kuntī, the passing of Bhīṣma, the journey to and entrance into Dvārakā, and Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes with the queens there. Śaunaka, desiring to hear about Parīkṣit’s birth, again asks about this specifically. *Upasṛṣṭena* means “being thrown.”

|| 1.12.2-3 ||

*tasya janma mahā-buddheḥ karmāṇi ca mahātmanaḥ |
nidhanaṁ ca yathaivāsīt sa pretya gataṁ yathā ||*

*tad idaṁ śrotum icchāmo gaditum yadi manyase |
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām yasya jñānam adāc chukaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

We desire to hear about the birth, activities, passing away and destination of

this highly intelligent devotee, which Śukadeva narrated to you. Please tell us, full of faith, if you desire to tell this.

|| 1.12.4 ||

sūta uvāca
apīpalad dharma-rājāḥ pitṛvad rañjayan prajāḥ |
niḥsprhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyaḥ kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Yudhiṣṭhira, like his father, freed from personal desires by engaging in service to the Lord, satisfied and protected the citizens.

COMMENTARY

Three verses describe Yudhiṣṭhira in order to indicate that the cause of attaining such a grandson was his attachment to Kṛṣṇa. *Apīpalat* means “he protected.”

|| 1.12.5-6 ||

sampadaḥ kratavo lokā mahiṣī bhrātaro mahī |
jambūdvīpādhipatyam ca yaśas ca tri-divam gatam ||

kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārhā mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ |
adhijahrur mudam rājñāḥ kṣudhitasya yathetare ||

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! He had all wealth, sacrifices, planets, queens, brothers, the earth, lordship over Jambū-dvīpa, and fame in Svarga, desirable even for the *devatās*. Did these things give joy to the King, whose mind was only fixed on Mukunda without deviation and nothing else?

COMMENTARY

The wealth and other items were desired by the *devatās*. *Spārhāḥ* means desire, coming from *sprha*, by adding the internal vowel “a”. Did these things create happiness for the King? No. The reason is given: he was thinking of Mukunda. “Other things” includes sandalwood and garlands offered in honor.

|| 1.12.7 ||

mātur garbha-gato vīraḥ sa tadā bhṛgu-nandana |
dadarśa puruṣam kañcid dahyamāno 'stra-tejasā ||

TRANSLATION

O son of Bhṛgu! The courageous hero Parikṣit in the womb of his mother, burned by the heat of the weapon, saw the form of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The topic of discussion now begins. Because of his natural courage (*vīrah*), he was not afraid of the fire of the weapon. His first perception of objects by his mental eyes was the form of the Lord.

|| 1.12.8 ||

aṅguṣṭha-mātram amalām sphurat-purāṭa-maulinam |
apīvyā-darśanam śyāmaṁ taḍid vāsasam acyutam ||

TRANSLATION

That pure, indestructible, beautiful form was the size of a thumb, dark in complexion, wearing cloth flashing like lightning, with a shining gold crown.

COMMENTARY

Though the Lord extends in all directions, he arranged to become the size of the thumb simply because he became situated in the womb. Actually he saw the Lord of that size in that particular place only by the inconceivable power of the Lord. There is no other reason for this. Later one it is said:

sa eṣa loke vikhyātaḥ parīkṣid iti yat prabhuḥ |
pūrvam dr̥ṣṭam anudhyāyan parīkṣeta nareṣv iha ||

Because he constantly remembered the Lord whom he had seen in the womb and searched for him among all men, he was famous Parīkṣit in this world. SB 1.12.39

He would not look among men to find that form if it had actually only been the size of a thumb.

The form he saw was most beautiful (*apīvyā-darśanam*). He wore a gold crown. *Maulin* is formed from *mauli* (crown) in the class of words like *vīhī*. He was dark in complexion and wearing cloth shining like lightning. This indicates that his form, like a rain cloud ornamented with lightning, had suddenly appeared in the sky of Uttarā's womb to save the young elephant Parīkṣit who was being burned by the forest fire of the *brahmāstra*.

|| 1.12.9 ||

śrīmad-dīrgha-catur-bāhuṁ tapta-kāñcana-kunḍalam |
kṣatajākṣam gadā-pāṇim ātmanaḥ sarvato diśam |
paribhramantam ulkābhām bhrāmayaṁtaṁ gadām muhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

He had four long arms, bright gold earrings. His eyes were red from anger and in his hands he was clutching a club. He wandered everywhere, swinging the club, which shone like a meteor.

COMMENTARY

Kṣatajākṣam (blood eyes) means that his eyes became very red because of anger at the *brahmastra*.

|| 1.12.10 ||

astra-tejaḥ sva-gadayā nīhāram iva gopatiḥ |
vidhamantaṁ sannikarṣe paryaiḥṣata ka ity asau ||

TRANSLATION

Seeing that form nearby annihilate the *brahmāstra* with his club, just as the sun dissipates frost, Parīkṣit considered in his mind, “Who is that?”

COMMENTARY

Like the sun (*gopatiḥ*) destroys frost (*nīhāram*) he destroyed the *brahmāstra*. He considered (*paryaiḥṣata*) “Who has saved me by those martial stances, even though he is not related to me?”

|| 1.12.11 ||

vidhūya tad ameyātmā bhagavān dharmagub vibhuḥ |
miṣato daśamāsasya⁴⁵ tatraivāntardadhe hariḥ ||

TRANSLATION

The Lord, maintaining his reputation of being affectionate to his devotees, inconceivable in form, and also a thief, having destroyed the *brahmāstra*, disappeared at that spot from the sight of the child ten months in the womb.

COMMENTARY

Dharmagub means “the Lord who maintains his quality of being affectionate to his devotee.” He was seen by Parīkṣit who was just about to be born, being ten months in the womb (*daśamāsasya*). The Lord disappeared there, where he was situated, without going elsewhere, because he is all powerful (*vibhuḥ*). He entered the womb and, attracting Parīkṣit’s mind (*hariḥ*, attractor), he then disappeared. This is the quality of the thief: he enters in and then disappears. Like a deceitful night prowler, he had entered into the womb to steal Parīkṣit’s mind. This metaphor is implied.

|| 1.12.12 ||

tataḥ sarva-guṇodarke sānukūla-grahodaye |

⁴⁵ *daśamāsasyeti pāohau |*

jajñe vaṁśa-dharaḥ pāṇḍor bhūyaḥ pāṇḍur ivaujasā ||

TRANSLATION

Then, with the ascendant filled with favorable planets, which would later manifest all good qualities, the maintainer of Pāṇḍu's lineage, similar to Pāṇḍu in strength, was born.

COMMENTARY

Sarva-guṇā udarakaḥ means in the future all good qualities would manifest. When he was born there was a conjunction of favorable planets in the ascendant.

|| 1.12.13 ||

*tasya prīta-manā raja viprair dhaumya-kṛpādibhiḥ |
jātakam kārayām āsa vācayitvā ca maṅgalam ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira had the *brāhmaṇas* such as Dhaumya and Kṛpācārya chant auspicious verses such as *puṇyāham* and perform the birth rites.

COMMENTARY

Jātakam means the birth rites.

|| 1.12.14 ||

*hiraṇyam gām mahīm grāmān hasty-aśvān nṛpatir varān |
prādāt svannaṁ ca viprebhyaḥ prajā-tīrthe sa tīrthavit ||*

TRANSLATION

On the auspicious occasion of the birth, the best of kings, knowing the proper time to give charity, gave the *brāhmaṇas* gold, cows, land, villages, elephants, horses, and the best food.

COMMENTARY

Prajā-tīrthe means “at the auspicious time of a son's birth.” *Putre jāte vyatīpāte dattaṁ bhavati cākṣayam*: what is given at the birth of a son or during calamity has indestructible results.

|| 1.12.15-17 ||

*tam ūcur brāhmaṇās tuṣṭā rājānaṁ praśrayānvitam |
eṣa hy asmin prajā-tantau purūṇām pauravarṣabha ||*

daivenāpratighātena śukle samsthām upeyuṣi |

rāto vo 'nugrahārthāya viṣṇunā prabhaviṣṇunā ||

*tasmān nāmnā viṣṇu-rāta iti loke bhaviṣyati |
na sandeho mahā-bhāga mahā-bhāgavato mahān ||*

TRANSLATION

The satisfied *brāhmaṇas* said to the humble king: O best of men! Though the pure dynasty of Puru was destroyed by unavoidable destiny, this son has been given as mercy to you by the powerful Viṣṇu. Therefore he will be known as Viṣṇu-rāta, “Gift of Viṣṇu,” and without doubt, in this world will be the best, the greatest devotee, O fortunate King!

COMMENTARY

Though the pure (*śukle*) dynasty of the Purus was destroyed (*upeyuṣi*), this son was given (*rātaḥ*). The *brāhmaṇas* say “without doubt” to the King who did not believe that his son had such qualities.

|| 1.12.18 ||

śrī-rājovāca—

*apy eṣa vaṁśyān rājarṣīn puṇya-ślokān mahātmanah |
anuvartitā svid yaśasā sādhu-vādena sattamāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The King said:

O great souls! Will this son follow our lineage of reputed saintly kings with fame and good praise?

COMMENTARY

Having heard that Parīkṣit would be a great devotee, the astonished king inquired with reverence. *Api svit* indicates a question. *Anuvartitā* means “follow the qualities of.” Will he be like them or not?

|| 1.12.19 ||

brāhmaṇā ūcuḥ—

*pārtha prajāvitā sāksād ikṣvākur iva mānavah |
brahmaṇyaḥ satya-sandhaś ca rāmo dāśarathir yathā ||*

TRANSLATION

The *brāhmaṇas* said: O son of Pṛthā! He is the protector of the citizens. He is exactly like Ikṣvāku, the son of Manu and Rāma, the son of Daśaratha. He is charitable to the *brāhmaṇas* and true to his promise.

COMMENTARY

You asked if he would have fame like the previous great kings. All their qualities by which they became famous exist in this boy now, and as the occasion arises, they will manifest. Therefore they were not equal to him (since he has the qualities of all of them.) This is what we have observed. With this intention they speak. *Prajā avitā* means protector of the people. *Satya-sandhaḥ* means “true to one’s promise.”

|| 1.12.20 ||

*eṣa dātā śaraṇyaś ca yathā hy auśīnaraḥ śibiḥ |
yaśo vitānitā svānām dauṣyantir iva yajvanām ||*

TRANSLATION

He is a donor and protector of those who surrender to him like Śibi, from Uśīnara, and will spread the fame of sacrificers and family members like Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta.

COMMENTARY

Śibi was the ruler of the province of Uśīnara. He protected a pigeon who had surrendered to him by offering his own flesh to a hawk. Bharata was the son of Duṣyanta (or Duṣmanta).

|| 1.12.21 ||

*dhanvinām agraṇīr eṣa tulyaś cārjunayor dvayoḥ |
hutāśa iva durdharṣaḥ samudra iva dustaraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is the best of archers like Arjuna and Kārtavīrya, is intolerable as fire and is insurmountable as the ocean.

COMMENTARY

The two Arjunas are the son of Pṛthā and Kārtavīrya-arjuna.

|| 1.12.22 ||

*mṛgendra iva vikrānto niṣevyo himavān iva |
titikṣur vasudhevāsau sahiṣṇuḥ pitarāv iva ||*

TRANSLATION

He is as courageous as a lion, honored like the Himālayas, tolerant like the earth and patient like a mother and father.

COMMENTARY

The earth, though all-enduring, does not experience the pain of others’ sharp words. But he, even though sometimes experiencing that pain, will still not react. The example for that is the patience or tolerance of the parents.

|| 1.12.23 ||

*pitāmaha-samaḥ sāmye prasāde giriśopamaḥ |
āśrayaḥ sarva-bhūtānām yathā devo ramāśrayaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is impartial to all beings like Yudhiṣṭhira, easily satisfied like Śiva, and the shelter of all living beings like Nārāyaṇa.

COMMENTARY

Pitāmaha is Yudhiṣṭhira. *Sāmye* means that he has hatred for no one. *Ramāśrayaḥ* (shelter of Lakṣmī) means Nārāyaṇa.

|| 1.12.24 ||

*sarva-sad-guṇa-māhātmye eṣa kṛṣṇam anuvrataḥ |
rantideva ivodāro yayātir iva dhārmikaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is famous for all good qualities like Kṛṣṇa, generous like Rantideva, and a follower of *dharma* like Yayāti.

COMMENTARY

In this verse they make one object of comparison with all the qualities. He is equal to Kṛṣṇa in being glorious with all good qualities

|| 1.12.25-26 ||

*dhṛtyā bali-samaḥ kṛṣṇe prahrāda iva sad-grahaḥ |
āhartaiṣo 'śvamedhānām vṛddhānām paryupāsakaḥ ||*

*rājarsīnām janayitā śāstā cotpatha-gāminām |
nigrahītā kaler eṣa bhuvo dharmasya kāraṇāt ||*

TRANSLATION

He is as determined as Bali, is absorbed in the most excellent Kṛṣṇa, like Prahlāda. He will perform horse sacrifices and respect elders. He will have wise kings for descendents, will punish those who deviate from the law, and will punish Kali in order to produce *dharma* on the earth.

COMMENTARY

Sad-grahaḥ means “he accepts most excellent.” Having spoken of Parīkṣit’s qualities, they then describe his activities.

|| 1.12.27 ||

*takṣakād ātmano mṛtyum dvija-putropasarjitāt |
prapatsyata upaśrutya mukta-saṅgaḥ padam hareḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing that he will be killed by Takṣaka who was dispatched by a *brāhmaṇa*'s son, detached from all things, he will worship the feet of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Upasarjitāt means “being dispatched.”

|| 1.12.28 ||

*jijñāsītātma-yāthārthyo muner vyāsa-sutād asau |
hitvedam nṛpa gaṅgāyām yāsyaty addhākutobhayam ||*

TRANSLATION

O King! Having discerned the truth about the Lord from the son of Vyāsa, giving up his body on the bank of the Gaṅgā, he will certainly attain the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Jijñāsītātma-yāthārthyaḥ means “he who had discerned the truth about the Lord.” *Idam* refers to the body.

|| 1.12.29 ||

*iti rājña upādiśya viprā jātaka-kovidāḥ |
labdhāpacitayaḥ sarve pratijagmuḥ svakān gṛhān ||*

TRANSLATION

Informing the king in this manner, all the *brāhmaṇas*, expert in astrology, after being worshipped, returned to their houses.

COMMENTARY

Labdhā apacitayaḥ means “those who were worshipped.”

|| 1.12.30 ||

*sa eṣa loke vikhyātaḥ parīkṣid iti yat prabhuḥ |
pūrvam dṛṣtam anudhyāyan parīkṣeta nareṣv iha ||*

TRANSLATION

Because he constantly remembered the Lord whom he had seen in the womb and searched for him among all men, he was famous as Parīkṣit in this world.

COMMENTARY

The name Parīkṣit is explained. Remembering the person he had seen in the

womb, he pondered “Is this the person or not?” in all the people he saw (*nareṣu iha*). *Pūrva-dṛṣtam* instead of *pūrvam dṛṣtam* is also seen.

|| 1.12.31 ||

sa rāja-putro vavṛdhe āśu śukla ivodupaḥ |
āpūryamāṇaḥ pitṛbhiḥ kāsthābhir iva so ’nvaham ||

TRANSLATION

Just as the waxing moon grows daily in phases to become the full moon, the prince quickly grew, nourished by his parents.

COMMENTARY

Just as the moon increases during the waxing phase and becomes full by the succeeding digits, being surrounded by the directions (*kāsthābhiḥ*), Parīkṣit grew by the care and affection, being surrounded by his parents.

|| 1.12.32 ||

yakṣyamāṇo ’śvamedhena jñāti-droha-jihāsayā |
rājā labdha-dhano dadhyau nānyatra kara-daṇḍayoḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira, desiring to rid himself of sin incurred by killing relatives by performing a horse sacrifice, began to consider whether there was an alternative to force or tax to attain wealth for the sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

He considered that there was no alternative to taxes or force, because it was necessary to have abundant wealth for the sacrifice.

|| 1.12.33 ||

tad abhipretam ālakṣya bhrātaro ’cyuta-coditāḥ |
dhanam prahīṇam ājhrur udīcyām diśi bhūriśaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Understanding his intention, his brothers, inspired by Kṛṣṇa, brought abundant wealth cast off from the sacrifice of King Marutta in the northern direction.

COMMENTARY

They brought gold vessels cast off (*prahīṇam*) from Marutta’s performance of sacrifice.

|| 1.12.34 ||

tena sambhṛta-sambhāro dharmā-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ |

vājimedhais tribhir bhīto yajñaiḥ samayajad⁴⁶ dharim ||

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, collecting the ingredients for sacrifice by that wealth, worshipped the Lord by three horse sacrifices since he feared the sin of killing relatives.

COMMENTARY

Sambhṛta-sambhāraḥ means “having collected the ingredients of sacrifice.” *Bhītaḥ* means “fearing the killing of relatives.”

|| 1.12.35-36 ||

*āhūto bhagavān rājñā yājayitvā dvijair nṛpam |
uvāsa katicin māsān suhrdām priya-kāmyayā ||*

*tato rājñābhyanujñātaḥ kṛṣṇayā saha-bandhubhiḥ |
yayau dvāravatīm brahman sārjuno yadubhir vṛtaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, called there by Yudhiṣṭhira, had the King perform the sacrifice with *brāhmaṇas*, and stayed there for some months to satisfy his friends.

Taking the permission of the king, Draupadī and other friends, he then departed for Dvārakā with Arjuna, surrounded by the Yadus.

Chapter Thirteen

Nārada explains the Disappearance of Dhṛtarāṣṭra

|| 1.13.1 ||

*sūta uvāca—
viduras tīrtha-yātrāyām maitreyād ātmano gatim |
jñātvāgād dhāstinapuram tayāvāpta-vivitsitaḥ⁴⁷ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Having learned about Kṛṣṇa, the goal of the *jīva*, from Maitreya while on pilgrimage, Vidura came to Hastināpura with a desire to teach that.

COMMENTARY

⁴⁶ *yajñōçamayad iti pādhaù |*

⁴⁷ *kāta-kātya-vivitsita iti pādhe viditavyedya ity arthau |*

Gatim means Kṛṣṇa. *Tayā avāpta-vivitsitaḥ* means “he who attained all that he desired by that knowledge.” *Vivitsitaḥ* comes from the verb *vit*, meaning “to attain,” in desiderative form.

The thirteenth chapter describes the arrival of Vidura, Dhṛtarāṣṭra leaving the palace on the instruction of Vidura, and Nārada’s instructions to allay the lamentation of Yudhiṣṭhira, in order to describe the coronation of Parīkṣit, just as the story of Aśvatthāmā throwing the *brahmāstra* was told in relation to Parīkṣit’s birth.

Having told about Parīkṣit’s birth, before telling about how Kali was punished by Parīkṣit, first the coronation will be described. But to describe the coronation, first the arrival of Vidura and the departure of Dhṛtarāṣṭra on the instruction of Vidura, the arrival of Arjuna, and the departure of the Pāṇḍavas are described in three chapters.

|| 1.13.2 ||

yāvataḥ kṛtavān praśnān kṣattā kauṣāravāgrataḥ |
jātaika-bhaktir govinde tebhyaś copararāma ha ||

TRANSLATION

Having asked sufficient questions to Maitreya, Vidura, ceased asking any more when he heard about pure devotion to Govinda.

COMMENTARY

“He gave up questioning” means he did not have any more desires to hear further, because all other questions are useless once *bhakti* has appeared.

|| 1.13.3-5 ||

taṁ bandhum āgataṁ dṛṣtvā dharma-putraḥ sahānujaḥ |
dhṛtarāṣṭro yuyutsuś ca sūtaḥ śāradvataḥ pṛthā ||
gāndhārī draupadī brahman subhadrā cottarā kṛpī |
anyāś ca jāmayāḥ pāṇḍor jñātayaḥ sasutāḥ striyaḥ ||
pratyujjagmuḥ praharṣeṇa prāṇaṁ tanva ivāgatam |
abhisaṅgamyā vidhivat pariṣvaṅgābhivādanaiḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Seeing that their friend had returned, Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Yuyutsu, Sañjaya, Kṛpācārya, Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, Uttarā, Kṛpī, the rest of the relatives of Pāṇḍu and their wives and sons became revived, as if their life airs had returned to their limbs, and according to suitability, joyfully mixed with his company, greeted and embraced him.

COMMENTARY

Sūta means Sañjaya, *Śāradvataḥ* is Kṛpa. *Kṛpī* is the wife of Droṇācārya. *Jāmayāḥ*

means wives of the relatives. The word *yāmi* is seen in dictionaries along with words starting with consonants and semi-vowels. When the life air goes, a person faints. When the life air returns, the person regains consciousness. *Tanvaḥ* means parts of the body like hands and feet. As if life airs had returned to the limbs, they revived their various actions.

|| 1.13.6 ||

*mumucuḥ prema-bāṣpaughaṁ virahautkaṅṭhya-kātarāḥ |
rājā tam arhayām cakre kṛtāsana-parigraham ||*

TRANSLATION

Agitated by the longing created by separation, they shed tears of love. The king had him accept a seat and worshipped him.

|| 1.13.7 ||

*taṁ bhuktavantam viśrāntam āsīnam sukham āsane |
praśrayāvanato rājā prāha teṣāṁ ca śṛṅvatām ||*

TRANSLATION

After feeding him, letting him rest and sitting him down, the king with humility spoke to Vidura for all to hear.

|| 1.13.8 ||

*yudhiṣṭhira uvāca—
api smaratha no yuṣmat-pakṣa-cchāyā-samedhitān |
vipad-gaṇād viśāgnyāder mocitā yat samātrkāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira said: Do you remember us, because we, along with our mother, growing up under the shade of your wings, were saved by you from the poison and the fire and other dangers?

COMMENTARY

Just as birds raise their young with great affection under the shade of their wings, you raised us. Another meaning of *pakṣa-cchāyā* is “showing favor to us.” *Yad mocitā* means “because we were saved by you.”

|| 1.13.9 ||

*kayā vṛtṭyā vartitam vaś caradbhiḥ kṣiti-maṇḍalam |
tīrthāni kṣetra-mukhyāni sevitānīha bhūtale ||*

TRANSLATION

As you wandered over the earth, what did you do for maintenance? What major holy places did you serve on the earth?

COMMENTARY

Vṛttyā means “by livelihood.” *Vaḥ* means “by you.”

|| 1.13.10 ||

bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho |
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā ||

TRANSLATION

O master! Devotees like you are holy places incarnate. You purify the holy places because the Lord is situated within you.

COMMENTARY

In this verse he says that Vidura’s going to the holy places is good fortune for those places. You make the holy places even greater, purifying the pure.

|| 1.13.11-12 ||

api naḥ suhṛdas tāta bāndhavāḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ |
dr̥ṣṭāḥ śrutā vā yadavaḥ sva-puryām sukham āsate ||
ity ukto dharmarājena sarvaṁ tat samavarṇayat |
yathānubhūtaṁ kramaśo vinā yadu-kula-kṣayam ||

TRANSLATION

O father! Did you see or hear about our relatives and friends, devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the Yadus. Are they residing happily in Dvārakā? When Yudhiṣṭhira had thus spoken, Vidura then gradually described everything he had experienced, except for the destruction of the Yadu dynasty.

|| 1.13.13 ||

nanv apriyam durviśaḥam nṛṇām svayam upasthitam |
nāvedayat sakaruṇo duḥkhitān draṣṭum akṣamaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

A merciful person, unable to see others suffer, should not reveal an inauspicious event arising on its own which no human can tolerate.

COMMENTARY

This verse explains the scriptural reason why he did not tell them about the disappearance of the Yadus.

|| 1.13.14 ||

*kañcit kālam athāvātsīt sat-kṛto devavat sukham⁴⁸ |
bhrātur jyeṣṭhasya śreyas-kṛt sarveṣāṃ sukham āvahan ||*

TRANSLATION

Respected as a god, Vidura stayed there for some time, pleasing all and giving the highest benefit to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

COMMENTARY

Śreyas-kṛt means “giving benefit.”

|| 1.13.15 ||

*abibhrad aryamā daṇḍam yathāvad agha-kāriṣu |
yāvad dadhāra śūdratvaṃ śāpād varṣa-śataṃ yamaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

As long as Yama passed his life for a hundred years as a *śūdra* because of a curse, Aryamā performed his duties of punishing the sinful in an appropriate way.

COMMENTARY

One should consider that Vidura was inferior because of being lesser than Dhṛtarāṣṭra and others. Dharma-rāja, Yama, was born as a *śūdra* by the curse of Māṇḍavya in the form of Vidura. Who would carry out punishment while Yama had the *śūdra* body? Aryamā held the post. *Abibhrat* is poetic license for *abibhaḥ*. One time the soldiers of a king were chasing some thieves. They caught them near Māṇḍavya who was performing penance. Tying him up along with the thieves they brought him to the king. By the king’s order, they were all impaled. But the king recognized the sage, and had him taken down, and took care of him. The sage went to Yama and in anger spoke. “Why was I impaled?” Yama replied, “As a boy you pierced a grasshopper with the tip of a *kuśa* grass, as play.” Hearing this Māṇḍavya cursed Yama, “Since you punished so severely though I was an ignorant boy at the time, you should become a *śūdra*.”

|| 1.13.16 ||

*yudhiṣṭhiro labdha-rājyo dṛṣṭvā pautram kulan-dharam |
bhrātr̥bhir loka-pālābhair mumude parayā śriyā ||⁴⁹*

TRANSLATION

Having attained his kingdom, and seeing the heir to the dynasty, Yudhiṣṭhira along with his brothers who were like protecting *devatās*, became overjoyed with the greatest splendor.

⁴⁸ *devavat svakair iti pāḥau |*

⁴⁹ *atra vijayadhvajyā nōḍaḥāḍā padyam—
athāmantryācyuto bandhūn nirvartyānugatān vibhuū |
arjunoddhava-ḥāineyair yayau dvāravatēā hayaiū || iti vidyate ||*

|| 1.13.17 ||

*evam gr̥heṣu saktānām pramattānām tad-īhayā |
atyakrāmad avijñātaḥ kālaḥ parama-dustaraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Insurmountable time overtook those attached to their houses and intoxicated with household affairs without their knowledge.

COMMENTARY

This verse is a criticism of people other than Yudhiṣṭhira and his family present at that time. It has already been said that he was unattached to everything except the Lord *kṣudhitasya yathetare*: he was completely attached to the Lord and nothing else. (SB 1.12.6)

|| 1.13.18 ||

*viduras tad⁵⁰ abhipretya dhṛtarāṣṭram abhāṣata |
rājan nirgamyatām śīghram paśyedaṁ bhayam āgatam ||*

TRANSLATION

Knowing that his time was approaching, Vidura spoke to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. “O king! You should leave immediately. See! Fearful time is approaching!”

|| 1.13.19 ||

*pratikriyā na yasyeha kutaścit karhicit prabho |
sa eṣa bhagavān kālaḥ sarveṣām naḥ samāgataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O master! The supremely powerful time which no one can stop has approached us all.

COMMENTARY

By saying “all” Vidura indicates that time had approached even those who should be able to prevent the actions of time.

|| 1.13.20 ||

*yena caivābhipanno ’yam prāṇaiḥ priyatamair api |
janaḥ sadyo viyuḡyeta kim utānyair dhanādibhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Attacked by time, a person is separated immediately from his beloved life airs,

⁵⁰ tam abhipretyeti pāohe taà vināça-kālan ity artho jīeyau |

what to speak of other things like wealth.

COMMENTARY

Afflicted by time, in the form of death a person is separated from his life airs.

|| 1.13.21 ||

*pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-suhṛt-putrā hatās te vigataṃ vayam |
ātmā ca jarayā grastah para-geham upāsase ||*

TRANSLATION

Your father, brothers, friends, and sons have been killed. Youth has departed. The body is afflicted by old age. You are living in another person's house.

COMMENTARY

In seven verses Vidura teaches renunciation.

|| 1.13.22 ||

*andhaḥ puraiva vadhiro manda-prajñās ca sāmpratam |
viśīrṇa-danto mandāgniḥ sarāgaḥ kapham udvahan ||*

TRANSLATION

You were blind from birth. You are now deaf, and feeble witted. Your teeth are broken, your digestion is weak, and your body is full of mucus. Still you are attached.

|| 1.13.23 ||

*aho mahīyasī jantor jīvitāśā yathā bhavān |
bhīmāpavarjitam⁵¹ piṇḍam ādatte gṛha-pālavat ||*

TRANSLATION

So strong is the desire to live among all creatures that, like a dog, you take the food given by Bhīma!

COMMENTARY

Apavarjitam means given. *Gṛha-pālah* is a dog.

|| 1.13.24 ||

*agnir nisṛṣṭo dattaś ca garo dārās ca dūṣitāḥ |
hṛtam kṣetram dhanam yeṣām tad-dattair asubhiḥ kiyat ||*

TRANSLATION

⁵¹ *bhēmāpavarjitam iti pāḥau | sa eva pāḥo yuktau, oékāyā dattam ity artha-karaēt |*

What is the use of life maintained by food given by those whom you tried to burn, poison, whose wife you insulted, and whose land and wealth you stole?

COMMENTARY

What is the use (*kiyat*) of life (*asubhiḥ*) attained by food given by them (*tad-dattaiḥ*).

|| 1.13.25 ||

*tasyāpi tava deho 'yaṁ kṛpaṇasya jijīviṣoḥ |
paraity anicchato jīrṇo jarayā vāsasī iva ||*

TRANSLATION

Though wanting to live and not give the body up, your body, worn out with old age, is dying, beyond your will, like two pieces of cloth.

COMMENTARY

Paraiti means “it is wasting away.” Two pieces of cloth indicate the upper and lower cloth. This indicates that both the gross and subtle bodies have become worn out. Blindness and deafness indicate decay of the subtle body (since the senses are subtle) and wrinkles and grey hair are the decay of the gross body.

|| 1.13.26 ||

*gata-svārtham imaṁ dehaṁ virakto mukta-bandhanaḥ |
avijñāta-gatir jahyāt sa vai dhīra udāhṛtaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is called wise who gives up this body which has not been used to worship Kṛṣṇa, after rejecting wealth and sons and going where no one can find him, while practicing *bhakti*.

COMMENTARY

Gata-svārtham means “afflicted with lamentation, illusion and old age because of not having performed worship of Kṛṣṇa.” *Mukta-bandhanaḥ* means giving up wealth and sons. *Avijñāta-gatiḥ* means “going where no one knows.” The words “gives up” should mean “gives up the body at a holy place with devotion.” Such a person is wise.

|| 1.13.27 ||

*yaḥ svakāt parato veva jāta-nirveda ātmavān |
hṛdi kṛtvā hariṁ gehāt pravrajat sa narottamaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is the best of men who gives up the house after developing discrimination by self-endeavor or inspiration of others and becoming detached, while

concentrating the mind on the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The best of men however prepares his remedy before old age. His qualities are described. Getting knowledge himself, or getting instructions from others, he develops discrimination (*ātmavān*). As the merchant turns his heart towards money, the devotee turns his heart towards the Lord, to achieve the Lord. He is the best of men. The austere *sannyāsī* is the wise man and the person understanding *bhakti* is the best of men.

|| 1.13.28 ||

athodīcīm diśaṃ yātu svair ajñāta-gatir bhavān |
ito 'rvāk prāyaśaḥ kālaḥ puṃsām guṇa-vikarṣaṇaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Therefore, go to the north, somewhere unknown to your relatives. Then time, the destroyer of most of man's qualities, will come.

COMMENTARY

You have not become a *narottama*. Therefore become a *dhīra*. *Arvāk kālaḥ* means "time will come." That time, the destroyer of man's qualities like determination and mercy will come.

|| 1.13.29 ||

evam rājā vidureṇānujēna
prajñā-cakṣur bodhita ājamīḍhaḥ |
chittvā sveṣu sneha-pāśān draḍhimno
niścakrāma bhrātr-sandarśitādhvā ||

TRANSLATION

The King, born of Ajamīḍha's dynasty, with eyes of knowledge, enlightened by his younger brother Vidura, possessing the path shown by his brother, cutting the ropes of affection because of determination, left the house.

COMMENTARY

He was given teachings of *bhakti-mīśra-jñāna*, for liberation. He was born in the Ajamīḍha dynasty. Because of his mental determination he could leave. The path shown by his brother was the path of bondage and liberation.

|| 1.13.30 ||

patim prayāntam subalasya putrī
pati-vratā cānujagāma sādhvī |
himālayam nyasta-daṇḍa-praharṣam

manasvinām iva sat samprahārah ||

TRANSLATION

Chaste Gāndhārī, daughter of Subala, having good qualities and dedicated to her husband, followed him as he went to the Himālayas, which gives joy to those who have given up violence. She took the challenge like a warrior enjoying a good battle.

COMMENTARY

Gāndhārī was the daughter of Subala. *Sādhvī* means “having good qualities.” How did she go to the Himālayas, which would give great hardship? Such sufferings are a cause of joy for those who have enthusiasm. An example is given. It is like a good (*san*) fight (*samprahārah*) experienced by the warrior even if he is very young. *Sat-samprahāram* is also seen. The neuter case is poetic license. *Amara-koṣa* says *samprahārābhisampāta-kali-saṁsphoṭa-saṁyugāḥ*: *samprahāra* means war, quarrel, battle, conflict.

|| 1.13.31 ||

*ajāta-śatruḥ kṛta-maitro hutāgnir
vivrān natvā tīla-go-bhūmi-rukmaiḥ |
gṛhaṁ praviṣṭo guru-vandanāya
na cāpaśyat pitarau saubalīm ca ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira after performing *sandhya* rites, offering oblations in the fire and offering respects to the *brāhmaṇas* by giving sesame, cows, land and gold, entered the house to offer respects to his elders. But he did not see Vidura, Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Gāndhārī.

COMMENTARY

Kṛta-maitraḥ means “having performed *sandhya* rites.” He worshipped the *brāhmaṇas* with sesame and other items and entered. By using the word *praviṣṭaḥ* (sometimes associated with entering the funeral pyre) there is a hint at death rites offerings, which also use sesame. The word *ca* indicates not only that he did not see them, but did not know where they had gone. *Pitarau* refers to Vidura and Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

|| 1.13.32 ||

*tatra sañjayam āsīnam papracchodvigna-mānasah |
gāvalgaṇe kva nas tāto vṛddho hīnaś ca netrayoḥ |
ambā ca hata-putrārtā pitṛvyaḥ kva gataḥ suhṛt ||*

TRANSLATION

Afflicted in mind, he asked Sañjaya who was sitting there, “O son of Gavalgaṇa,

where is our father, my blind, aged uncle, his wife grieving for her slain children, and my uncle and friend Vidura?”

|| 1.13.33 ||

*api mayy akṛta-prajñe hata-bandhuḥ sa bhāryayā |
āśamsamānaḥ śamalam gaṅgāyām duḥkhito 'patat ||*

TRANSLATION

Has he thrown himself in the Gaṅgā along with his wife, out of sorrow, with all his children dead, while contemplating my foolish offense?

COMMENTARY

Was Dhṛtarāṣṭra depressed (*āśamsamānaḥ*) with the thought of my offense, thinking, “Why should I live, when Yudhiṣṭhira did not leave even one of my sons?” or another meaning is: he desired (*āśamsamānaḥ*) as follows, “Let Yudhiṣṭhira also have the sin of killing me too.”

|| 1.13.34 ||

*pitary uparate pāṇḍau sarvān naḥ suhrdaḥ śiśūn |
arākṣatām vyasanataḥ pitṛvyau kva gatāv itaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When our father Pāṇḍu departed, these two protected all us children, who were their relatives, from dangers. From this place, where have they gone?

|| 1.13.35 ||

*sūta uvāca—
kṛpayā sneha-vaiklavyāt sūto viraha-karṣitaḥ |
ātmeśvaram acakṣāṇo na pratyāhātīpīḍitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Sañjaya, pained by the separation, and not seeing his lord, overcome with compassion and the bewilderment of affection, did not reply.

COMMENTARY

Sañjaya was overcome with affection, thinking, “What will become of these two without protection?” He was disturbed by affection caused by his relationship which melted his heart.

|| 1.13.36 ||

*vimṛjyāsrūṇi pāṇibhyām viṣṭabhyātmānam ātmanā |
ajāta-śatruṃ pratyūce prabhoḥ pādāv anusmaran ||*

TRANSLATION

Wiping his tears with his hands, making his mind steady by intelligence, remembering the feet of his master, he replied to Yudhiṣṭhira.

COMMENTARY

Viṣṭabhyātmānam ātmanā means “creating steadiness in the mind by intelligence.”

|| 1.13.37 ||

sañjaya uvāca—

*nāham veda vyavasitaṁ pitror vaḥ kula-nandana |
gāndhāryā vā mahā-bāho muṣita ’smi mahātmabhiḥ ||⁵²*

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: O joy of the dynasty! I certainly do not know about your uncles and Gāndhārī. O mighty-armed warrior! They have cheated me.

COMMENTARY

Veda should actually be *vedmi*. *Muṣitaḥ* means cheated. They left while he was sleeping.

|| 1.13.38 ||

*athājagāma bhagavān nāradaḥ saha-tumburuḥ |
pratyutthāyābhivādyāha sānujo ’bhyarcayan munim ||*

TRANSLATION

At that time, Lord Nārada, holding a *vīṇa*, arrived. Standing up, Yudhiṣṭhira, along with his brothers, after welcoming and worshipping him, spoke to him.

COMMENTARY

Out of lamentation, Yudhiṣṭhira worshipped him, but more important was the whereabouts of his uncles.

|| 1.13.39-40 ||

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca—

*nāham veda gatim pitror bhagavan kva gatāv itaḥ |
ambā vā hata-putrārtā kva gatā ca tapasvinī |
karṇadhāra ivāpāre bhagavān pāra-darśakaḥ ||
athābabhāṣe bhagavān nārado muni-sattamaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira said: “O master! I do not know the destination of my uncles. Where did they go from there? Where did my austere aunt, grieving for her dead sons,

⁵² *vijayadhvajyā tv atra—aha ca vyaāsino rājan pitror vaù kula-nanadana | na veda sādhyā gāndharvyā bhuñito ’smi mahātmabhiù || iti pāöhau |*

go? You are like a pilot for crossing the ocean of grief; you can see the other side.” Then Lord Nārada the best of sages spoke.

COMMENTARY

Apāre means “in the ocean of grief.” Since you are the Lord, you know everything. Please tell me.

|| 1.13.41 ||

nārada uvāca—

*mā kañcana śuco rājan yad īśvara-vaśam jagat |
lokāḥ sapālā yasyeme vahanti balim īsituḥ |
sa saṁyunakti bhūtāni sa eva viyunakti ca ||*

TRANSLATION

Nārada said: O King! Do not lament for anything, because this world is dependent on the Lord. The Lord to who even the *devatās* carry offerings joins and separates the living beings.

COMMENTARY

In the beginning, Yudhiṣṭhira would faint with lamentation on hearing what had happened. Therefore first Nārada appeased his lamentation. “You say do not lament, but I am fainting in separation from those two persons.” “This cannot be prevented because meeting and separation are dependent on the Lord.”

|| 1.13.42 ||

*yathā gāvo nasi protās tantryām baddhās ca dāmabhiḥ ||
vāk-tantyām nāmabhir baddhā vahanti balim īsituḥ ||42||*

TRANSLATION

Just as cows are bound by ropes to the nose and the ropes are all attached to one longer rope, all humans, bound by designations of *varṇāśrama* derived from the Vedas carry out the orders of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

To support what has been said about all entities carrying out the Lord’s orders and the Lord causing meeting and separation, two examples are given. Each cow has a rope tied to its nose, and all are tied to one longer rope. What is the connection between the ropes and the longer rope with the present discussion? The Veda is the long rope. Humans are bound by the short ropes of the designations in the Vedas, such as *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya*, *brahmacārī* and *gṛhastha*. Their payment (*balim*) is following the order, such as “Every day one must perform *sandhyā* rites.”

|| 1.13.43 ||

*yathā krīḍopaskarāṇām saṁyoga-vigamāv iha |
icchayā krīḍituḥ syātām tathaiveśecchayā nṛṇām ||*

TRANSLATION

Just as the items used in playing are brought together and separated by the will of the player, humans are brought together and separated by the will of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Krīḍopaskarāṇām refers to things like dice.

|| 1.13.44 ||

*yan manyase dhruvaṁ lokam adhruvaṁ vā na cobhayam |
sarvathā na hi śocyās te snehād anyatra mohajāt ||*

TRANSLATION

If one considers oneself to be the soul, the body, neither or both, in all these cases, the person, situated with discernment beyond material affection, should not lament for himself or others.

COMMENTARY

It has been just said that because everything is under the control of the Lord, one should not lament. But when looking at the world, there is no real object of suffering. People may consider themselves as *jīva* (*dhruvam*) or as the body (*adhruvam*) or neither as *jīva* or body by being *brahman* (*ubhayam*), or having qualities of both consciousness and unconsciousness (*vā*).⁵³ All four types of people should not lament for their relatives, since they have no affection (*snehād anyatra*), being situated with discernment. Affection is the source of lamentation and is the root of ignorance. This affection is generated from illusion in the material world (*mohajāt*). This indicates that the affection related to *bhakti* is not included here as a source of lamentation. Lamentation arising from *bhakti*, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *karuṇa-rasa*, is most excellent.

|| 1.13.45 ||

*tasmāj jahy aṅga vaiklavyam ajñāna-kṛtam ātmanaḥ |
kathaṁ tv anāthāḥ kṛpaṇā varteraṁs te ca mām vinā⁵⁴ ||*

TRANSLATION

O King! Give up your agitation arising from ignorance, thinking “How will they, suffering and without protection, live without me?”

⁵³ This would be the belief that the self is a conscious particle, but subject to destruction.

⁵⁴ ‘varteran vanam āçritāu’ ‘varteran mām anāçritāu’ iti pāḍhau |

COMMENTARY

Give up the disturbance of mind which thinks “How will they live without me?”

|| 1.13.46 ||

*kāla-karma-guṇādhīno deho 'yaṁ pāñca-bhautikāḥ |
katham anyāms tu gopāyet sarpa-grasto yathā-param ||*

TRANSLATION

This body of five elements is dependent on time, *karma* and the material ingredients. How can a person, as if bitten by a snake, protect others?

COMMENTARY

No one can protect anyone else by giving maintenance. Time is the general cause. *Karma* is the cause of birth. *Guṇa* indicates the material cause. The body made of five elements is dependent on these. The body with these constituents is quickly subject to destruction. One person bitten by a snake cannot protect others.

|| 1.13.47 ||

*ahastāni sahasānām apadāni caṭuṣ-padām |
phalgūni tatra mahatām jīvo jīvasya jīvanam ||*

TRANSLATION

The humans are maintained by the animals and the animals are maintained by the plants. The big are maintained by the small. One living being is the maintenance for another living being.

COMMENTARY

The maintenance of all entities is established in the beginning by the Lord. The animals (*ahastāni*) are food for the humans. The plants (*apadāni*) are food for the animals. The small fish are food for the big fish. One entity is the natural food for another. For renounced persons, maintenance through leaves, fruits and flowers prepared for the Lord is not forbidden. Why do you lament then?

|| 1.13.48 ||

*tad idaṁ bhagavān rājann eka ātmātmanām sva-drk |
antaro 'nantaro bhāti paśya taṁ māyayorudhā ||*

TRANSLATION

O King! This universe is only the Lord. He is the one soul of all the *jīvas*. He is self manifesting, not dependent on others. He is the *jīva* and the objects of enjoyment for the *jīva*. See the one Lord manifested as many by his material energy.

COMMENTARY

“You have said that the world is dependent on the Lord. If everything is dependent on the Lord, why do you say that the body is dependent on time, *karma* and matter?”

That is true. Everything is the Lord because everything in this world including time and *karma* is the effect of the Lord’s energies. That is expressed in this verse.

The Lord is this universe (*idam*). Through his *svarūpa-śakti*, in the form of *paramātmā*, he is the soul of the *jīvas* (*ātmanām*). He is self-revealing (*svadṛk*). He is the *jīva* (*antaraḥ*) as the enjoyer. He is the happiness and distress as the external objects of experience (*anantaraḥ*). The Lord appears through these three energies (*svarūpa-śakti*, *jīva-śakti*, *māyā-śakti*). See the one Lord manifested as many (*urudhā*) such as *devatās* and animals, by the *māyā-śakti*.

|| 1.13.49 ||

so 'yam adya mahārāja bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ |
kāla-rūpo 'vatīrṇo 'syām abhāvāya sura-dviṣām ||

TRANSLATION

He, the Lord of Dvārakā, protector of all beings, has appeared in the form of time to destroy the demons.

COMMENTARY

Where does this person with such powers exist? He is living in Dvārakā. He is here (*so 'yam*). He has appeared on earth (*asyām*) for destroying the demons. Appearing to the demons as the form of time he destroys them. Actually he has a form of supreme bliss but for the demons he appears as time.

|| 1.13.50 ||

niṣpāditaṁ deva-kṛtyam avaśeṣaṁ pratīkṣate |
tāvad yūyam avekṣadhvaṁ bhaved yāvad iheśvaraḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Having completed the actions for the *devatās*, he is waiting for the remaining activities. While he remains on earth, you should consider all things as objects of attachment.

COMMENTARY

He is waiting only for the remaining actions. Like Vidura, Nārada did not describe the arrangement for the destruction of the Yadu family, which he knew had already taken place. The verb has no object, but it means that they should observe everything as objects of “I” and “mine.” Even hearing about the incident, they should consider everything in this way.

|| 1.13.51 ||

*dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ saha bhrātrā gāndhāryā ca sva-bhāryayā |
dakṣiṇena himavata ṛṣiṇām āśramam gataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Dhṛtarāṣṭra, with his wife Gāndhārī, and Vidura, has gone to a hermitage of sages on the south side of the Himālayas.

COMMENTARY

Having dispelled his lamentation, he now tells the actual facts to the inquisitive Yudhiṣṭhira in six verses. *Dakṣiṇena* means “in the southern direction.”

|| 1.13.52 ||

*srotobhiḥ saptabhir yā vai swardhunī saptadhā vyadhāt |
saptānām prītaye nānā⁵⁵ sapta-srotaḥ pracakṣate ||*

TRANSLATION

That place where the Gaṅgā became seven by dividing into seven branches to please the seven sages is called Sapta-srota.

COMMENTARY

That which is famous as Gaṅgā (*swardhunī*) made herself into seven (*saptadhā*). Why? She did it to please the seven sages. That place is called by names like Sapta-srota or Marīci-gaṅgā.

|| 1.13.53-54 ||

*snātvānusavanam tasmin hutvā cāgnīn yathā-vidhi |
ab-bhakṣa upasāntātmā sa āste vigataiṣaṇaḥ ||
jitāsano jita-śvāsaḥ pratyāhṛta-ṣaḍ-indriyaḥ |
hari-bhāvanayā dhvasta-rajah-sattva-tamo-malaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

At that place Dhṛtarāṣṭra, bathing three times a day, performing sacrifice according to scriptural rules, drinking only water as food, controlling the mind, ridding himself of material desires, perfecting sitting postures and breathing, withdrawing the six senses, has destroyed the contamination of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* by meditation on the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* that he performed is described in four verses. The *niyamas* are bathing, sacrifice and taking water as food. The *yamas* are calming the mind (*upasāntātmā*) and destroying attachments (*vigataiṣaṇaḥ*). *Āsana*,

⁵⁵ 'nāmnā' iti pāohau sa cāsaàbaddha eva |

prāṇāyāma and *pratyāhārā* are described in the third line. *Dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* are described in the last line.

|| 1.13.55-56 ||

vijñānātmani samyojya kṣetrajñe pravilāpya tam |
brahmaṇy ātmānam ādhāre ghaṭāmbaram ivāmbare ||
dhvasta-māyā-guṇodarko niruddha-karaṇāśayaḥ |
nivartitākhillāhāra āste sthāṇur⁵⁶ ivācalaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Meditating on merging the false ego into the *mahat-tattva*, merging the *mahat-tattva* into the *jīva*, merging the *jīva* into the *brahman*, and merging the Paramātmā into Bhagavān, the supreme shelter, like merging the sky in the pot into the sky, he has destroyed the impressions arising from the *guṇas* of *māyā*, controlled the senses and mind. Stopping all enjoyment of the senses (or eating), he remains without movement like a pillar.

COMMENTARY

Merging the elements of his body into the senses, merging the false ego (*ātmānam*) into the *mahat-tattva* (*vijñānātmani*), merging the *mahat-tattva* into the *jīva* (*kṣetra-jñe*), perceiving it as such, and merging the *jīva* into the *brahman*, merging the Paramātmā situated in the body (*ātmānam*) into Bhagavān, the Lord (*ādhāre*), the *āśraya-tattva*, the *aṁśī*. But it is well known that Paramātmā and Bhagavān are one. That is true, but though they are one, there is a functional difference. This is explained through an example. It is like air in a pot and the air, like the limited sky and the unlimited sky. The sky in the pot and the sky outside the pot are actually one since the sky is all-pervading. Lack of deviation is described. Deviation arises from internal disturbance of the *guṇas* or from external agitation of the senses. Dhṛtarāṣṭra has neither because he has destroyed the results of the *guṇas* of *māyā*, the impressions of desires. Therefore he has controlled the senses and mind.

|| 1.13.57 ||

tasyāntarāyo maivābhūḥ sannyastākhila-karmaṇaḥ |
sa vā adyatanād rājan parataḥ pañcame 'hani |
kalevaraṁ hāsyati svam tac ca bhasmī-bhaviṣyati ||

TRANSLATION

Do not be an obstacle to Dhṛtarāṣṭra who has renounced all actions! O king! Five days from now he will give up his body. He will turn himself to ashes.

COMMENTARY

Since Yudhiṣṭhira may try to bring him back Nārada says “Do not be an obstacle

⁵⁶ 'sthāṇur ivādhunā' iti pāohau |

(*antarāyah*)!” *Abhūḥ* in this case should be *bhūḥ* with *mā*, but stays in that form because of poetic license. Yudhiṣṭhira may still want to see him. Therefore Nārada says five days from now (*adyatanāt*) he will give up his body. Yudhiṣṭhira may want to go to burn the body. Nārada says that he will burn himself up (*svam*).

|| 1.13.58 ||

*dahyamāne ’gnibhir dehe patyuh patnī sahoṭaje |
bahih sthitā patim sādhvī tam agnim anu vekṣyati ||*

TRANSLATION

While his body is being burned along with the cottage, the noble wife, situated outside, will enter the fire to follow her husband.

COMMENTARY

“I will go and bring back Gāndhārī!” No, that is not possible. When the body of her husband burns along with the hut (*sahoṭaje*) by the fire of *yoga* and the household fire, she, situated outside, will enter the fire following (*anu*) her husband.

|| 1.13.59 ||

*viduras tu tad āścaryam niśāmya kuru-nandana |
harṣa-śoka-yutas tasmād gantā tīrtha-niṣevakaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O joy of the Kurus! Seeing this astonishing event, Vidura, with joy and lamentation, will depart to visit holy places.

COMMENTARY

“I will go and bring Vidura back.” No, that is not possible. Seeing this astonishing event, he will depart for holy places. Vidura will be joyful, since Dhṛtarāṣṭra has attained a spiritual goal. He will lament as a worldly custom. He will then go from that place to serve holy places. It should be understood that Dhṛtarāṣṭra being an offender to devotees, attained only liberation and not *prema*, since Vidura did not give such mercy.

|| 1.13.60 ||

*ity uktvāthāruhat svargam nāradaḥ saha-tumburuḥ |
yudhiṣṭhiro vacas tasya hṛdi kṛtvājahāc chucaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Saying this, Nārada with his *vīṇa* ascended to Svarga. Yudhiṣṭhira, taking those words in his heart, gave up his lamentation.

COMMENTARY

Nārada saying this concluded, and then ascended to Svarga. Śucaḥ means lamentation.

Chapter Fourteen Yudhiṣṭhira's Doubts on Seeing Omens

|| 1.14.1-2 ||

sūta uvāca—

*samprasthite dvāarakāyām jīṣṇau bandhu-didṛkṣayā |
jñātum ca puṇya-ślokasya kṛṣṇasya ca viceṣṭitam ||
vyatītāḥ katicin māsās tadā nāyāt tato 'rjunaḥ |
dadarśa ghora-rūpāṇi nimittāni kurūdvahaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: When Arjuna went to Dvārakā to see his friends and understand the activities and intentions of famous Kṛṣṇa, he did not return for some months. Yudhiṣṭhira saw inauspicious omens at that time.

COMMENTARY

In the fourteenth chapter, Yudhiṣṭhira understands the meaning of the inauspicious signs when he sees Arjuna arrive in distress.

He went to understand Kṛṣṇa's activities and his intentions (*ca*). "Some months" means seven months. *Nimittāni* means ill omens.

|| 1.14.3 ||

*kālasya ca gatim raudrām viparyastartu-dharmināḥ |
pāpīyasīm nṛṇām vārtām krodha-lobhānṛtātmanām ||*

TRANSLATION

He saw a fearful change of time, with seasons appearing in the wrong order. He saw sinful men engaged in maintaining themselves by occupations which were characterized by anger, greed and cheating.

COMMENTARY

Time passed with the sequence of seasons being reversed. Men's livelihood (*vārtām*) became most sinful.

|| 1.14.4 ||

*jihma-prāyam vyavahṛtam śāṭhya-miśram ca sauhṛdam |
pitṛ-mātr-suhṛd-bhrātr- dam-patīnām ca kalkanam ||*

TRANSLATION

He saw dealings that were filled with deception, and friendships which were mixed with cheating. There were quarrels between fathers, mothers, friends, brothers, husbands and wives.

COMMENTARY

Kalkanam means quarrels and other conflicts.

⁵⁷|| 1.14.5 ||

*nimittāny atyariṣṭāni kāle tv anugate nṛṇām |
lobhādy-adharma-prakṛtiṁ dṛṣṭvovācānujam nṛpaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing the men's sinful qualities filled with greed and the extremely inauspicious symptoms appearing according to time, he spoke to Bhīma.

COMMENTARY

The cause everywhere is time. His own time having arrived, seeing the nature (*prakṛtim*) of men, he spoke to Bhīma (*anujam*).

|| 1.14.6 ||

*yudhiṣṭhira uvāca—
sampsṛiṣṭo dvāarakāyām jiṣṇur bandhu-didṛkṣayāj |
jñātuṁ ca puṇya-ślokasya kṛṣṇasya ca viceṣṭitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira said: I sent Arjuna to Dvāarakā because I wanted him to see our friends there and to understand the activities of famous Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.14.7 ||

*gatāḥ saptādhunā māsā bhīmasena tavānujaḥ |
nāyāti kasya vā hetor nāhaṁ vededam añjasā ||*

TRANSLATION

O Bhīmasena! Seven months have passed. You younger brother has not yet returned. I do not know the reason at all.

|| 1.14.8 ||

⁵⁷ *asmāc chlokāt pūrvam ayaà pāḥo 'dhiko vérarāghava-siddhāntadépikayoù, yathā—
kanyā-vikrayiëà tātaà sutaà pitror apoñakam |
brāhmaëän veda-vimukhān çüdrān vai brahma-vādināu ||*

*api devarṣiṇādiṣṭaḥ sa kālo 'yam upasthitaḥ |
yadātmano 'ṅgam ākrīḍaṁ bhagavān utsisṛkṣati ||*

TRANSLATION

Has the time indicated by Nārada arrived, when the Lord desires to give up his form engaged in pastimes?

COMMENTARY

Yudhiṣṭhira speaks in this manner about Kṛṣṇa's departure to express lamentation for a friend, and not to express the real truth. However Sarasvatī speaks through his mouth, giving another meaning to his words. He desires to establish (*sisṛkṣati*) his expansion form (*ātmanaḥ aṅgam*) of Nārāyaṇa above (*ut*) in Vaikuṅṭha. What type of form has Nārāyaṇa? It is somewhat expressive (*ā*) of pastimes (*krīḍām*)

|| 1.14.9 ||

*yasmān naḥ sampado rājyaṁ dārāḥ prāṇāḥ kulaṁ prajāḥ |
āsan sapatna-vijayo lokāś ca yad-anugrahāt ||*

TRANSLATION

From him, by his mercy we have attained wealth, kingdom, wives, life, family, citizens, victory over enemies, and the higher worlds.

COMMENTARY

Without the absence of Kṛṣṇa, the ill omens would not appear. That is expressed in this verse. *Lokāḥ* means “higher worlds attained by sacrifices.”

|| 1.14.10 ||

*paśyotpātān nara-vyāghra divyān bhaumān sadaiḥkān |
dāruṇān śamsato 'dūrād bhayaṁ no buddhi-mohanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Lion among men! See the ill omens in the sky, land and bodies indicating fearful situation close at hand which will bewilder our intelligence.

COMMENTARY

The omens indicate fear (*bhayaṁ śamsataḥ*).

|| 1.14.11 ||

*ūrv-akṣi-bāhavo mahyaṁ sphuranty aṅga punaḥ punaḥ |
vepathuś cāpi hṛdaye ārād dāsyanti vipriyam ||*

TRANSLATION

O Bhīma! My left thigh, eye and arm are repeatedly twitching. There is trembling in my heart. Soon these omens will bring misfortune.

COMMENTARY

Here the bodily omens are described. Actually the trembling of the left side is inauspicious. The plural case is poetic license.

|| 1.14.12 ||

*śivaiṣodyantam ādityam abhirauty analānanā |
mām aṅga sārameyo 'yam abhirebhaty abhīruvat ||*

TRANSLATION

Bhīma! A jackal spitting fire is howling while facing the rising sun. A fearless dog is looking at me and howling.

COMMENTARY

The omens on the earth are described. A jackal (*śivā*) facing the rising sun is howling while vomiting fire from his mouth. O Bhīma (*aṅga*)! A fearless dog looking at me is howling.

|| 1.14.13 ||

*śastāḥ kurvanti mām savyam dakṣiṇam paśavo 'pare |
vāhānś ca puruṣa-vyāghra lakṣaye rudato mama ||*

TRANSLATION

O tiger among men! Auspicious animals are circling me counterclockwise and inauspicious animals are circling me clockwise. I see that my horses are crying.

COMMENTARY

Auspicious animals are ones like the cow. They are going to the left (*savyam*). Inauspicious animals like the donkey are going clockwise. I see that the horses (*vāhān*) are crying.

|| 1.14.14 ||

*mṛtyu-dūtaḥ kapoto 'yam ulūkaḥ kampayan manaḥ |
pratyulūkaś ca kuhvānair⁵⁸ viśvam vai śūnyam icchataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

This pigeon, a messenger of death, the owl which is making my mind tremble and the crow desire to empty the universe with their harsh cries.

COMMENTARY

Pratyulūkaḥ is a type of owl which is an enemy to the other owl, or a crow.

⁵⁸ 'drāk ṣūnyam icchatau' iti pāḍhe viṣvam ity adhyāhārau | 'kuhvānair viṣvaà vai ṣūnyam icchatau' ity ayaà pāḍhau sādhu eva |

|| 1.14.15 ||

*dhūmrā diśaḥ paridhayaḥ kampate bhūḥ sahādrībhiḥ |
nirghātaś ca mahāms tāta sākam ca stanayitnubhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The air is hazy in all direction like a wall. The earth along with the mountains is trembling. There is sudden loud clamor with cloudless thunder.

COMMENTARY

The grey directions are like a wall. There is tremendous sudden clamor (*nirghātaḥ*) along with cloudless thunder (*stanayitnubhiḥ*).

|| 1.14.16 ||

*vāyur vāti khara-sparśo rajasā viṣṭjams tamaḥ |
asṛg varṣanti jaladā bībhatsam iva sarvataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The wind, spreading darkness with dust, blows harshly. And the clouds rain hideously as if spraying blood everywhere.

COMMENTARY

The wind creates intense (*vi*) darkness (*tamaḥ*). The clouds seem to rain blood (*asṛk.*)

|| 1.14.17 ||

*sūryam hata-prabham paśya graha-mardam mitho divi |
saṅkulair bhūta-gaṇair jvalite iva rodasī ||*

TRANSLATION

See the sun with weak light fighting with other planets in the sky, ⁵⁹and see the earth and heavens ablaze with the followers of Śiva along with other beings.

COMMENTARY

See the blazing earth and heavens (*rodasī*) with Śiva's attendants mixed with other living beings (*sa-saṅkulaiḥ*).

|| 1.14.18 ||

*nadyo nadās ca kṣubhitāḥ sarāmsi ca manāmsi ca |
na jvalaty agnir ājyena kālo 'yam kim vidhāsyati ||*

TRANSLATION

⁵⁹ Astrologically this means that the sun is very close to the other planets in the sky. This is not auspicious.

The male and female rivers, the lakes and the mind of all beings are agitated.
Fire does not burn with ghee. What does the future portend?

COMMENTARY

Again he speaks of the omens on the earth.

|| 1.14.19 ||

*na pibanti stanam vatsā na duhyanti ca mātaraḥ |
rudanty aśru-mukhā gāvo na hṛṣyanty ṛṣabhā vraje ||*

TRANSLATION

The calves do not drink milk and the cows do not give milk. The cows wail with
tearful faces and the bulls do not enjoy the fields.

COMMENTARY

Na duhyanti as a reflexive verb (the cows do not milk themselves) is poetic license.
It means that the cows do not give milk.

|| 1.14.20 ||

*daivatāni rudantīva svidyanti hy uccalanti ca |
ime jana-padā grāmāḥ purodyānākarāśramāḥ |
bhraṣṭa-śriyo nirānandāḥ kim agham darśayanti naḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The deities seem to be weeping, perspiring and moving about. The populated
areas, villages, towns, gardens and hermitages are devoid of splendor and bliss.
Why are they showing us such suffering?

COMMENTARY

Daivatāni means deities.

|| 1.14.21 ||

*manya etair mahotpātair nūnam bhagavataḥ padaiḥ |
ananya-puruṣa-śrībhir⁶⁰ hīnā bhūr hata-saubhagā ||*

TRANSLATION

It seems the earth, made inauspicious by these ominous signs, is devoid of the
footsteps of the Lord endowed with glorious marks not seen in any one else.

COMMENTARY

I consider (*manye*) that the earth is devoid of the feet of the Lord whose marks
like the thunderbolt and elephant goad do not exist in other persons (*ananya-
puruṣa-śrībhiḥ*).

⁶⁰ ‘ *ananya-puruṣa-śrībhir*’ iti pāḥau |

|| 1.14.22 ||

*iti cintayatas tasya dṛṣṭāriṣṭena cetasā |
rājñah pratyāgamad brahman yadu-puryāḥ kapi-dhvajaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! While the king was contemplating the matter with consideration of the ill omens, Arjuna arrived in Hastināpura.

|| 1.14.23-24 ||

*taṁ pādayor nipatitam ayathā-pūrvam āturam |
adho-vadanam ab-bindūn sṛjantaṁ nayanābjayoḥ ||
vilokyodvigna-hṛdayo vicchāyam anujam nṛpaḥ |
pṛcchati sma suhṛn madhye saṁsmaran nāraderitam ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing lusterless Arjuna fallen at his feet, grieving like never before, with downcast face and tears flowing from his lotus eyes, with an agitated heart, Yudhiṣṭhira, remembering what Nārada has said, inquired from Arjuna in the presence of his friends.

COMMENTARY

Vicchāyam means without luster.

|| 1.14.25 ||

*yudhiṣṭhira uvāca—
kaccid ānarta-puryām naḥ sva-janāḥ sukham āsate |
madhu-bhoja-daśārha-sātvatāndhaka-vṛṣṇayaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Yudhiṣṭhira said: O Arjuna! Are our relatives, the Madhus, Bhojas, Daśārhas, Arhas, Sātvatas, Andhakas and Vṛṣṇīs well in Dvārakā?

|| 1.14.26 ||

*śūro mātāmahaḥ kaccit svasty āste vātha māriṣaḥ |
mātulaḥ sānujaḥ kaccit kuśaly ānakadundubhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Is our respected maternal grandfather Śūra⁶¹ well? Are our maternal uncle Vasudeva and his younger brothers well?

⁶¹ He was Vasudeva and Kunté's father. They were therefore brother and sister. He had nine other sons and three other daughters. Kunté was later adopted by Kuntibhoja.

COMMENTARY

Māriṣaḥ means respected.

|| 1.14.27 ||

sapta sva-sāras tat-patnyo mātulānyaḥ sahātmajāḥ |
āsate sasnuṣāḥ kṣemaṁ devakī-pramukhāḥ svayam ||

TRANSLATION

Are our seven aunts, Vasudeva's wives, who are like sisters, headed by Devakī,⁶² and their sons and their wives well?

COMMENTARY

Svasāraḥ means mutual, indicating sisters.

|| 1.14.28 ||

kaccid rājāhuko jīvaty asat-putro 'sya cānujaḥ |
hṛdikaḥ sasuto 'krūro jayanta-gada-sāraṇāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

How are Ugrasena, evil Kāmsa, and his younger brother Devaka? How are Hṛdika and his son Kṛtavarmā, Akrūra, Jayanta, Gada and Sāraṇa?

COMMENTARY

Āhuka is Ugrasena. His evil son was Kāmsa, who is already dead. He is asking about his (Kāmsa's) soul. Ugrasena's younger brother is Devaka. Hṛdika's son is Kṛtavarmā. Jayanta, Gada, Sāraṇa⁶³ and Śatrujit (mentioned in the next verse) were brothers (Vasudeva's other sons).

|| 1.14.29 ||

āsate kuśalam kaccid ye ca śatrujid-ādayaḥ |
kaccid āste sukham rāmo bhagavān sātvatām prabhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

How are Śatrujit and others? Is Balarāma, Lord of the Sātvatas well?

|| 1.14.30 ||

pradyumnaḥ sarva-vṛṣṇinām sukham āste mahā-rathaḥ |
gambhīra-rayo 'niruddho vardhate bhagavān uta ||

⁶² His wives were Rohiṇī, Devakī, Upadevī, Vākadevī, Saptamēdevī, Çraddhādevī, Çrutandharā, Janā. However Nṛaddhādevī was a *vaiçya* woman he met in the forest. However in the commentary on SB 1.11.29 it is mentioned that Vasudeva actually had eighteen wives. This is also mentioned in SB 10.84.47

⁶³ Sāraṇa and Gada were sons of Vasudeva and Rohiṇī.

TRANSLATION

Is Pradyumna, the *mahāratha* among all the Vṛṣṇis happy? Is Aniruddha, fierce in fighting, prospering?

COMMENTARY

Gambhīra-rayah means “fierce in battle.”

|| 1.14.31-33||

*suṣeṇaś cārudeṣṇaś ca sāmbo jāmbavatī-sutaḥ |
anye ca kārṣṇi-pravarāḥ saputrā ṛṣabhādayaḥ ||*

*tathaivānucarāḥ śaureḥ śrutadevoddhavādayaḥ |
sunanda-nanda-śīrṣaṇyā ye cānye sātvataraṣabhāḥ
api svasty āsate sarve rāma-kṛṣṇa-bhujāśrayāḥ |
api smaranti kuśalam asmākaṁ baddha-sauhṛdāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

How are Suṣeṇa,⁶⁴ Cārudeṣṇa,⁶⁵ Jāmbavatī’s son Sāmbo, and other prominent sons, and their sons such as Ṛṣabha? How are Śrutadeva, Uddhava and other attendants of Kṛṣṇa? How are the best of the Sātvatas headed by Nanda and Sunanda, protected by the arms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma? Do your firm friends think of our welfare?

|| 1.14.34 ||

*bhagavān api govindo brahmaṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ |
kaccit pure sudharmāyām sukham āste suhṛd-vṛtaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Is Lord Govinda, who is kind to the *brāhmaṇas* and affectionate to the devotees, happily presiding over the Sudharmā hall surrounded by his friends in the city?

COMMENTARY

It is not proper at all to ask if Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord is happy. Therefore he asks “Is he happy in the assembly hall in Dvārakā?”

|| 1.14.35 ||

*maṅgalāya ca lokānām kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca |
āste yadu-kulāmbhodhāv ādyo ’nanta-sakhaḥ pumān ||*

TRANSLATION

Is the first person, Kṛṣṇa, with the help of Balarāma, residing happily in the

⁶⁴ He was Satyabhāmā’s son.

⁶⁵ He was Rukmiṇī’s son.

ocean of the Yadu family for giving *prema*, liberation and prosperity to the people?

COMMENTARY

Maṅgalāya means “for giving *prema*.” *Kṣemāya* means “for giving liberation.” *Bhavāya* means “for giving material prosperity.” *Ananta-sakhaḥ* means “with the help of Balarāma.”

|| 1.14.36 ||

yad bāhu-daṇḍa-guptāyām sva-puryām yadavo ’rcitāḥ |
krīḍanti paramānandaṁ mahā-pauruṣikā iva ||

TRANSLATION

The Yādavas, worshipped even by the *devatās*, play like the inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha in their city which is protected by Kṛṣṇa’s strong arms.

COMMENTARY

They are worshipped even by the *devatās*. *Mahā-pauruṣikā iva* means “like the followers of the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.” Or it can mean “like conquerors with great prowess.”

|| 1.14.37 ||

yat-pāda-śuśrūṣaṇa-mukhya-karmaṇā
satyādayo dvy-aṣṭa-sahasra-yoṣitaḥ |
nirjitya saṅkhye tri-daśāms tad-āśiṣo
haranti vajrāyudha-vallabhocitāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Satyabhāmā and the other sixteen thousand queens, by serving his feet as their main activity, (through Kṛṣṇa) defeated in battle the *devatās*, and took the *pārijāta* tree which was being enjoyed by Indra’s wife Śaci.

COMMENTARY

“Defeating the *devatās* (*tridaśān*)” means “defeating through the strength of Kṛṣṇa.” *Tad-āśiṣaḥ* means Pārijāta and other things. *Vajrāyudha-vallabha* is Śaci.

|| 1.14.38 ||

yad bāhu-daṇḍābhyudayānujīvino
yadu-pravīrā hy akuto bhayā muhuḥ |
adhikramanty aṅghribhir āhṛtām balāt
sabhām sudharmām sura-sattamocitām ||

TRANSLATION

The fearless Yadu heroes, protected by the strength of his arms, constantly tread with their feet over the Sudharmā assembly hall which was taken by force even though the *devatās* deserved it.

COMMENTARY

Bāhu-daṇḍābhyudayānujīvinaḥ means “they who subsist on the strength of his arms.”

|| 1.14.39 ||

*kaccit te 'nāmayam tāta bhraṣṭa-tejā vibhāsi me |
alabdha-māno 'vajñātaḥ kim vā tāta ciroṣitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Are you healthy? You appear to me to have lost your effulgence. Staying away so long, were you not given proper respect, or were you disrespected by your friends?

COMMENTARY

In six verses he asks about the welfare of Arjuna who was not speaking. *Anāmayam* means health. Were you, who were staying there a long time (*ciroṣitaḥ*), not respected by your friends, or more than that, disrespected by them?

|| 1.14.40 ||

*kaccin nābhihato 'bhāvaiḥ śabdādibhir amaṅgalaiḥ |
na dattam uktam arthibhya āśayā yat pratiśrutam ||*

TRANSLATION

Were you struck by harsh words without affection? Did you fail to give what you had promised to someone who requested from you and then remained silent?

COMMENTARY

Were you beaten (*abhihataḥ*) by words without love (*abhāvaiḥ*)? Did you fail to give what you promised to persons who were wanting (*arthibhyaḥ*) something with a desire (*āśayā*) to attain it? And did you remain silent?

|| 1.14.41 ||

*kaccit tvam brāhmaṇam bālam gām vṛddham rogiṇam striyam |
śaraṇopasṛtam sattvam nātyākṣiḥ śaraṇa-pradaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Giver of shelter, did you perhaps reject *brāhmaṇas*, children, cows, elders, invalids and women, and other living beings, who took shelter of you?

COMMENTARY

Śaraṇopasṛtam means surrendered. *Sattvam* means living beings.

|| 1.14.42 ||

*kaccit tvaṁ nāgamo 'gamyāṁ gamyāṁ vāsat-kṛtām striyam |
parājito vātha bhavān nottamair nāsamaiḥ pathi ||*

TRANSLATION

Did you perhaps approach an unworthy woman or did you approach a woman not properly attired? Were you defeated on the road by inferiors in strength or caste?

COMMENTARY

There are two sentences in the first line. *Asatkṛtām* means “with contaminated clothing and other items.” *Asamaiḥ* means “persons lesser in strength.” *Nottamaiḥ* means “by those of inferior caste.”

|| 1.14.43 ||

*api svit parya-bhukthās tvaṁ sambhojyān vṛddha-bālakān |⁶⁶
jugupsitaṁ karma kiñcit kṛtavān na yad akṣamam ||*

TRANSLATION

Did you perhaps take your meal without feeding elders and children who should be fed at the same time? Did you perform some horrendous, forbidden act?

COMMENTARY

Paryabhukthāḥ means “Did you eat without feeding others first?” *Akṣamam* means something which should not be done.

|| 1.14.44 ||

*kaccit preṣṭhatamenātha hṛdayenātma-bandhunā |
śūnyo 'smi rahito nityaṁ manyase te 'nyathā na ruk ||*

TRANSLATION

Do you consider yourself empty in consciousness because of separation from your most dear friend? There can be no other reason for such devastation.

COMMENTARY

But I should not have such doubts about you. Remembering the words of Nārada, the following is possible however. You think to yourself, “I am devoid of

⁶⁶ atra 'upadekñātithi-vāddhāc ca garbhiḥy ātura-kanyakāu' ity ardhm adhikā kvacit |

consciousness (*hr̥dayena*), fainting, because of the absence of my dearest friend at all times.” That indeed can be the only cause. Otherwise you should not have affliction in your mind (*ruk*).

Chapter Fifteen The Pāṇḍavas Ascend to the Spiritual World

|| 1.15.1 ||

sūta uvāca—

*evam kṛṣṇa-sakhaḥ kṛṣṇo bhrātrā rājñā vikalpitaḥ |
nānā-śankāspadam rūpam kṛṣṇa-viśleṣa-karṣitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: The friend of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, was thus questioned by his brother, the king, because he presented himself as an object of worry. He had become thin because of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

In the Fifteenth Chapter, hearing the lamentation of Arjuna, and seeing the entrance of Kali, the King enthrones his grandson, and giving up the kingdom, marches to death with his brothers.

Arjuna became the object of doubt (*vikalpitaḥ*) for the king: was it because of this or was it because of that? The cause was Arjuna’s worrisome condition. He had become thin because of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.15.2 ||

*śokena śuṣyad-vadana-hṛt-sarojo hata-prabhaḥ |
vibhum tam evānusmaran nāśaknot pratibhāṣitum ||*

TRANSLATION

Arjuna, his lotus heart and face dried up because of grief, with dull complexion, remembering the Lord, could not reply.

|| 1.15.3-4 ||

*kṛcchreṇa samstabhya śucaḥ pāṇināmṛjya netrayoḥ |
parokṣeṇa samunnaddha- praṇayautkaṅṭhya-kātarah ||*

*sakhyam maitrīm sauhṛdam ca sārathyādiṣu saṁsmaran |
nṛpam agrajam ity āha bāṣpa-gadgadayā girā ||*

TRANSLATION

Stopping with difficulty the tears and wiping his eyes with his hands, extremely pained by the increased longing of love due to separation, remembering the pure friendship with Kṛṣṇa, friendship mixed with servitude, and friendship mixed with parental feelings towards Kṛṣṇa, he spoke to the king with choked voice filled with tears.

COMMENTARY

Stopping the tears of grief (*śucaḥ*) in his eyes, he wiped those tears which flowed anyway. Because of Kṛṣṇa not being present (*parokṣeṇa*), he was in pain. *Sakhyam* is mutual affection and mutual helping each other. *Maitrīm* is *sakhya* mixed with *dāsya*. *Sauhrdam* is *sakhya* mixed with *vātsalya*.

|| 1.15.5 ||

arjuna uvāca—
vañcito 'haṁ mahā-rāja hariṇā bandhu-rūpiṇā |
yena me 'pahṛtaṁ tejo deva-vismāpanaṁ mahat ||

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O King! My friend the Lord has left me. He has taken with him my great power which astonished the *devatās*.

COMMENTARY

Vañcitaḥ means “abandoned.” I have been left by my friend, the Lord, who has taken my powers which were given by him.

|| 1.15.6 ||

yasya kṣaṇa-viyogena loko hy apriya-darśanaḥ |
ukthena rahito hy eṣa mṛtakaḥ procyate yathā ||

TRANSLATION

Just as a dead person without life becomes repulsive, the world which is separated from Kṛṣṇa even for a moment appears repulsive.

COMMENTARY

This and the verses following till verse thirteen are all connected with “the lord” in verse five. An example is given to show that what was attractive becomes repulsive without life (*ukthena*). *Eṣa* refers to persons like a father.

|| 1.15.7 ||

yat-saṁśrayād drupada-geham upāgatānām
rājñām svayaṁvara-mukhe smara-durmadānām |
tejo hṛtaṁ khalu mayābhīhataś ca matsyaḥ
sajjīkṛtena dhanuṣādhigatā ca kṛṣṇā ||

TRANSLATION

By taking shelter of him, I stole the power of the kings who had come to Drupada's house for the *svayamvara* ceremony and were mad with lust, then pierced the fish with the strung bow and obtained Draupadī.

COMMENTARY

Because of taking shelter of him, at the *svayamvara* I stole the power of the kings, and obtained Draupadī.

|| 1.15.8 ||

*yat-sannidhāv aham u khāṇḍavam agnaye'dām
indram ca sāmara-gaṇam tarasā vijitya |
labdhā sabhā maya-kṛtādbhuta-śilpa-māyā
digbhyo 'haran nṛpatayo balim adhware te ||*

TRANSLATION

In his company, I conquered with my strength Indra and the *devatās*, gave the Khāṇḍava forest to Agni, obtained the assembly hall of wonderful construction made by Maya, and presented it to you as a gift at the Rājasūya sacrifice where kings from all directions had assembled.

COMMENTARY

U expresses astonishment. The Khāṇḍava forest belonged to Indra. I obtained the hall made by Maya whom I saved from the burning forest. In that marvelous hall, the sacrifice was held.

|| 1.15.9 ||

*yat-tejasā nṛpa-śiro- 'nghrim ahan makhārtham
āryo 'nujas tava gajāyuta-sattva-vīryaḥ |
tenāhṛtāḥ pramatha-nātha-makhāya bhūpā
yan-mocitās tad-anayan balim adhware te ||*

TRANSLATION

By his strength, Bhīma, endowed with the strength and enthusiasm of ten thousand elephants, killed Jarasandha at whose feet kings surrendered for the purpose of the sacrifice, by which kings who had been taken prisoner for Jarasandha's sacrifice to Śiva were released, and brought gifts to your Rājasūya sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

He who had kings of his own nature at his feet was Jarasandha. *Tava anuja* is Bhīma. Without conquering him, the sacrifice could not be performed. Bhīma had perseverance (*sattva*) and strength (*vīryaḥ*). Jarasandha had gathered them in prison to sacrifice them to Bhairava-śiva. Because they were released, they brought

tribute to the sacrifice.

|| 1.15.10 ||

*patnyās tavādhimakha-klpta-mahābhiṣeka-
ślāghīṣṭha-cāru-kabaram kitavaiḥ sabhāyām |
sprṣṭam vikīrya padayoḥ patitāśru-mukhyā
yas tat-striyo 'krta-hateśa-vimukta-keśāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

And Bhīma made widows of those whose rascal husbands in the assembly untied and pulled the hair bound up beautifully during the bathing ceremony at the Rājasūya sacrifice of your wife, whose tears fell on the feet of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

You made widows of the wives (*tat-striyo 'krta-hateśa-vimukta-keśāḥ*) of rascals like Duṣṣāsana by whom your wife's hair done up nicely for the bathing ceremony at the Rājasūya sacrifice was untied (*vikīrya*) and pulled (*sprṣṭam*). *Yah* refers to Bhīma from the previous verse. From Draupadī's face tears fell on the feet of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in her mind by remembrance. Or the phrase can mean Draupadī with a tearful face fell at the feet of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.15.11 ||

*yo no jugopa vana etya duranta-kṛcchrād
durvāsaso 'ri-racitād ayutāgra-bhug yaḥ |
śākāṇna-śiṣṭam upayujya yatas tri-lokīm
trṛptām amamsta salile vinimagna-saṅghaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Kṛṣṇa, arriving at the forest and eating the remnants from the food pot, saved us from the scheme of our enemy in the form of Durvāsa who is difficult to overcome and who eats with ten thousand followers, because they felt completely satisfied while submerging themselves in the water.

COMMENTARY

Because of Durvāsa, whose visit was planned out by the enemy; who has a terrible curse; who eats at the head of a line of ten thousand disciples (*yaḥ ayutāgra-bhuk*), Kṛṣṇa came to us in the forest and saved us, after eating (*upayujya*) the remnants of food in the pot. Due to that, the group of sages bathing in the water felt satisfied up to the three worlds. The story is told in the Mahābhārata. Once, Duryodhana had Durvāsa as his guest. Durvāsa, satisfied, wanted to grant him a boon. Thinking in his mind that the Pāṇḍavas can be destroyed by the curse of Durvāsa, he said, "Yudhiṣṭhira is the head of our family. Therefore you should be his guest with your ten thousand disciples. But you should go to their house when Draupadī has eaten and is not hungry." When Durvāsa arrived, Yudhiṣṭhira with great respect invited him for food after Durvāsa had performed the noon bathing rituals. The

sages submerged themselves in water for purifying themselves with *agha-marṣaṇa*. The moment Draupadī thought of Kṛṣṇa he left Rukmiṇī's side and came there immediately out of affection for his devotee. When she told him what had happened, he said, "O Draupadī, I want to eat. First feed me." In great shame she said, "Oh! This is my misfortune and fortune. The lord of the three worlds, the lord of sacrifice, has come to my house and is asking for food." Thinking like this, she said, "O master! My food pot given by the sun god is inexhaustible until I eat. After feeding everyone, I have eaten. There is no more food." She began to weep. With insistence he made her bring the pot and eating the spinach and rice stuck to the edge of the pot, he said, "Bring the sages to eat." Bhīma was sent. Bhīma said, "Please come and eat. Why are you delaying?" Durvāsa, being too full, fled, fearing that they had prepared a meal that could not be eaten.

|| 1.15.12 ||

*yat-tejasātha bhagavān yudhi śūla-pāṇir
vismāpitaḥ sagirijo 'stram adān nijam me |
anye 'pi cāham amunaiva kalevareṇa
prāpto mahendra-bhavane mahad⁶⁷-āsanārdham ||*

TRANSLATION

By his power, Śiva along with Parvatī became astonished at my prowess in fighting and gave me his own weapon; others also gave me their weapons; and in this body I sat on half of Indra's throne in his hall.

COMMENTARY

Śiva with Durgā (*sa-girijaḥ*) was astonished and gave his own weapon. Other *devatās* as well gave their weapons. I shared half the throne of Indra (*mahad-āsanārdham*).

|| 1.15.13 ||

*tatraiva me viharato bhujā-daṇḍa-yugmaṁ
gāṇḍīva-lakṣaṇam arāti-vadhāya devāḥ |
sendrāḥ śritā yad-anubhāvitam ājamīḍha
tenāham adya muṣitaḥ puruṣeṇa bhūmnā ||*

TRANSLATION

O descendent of Ājamīḍha! I have been abandoned by that great person, by whose power, while I was staying in Svarga, the *devatās* along with Indra took shelter of my strong arms holding the Gāṇḍīva bow for killing the Nivātakavacas.

COMMENTARY

Arāti means Nivātakavaca demons. The *devatās* took shelter of me for killing them.

⁶⁷ *atra mahad iti pāthak padaā yuktam | anyathā 'ānmahata' ity ātvāpattiū syāt | arñatvāt tad-abhāve mahaty āsane ity apy anvetuā cakyam |*

Yad-anubhāvitam here means “by taking powers from Kṛṣṇa.” I have been given up (*muṣitaḥ*) by that excellent (*bhūmnā*) person.

|| 1.15.14 ||

*yad-bāndhavaḥ kuru-balābdhim ananta-pāram
eko rathena tatare 'ham atīrya-sattvam |
pratyāhṛtaṁ bahu dhanam ca mayā pareṣāṁ
tejās-padam maṇimayaṁ ca hṛtaṁ śirobhyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Having him as a relative, I alone crossed over the ocean of the Kuru's strength, infinite in width, filled with formidable creatures, on my chariot, and took abundant wealth of cows and jeweled turbans, symbols of their power, from their head.

COMMENTARY

I, who had Kṛṣṇa as my relative (*yad-bāndhavaḥ*), alone, crossed the ocean of the Kuru army, to take back the cows of King Uttara. That army had no end, because of its density and placement. That ocean was filled with formidable creatures (*atīrya-sattvam*) such as Bhīṣma who were like *timīṅgala* fish in the ocean. I took wealth in the form of the cows and their turbans, symbols of their power (*tejās-padam*) from their heads, bewildering them with the *mohana* weapon.

|| 1.15.15 ||

*yo bhīṣma-karṇa-guru-śalya-camūṣv adabhra-
rājanya-varya-ratha-maṇḍala-maṇḍitāsu |
agrecaro mama vibho ratha-yūthapānām
āyur manāmsi ca dṛśā saha oja ārcchat ||*

TRANSLATION

O master! Situated in front of me as my charioteer, he stole by his glance the *karma*, minds, enthusiasm to fight, and ability to take up weapons of the *mahārathas* among the armies of Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Droṇa and Śalya decorated with an array of many royal chariots.

COMMENTARY

O lord (*vibho*)! He was situated in front of me as the driver. By his inconceivable influence, he took away (*ārcchat*) their *prārabdha-karma* (*āyus*). By his beauty he stole their minds. By showing his power, he took away their enthusiasm to fight, characterized by sharpness of mind (*sahas*). By his glance alone he took away their ability to take up weapons (*ojas*), characterized by sharpness of the senses.

|| 1.15.16 ||

*yad-dohṣu mā praṇihitam guru-bhīṣma-karṇa-
napṭṛ-trigarta-śalya-saindhava-bāhlikādyaiḥ |
astrāṇy amogha-mahimāni nirūpitāni
nopaspr̥sur nṛhari-dāsam ivāsurāṇi ||*

TRANSLATION

Because I was in the shelter of his arms the weapons of unfailing power released by Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Bhūriśravā, Suśarmā, Śalya, Jayadratha, Valhlika and others did not touch me, just as the weapons of the demons did not touch Prahlāda.

COMMENTARY

The weapons of Droṇa and others did not touch me, established (*praṇihitam*) in the arms of Kṛṣṇa (*yad-dohṣu*). *Guru* means Droṇa. *Napṭṛ* is Bhūriśravā. *Trigarta* is the king of Trigarta, Suśarmā. *Śala* is Śalya. *Saindhava* is the king of Sindhu, Jayadratha. *Bāhlika* was the brother of Śantanu. The weapons had unfailing power (*amogha-mahimāni*). The word *mahitāni* is sometimes seen instead. An example of not being harmed by formidable weapons is Prahlāda (*nṛhari-dāsam*).

|| 1.15.17 ||

*sautye vṛtaḥ kumatinātmada īśvaro me
yat-pāda-padmaṃ abhavāya bhajanti bhavyāḥ |
mām śrānta-vāham arayo rathino bhuvi-ṣṭham
na prāharan yad-anubhāva-nirasta-cittāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

I foolishly engaged as my charioteer the Lord, who gives life, whose feet are worshipped by the great souls aspiring for liberation, and by whose influence the enemies on chariots, losing concentration, could not strike me as I stood on the ground with thirsty horses.

COMMENTARY

Remembering Kṛṣṇa's powers in separation, Arjuna's *dāsyā-bhāva* appeared. This caused his natural *sakhyā-bhāva* to recede. Thus Arjuna sees that he was offensive to engage Kṛṣṇa as his charioteer and expresses regret in this verse. *Sautye* means "as a charioteer." Great souls worship him for liberation (*abhavāya*). This individual (myself) with ego did not worship him. But listen to the mercy he showed me, who am such an offender. My horses were tired from lack of water when killing Jayadratha. I got down from the chariot, and piercing the ground produced water. At that time the enemies could not attack me, because by his influence their minds lost concentration.

|| 1.15.18 ||

narmāṇy udāra-rucira-smita-śobhitāni

he pārtha he'ṛjuna sakhe kuru-nandaneti |
sañjalpitāni nara-deva hṛdi-sprśāni
smartur luṭhanti hṛdayam mama mādhasya ||

TRANSLATION

O King! On remembering Mādhava's joking words, splendid with smiles, charm and eloquence, our conversations, which touched the heart, while he addressed me as "Pārtha, Arjuna, friend, joy of Kurus," my heart becomes agitated.

COMMENTARY

The words touched his heart because of their sweet syllables. *Luṭhanti* stands for *loṭhayanti*. Not using the causative form is poetic license.

|| 1.15.19 ||

śayyāsanātana-vikatthana-bhojanādiṣv
aikyād vayasya ṛtavān iti vipralabdhaḥ |
sakhyuḥ sakheva pitṛvat tanayasya sarvaṁ
sehe mahān mahitayā kumater aghaṁ me ||

TRANSLATION

Because of our intimacy in sleeping, sitting, walking, boasting and eating, I would scold him, saying, "O friend! You are truthful!" Being exalted, by his greatness he tolerated the offenses of me, a fool, just as a father tolerates a son or a friend tolerates a friend.

COMMENTARY

Because of our mutual dependence, our oneness, I would scold him with sarcastic words such as "O friend you are truthful." Instead of *ṛtavān* sometimes *ṛbhumān* (person with servants) is seen. *Mahitayā* means "by his greatness."

|| 1.15.20 ||

so 'ham nṛpendra rahitaḥ puruṣottamena
sakhyā priyeṇa suhṛdā hṛdayena śūnyaḥ |
adhvany urukrama-parigraham aṅga rakṣan
gopair asadbhir abaleva vinirjito'smi ||

TRANSLATION

O best of kings! Without the Lord, my dear friend, companion, my mind being vacant, like a weakling, I was defeated by criminal cowherds while protecting his queens on the road.

COMMENTARY

What you guessed--my defeat, also occurred. Without my friend, my mind became vacant (*hṛdayena śūnyaḥ*). I was almost fainting. Actually the cowherds were not low criminals. *Gopa* means those who protected (*pa*) the earth and heavens (*go*).

These persons took the queens away. The Lord took the form of these cowherd men and took away his dear queens so that they could enter into the unmanifest pastimes.

*na vayam sādḥvi sāmrajyaṁ svārājyaṁ bhaujyaṁ apy uta
vairājaṁ pārameṣṭhyaṁ ca ānantyaṁ vā hareḥ padam*

O saintly lady, we do not desire dominion over the earth, the sovereignty of the King of heaven, unlimited facility for enjoyment, mystic power, the position of Lord Brahmā, immortality or even attainment of the kingdom of God.

*kāmayāmaha etasya śrīmat-pāda-rajah śriyah
kuca-kuṅkuma-gandhāḍhyaṁ mūrdhnā voḍhum gadā-bhṛtaḥ*

We simply desire to carry on our heads the glorious dust of Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet, enriched by the fragrance of *kuṅkuma* from His consort's bosom. SB 10.83.41-42

*vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ
gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ pada-sparśam mahātmanaḥ*

We desire the same contact with the Supreme Lord's feet that the young women of Vraja, the cowherd boys and even the aborigine Pulinda women desire—the touch of the dust He leaves on the plants and grass as He tends His cows. SB 10.83.43

From these verses it is understood that the queens desired the form of the Lord that the *gopīs* hankered for. Otherwise, if the queens, who were directly Lakṣmī, enjoyed by the Lord, were touched by low material persons, they would have immediately disappeared. It is understood that they attained forms as women of Vraja in another manifested pastime. This can be understood from the Viṣṇu and Brahma Purāṇas. Vyāsa also spoke to Arjuna about this:

*evam tasya muneḥ śāpād aṣṭāvakrasya keśavam |
bhartāram prāpya tā yātā dasyuhastā varāṅganāḥ ||*

Because of the curse of the sage Aṣṭāvakra, the best of women, becoming the wives of Kṛṣṇa, would be touched by the thieves.

Long ago, the heavenly women praised Aṣṭāvakra. He blessed them by saying “Viṣṇu will become your husband.” Because they laughed at him on seeing his crooked body, he cursed them “You will be taken by the thieves.” Again being merciful he said that after the curse had ended they would again attain the Lord who would take the form of the thieves. Not being able to avoid the curse and the blessing, they experienced being taken by the thieves and attaining the Lord

because of this, since Kṛṣṇa took the form of the thieves. It is also said:

*tat tvayā na hi kartavyaḥ śoko 'lpo 'pi hi pāṇḍava |
tenāpy akhila-nāthena sarvaṁ tad upasaṁhṛtam ||*

O Pāṇḍava! Do not lament at all. All of the queens have been brought close by the perfect husband Kṛṣṇa.

Akhila-nāthena means by Kṛṣṇa, the perfect husband. *Sarvaṁ* refers to all the dear queens. *Upasaṁhṛtam* means “brought close to him in a direct way,” since this happened through the instrument of Arjuna.

|| 1.15.21 ||

*tad vai dhanus ta iṣavaḥ sa ratho hayās te
so 'haṁ rathī nṛpatayo yata ānamanti |
sarvaṁ kṣaṇena tad abhūd asad īśa-riktam
bhasman hutam kuhaka-rāddham ivoptam uṣyām ||*

TRANSLATION

I, the warrior, and the bow, the arrows, the chariot and the horses which made kings bow to me, have become powerless in a moment without the Lord. They are as fruitless as sacrificing ghee into ashes, or as immaterial as getting an illusory gift from a magician, or as perishable as sowing seeds in salty earth.

COMMENTARY

The reason for all this is the absence of Kṛṣṇa and nothing else. All of these things which caused kings to bow to me, have lost their effect because Kṛṣṇa is absent. Throwing ghee into ashes shows no results. Getting articles from a magician shows their insubstantiality. Sowing seeds in salty earth shows the perishable condition.

|| 1.15.22-23 ||

*rājams tvayānupṛṣṭānām suhṛdām naḥ suhṛt-pure |
vipra-śāpa-vimūḍhānām nighnatām muṣṭibhir mithaḥ ||
vāruṇīm madirām pītvā madonmathita-cetasām |
ajānatām ivānyonyam catuḥ-pañcāvaśeṣitāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O King! Only four or five among our friends in Dvārakā remain. Drinking rice wine, by the curse of a *brāhmaṇa* they become bewildered, enraged in mind, and killed each other with handfuls of reeds as if not knowing each other.

COMMENTARY

Among the friends who, having drunk wine, became enraged and killed each other with handfuls of *erakā* reeds, only a four or five remain.

|| 1.15.24 ||

*prāyēṇaitad bhagavata īśvarasya viceṣṭitam |
mitho nighnanti bhūtāni bhāvayanti ca yan mithaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

According to common vision only, the destruction of the Yadus occurred by the will of the Lord, because actually living beings themselves cause their own survival and destruction.

COMMENTARY

Why did some remain? The destruction of the Yadu family (*etad*) was the will of the Lord, according to common vision (*prāyena*), but this is not the real truth, because among themselves (*mithaḥ*) living beings are the cause of destroying and protecting each other.

|| 1.15.25 ||

*jalaukasām jale yadvan mahānto'danty anīyasaḥ |
durbalān balino rājan mahānto balino mithaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Among the aquatics, the big eat the small and weak and those of equal strength or size can eat each other.

COMMENTARY

Among the fish (*jalaukasām*) the big eat the small, and the strong can eat an equally strong fish.

|| 1.15.26 ||

*evam baliṣṭhair yadubhir mahadbhir itarān vibhuḥ |
yadūn yadubhir anyonyam bhū-bhārān sañjahāra ha ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord in this way destroyed the Yadus, who became a burden on the earth, with strong Yadus killing other great Yadus.

COMMENTARY

It is said there that the Lord destroyed the Yadus who became a burden on the earth. This perception was created by the Lord for Arjuna and others. The cause is explained at the end of the Eleventh Canto. Arjuna here says that the Yadus became a burden on the earth, but actually they were the ornaments for the earth. That is because the Yadus were eternal associates of the Lord. Just as a woman does not feel that her ornaments are a weight, so the earth did not feel the weight of the Yadus. Even the *devatās* who had appeared in the Yadu family cannot be

said to be a burden since they also were without *rajas* and *tamas*. Therefore the destruction was a means of having the *devatās* and the eternal associates return to their appropriate destinations. The Lord himself makes reference to the burden:

*kiyān bhuvo 'yam kṣapitoru-bhāro
yad droṇa-bhīṣmārjuna-bhīma-mūlaiḥ
aṣṭādaśākṣauhiṇiko mad-amśair
āste balaṁ durviṣahaṁ yadūnām*

The burden of the earth caused by the eighteen *akṣauhini*s formed by Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Arjuna and Bhīma has only been slightly reduced. The intolerable strength of the Yadus remains because of my portions such as Pradyumna. SB 3.3.14

|| 1.15.27 ||

*deśa-kālārtha-yuktāni hṛt-tāpopaśamāni ca |
haranti smarataś cittam govindābhihitāni me ||*

TRANSLATION

When I remember the words of Govinda which were suitable to place, time and subject, and which calmed the pain in my heart, those words break my heart.

COMMENTARY

I can say nothing more. Do not ask anything else. When I remember those words of Govinda which were suitable to place, time and subject, they break (*haranti*) my heart.

|| 1.15.28 ||

*sūta uvāca—
evam cintayato jiṣṇoḥ kṛṣṇa-pāda-saroruham |
sauhārdenātigādhena śāntāsīd vimalā matiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: When Arjuna contemplated the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with deep affection, his intelligence, regaining steadiness, became calm.

COMMENTARY

Though his intelligence was full of pain due to separation, by attaining an appearance of the Lord from his continuous contemplation of the Lord, he became pacified, since his burning pain was extinguished. His intelligence became free of the contamination of unsteadiness (*vimalā*).

|| 1.15.29 ||

vāsudevāṅghry-anudhyāna-paribr̥ṁhita-rāmhasā |
bhaktyā nirmathitāśeṣa-kaṣāya-dhiṣaṇo 'rjunaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Arjuna had his intelligence completely freed of all contaminations by intense *bhakti* which was completely filled with meditation on the feet of Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY

“But the word *mala* means things contaminations like lust.” That is true. But because Arjuna is not just an associate of the Lord, but the *avatāra* Nara, it is impossible for him to have such contamination. “But perhaps we can say that his being an *aṁśa* of Indra can have contamination.” That also cannot be. This verse explains. Arjuna had intelligence (*dhiṣaṇa*) completely free (*nirmathita*) of all contaminations (*kaṣāya*) such as lust from the very beginning by *bhakti* which appeared from his birth.

|| 1.15.30 ||

gītaṁ bhagavatā jñānaṁ yat tat saṅgrāma-mūrdhani |
kāla-karma-tamo 'ruddhaṁ punar adhyagamat prabhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Arjuna again understood the knowledge sung by the Lord in the battlefield, which was not forgotten by the influence of time, action or darkness caused by separation from the Lord.

COMMENTARY

It is said that when a person is burning in separation from a beloved person, by remembering the words of the beloved the flames of that pain are extinguished. Therefore he began to recite the nectar of the *Gītā* which emanated from the cooling moon-like mouth of the Lord. This relieved him of all pain. That knowledge of *Gītā* was not forgotten (*aruddham*) by the influence of time, action or ignorance. *Tamas* here means the situation similar to darkness caused by separation from the Lord.

|| 1.15.31 ||

viśoko brahma-sampattyā sañchinna-dvaita-saṁśayaḥ |
līna-prakṛti-nairgunyād alīngatvād asambhavaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

By the wealth of friendship with Kṛṣṇa he destroyed his lamentation. He vanquished all doubts about separation from the Lord. Since he was beyond the *guṇas* by his nature though difficult to perceive, and therefore was without a subtle body, he had no birth in the material world.

COMMENTARY

In the *Gītā* it is said:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru |
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo 'si me ||*

Being my devotee, offer your mind to me. Offer articles to me in worship.. Offer respects to me. I promise that you will come to me without doubt, for you are most dear to me. BG 18.65

In that verse Kṛṣṇa said “You will come to me without doubt.” This was indicated in the future. “O Arjuna! At the right time you will come to me. But out of affection I today speak to you the method when you will try to attain me because of great separation in the future.”

“I have constantly practiced the process of meditation that you taught to attain you. By that meditation I think of myself as the *ātmā* next to the body. But still, my body is an obstacle, because the body gradually makes me think of external objects, and throws me into the ocean of lamentation. Therefore I have decided that I will cultivate what is known as *yoga* previously practiced which is like the weapon of knowledge recommend in all scriptures to separate the soul from this body. Though I am a spiritual entity, not inquiring whether I am an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa or a friend of Nārāyaṇa, I understand that I am a material human with uncontrolled *prema*. I have come to the perfection of *yoga* (*yogārūḍha*) for a second only to cover that condition.” That is explained in this verse.

By attainment of the wealth of *brahman*, lamentation vanishes. This is a statement of Sūta, according to his understanding. Actually, giving up the wealth of the material world, one becomes free of lamentation by attaining dear friendship with Kṛṣṇa in his manifested and unmanifested pastimes (*brahma-sampattyā*). One should completely cut the doubt of duality. One has the doubt “Do I have a relationship with the body or not?” Arjuna’s doubt is as follows. “Actually, though there is a difference between Kṛṣṇa and me, the doubt is that previously because of mutual friendship, there was oneness between us, but now there is separation (*dvaita*). Will Kṛṣṇa again bring me to the oneness of happy friendship?”

Or the meaning can be: he cuts the contemplative doubt “He will drown me in the ocean of suffering by separation (*dvaita*)?”

Nor should there be fear of further material existence for even the person born in the material world. Because of merging *prakṛti* into the substance without quality, he has no rebirth. The meaning is clear. However, actually, there is no rebirth because he does not have a subtle body (*alīngatvāt*) since he is beyond the *guṇas* (*nairgunyāt*), being Kṛṣṇa’s friend by his very nature (*prakṛti*) which is difficult to

perceive (*līna*).

Or there is another meaning. Arjuna as an *aṁśa* of Indra was a *jīvan-mukta* (who had a material body but gave it up). Thus he was without lamentation. He was free of lamentation and illusion arising from investigating the material world (*sañchinna- dvaita-saṁśayaḥ*). This is because he was beyond the *guṇas*, having merged *prakṛti* into the *guṇas*. With the disappearance of the subtle body he would not take birth again.

|| 1.15.32 ||

*niśamya bhagavan-mārgam samsthām yadu-kulasya ca |
svaḥ-pathāya matim cakre nibhṛtātmā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing the arrangements of the Lord and the proper situation of the Yadu family, without others knowing, Yudhiṣṭhira fixed his mind on attaining Kṛṣṇa's abode.

COMMENTARY

Marga means the way, the skilful arrangement. According to the proper conclusions being presented, they had a proper (*sam*) situation (*sthām*) within the Lord's manifested and unmanifested pastimes in a spiritual condition. There was however a destruction of the external conditions. *Svaḥ* refers to Kṛṣṇa's spiritual abode. It is said:

*na vā idam rājarṣi-varya citram
bhavatsu kṛṣṇam samanuvrateṣu
ye 'dhyāsanam rāja-kirīta-juṣṭam
sadyo jahur bhagavat-pārśva-kāmāḥ*

O best of kings! It is not surprising that those desiring to associate with the Lord, born in the Pāṇḍava family and devoted solely to Kṛṣṇa, immediately gave up the royal throne served by kings' crowns. SB 1.19.20

*sampadaḥ kratavo lokā mahiṣi bhrātaro mahī
jambūdvīpādhipatyam ca yaśas ca tri-divam gatam*

*kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārhā mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ
adhijahrur mudam rājñāḥ kṣudhitasya yathetare*

O *brāhmaṇa*! He had all wealth, sacrifices, planets, queens, brothers, the earth, lordship over Jambū-dvīpa, and fame in Svarga, desirable even for the *devatās*. Did these things give joy to the king, whose mind was only fixed on Mukunda without deviation and nothing else? SB 1.12.5-6

Though only Yudhiṣṭhira is mentioned, the same applies to all the Pāṇḍavas. All five brothers made up their minds to attain Kṛṣṇa's abode. *Nibhṛtātmā* means that their thinking was not revealed to others.

|| 1.15.33 ||

*pr̥thāpy anuśrutya dhanāñjayoditam
nāsam yadūnām bhagavad-gatiṁ ca tām |
ekānta-bhaktyā bhagavaty adhokṣaje
niveśitātmopararāma saṁsr̥teḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing from Arjuna about the disappearance of the Yadus and the Lord's attaining his abode, Kuntī became absorbed in the Lord with pure devotion, and disappeared from the pastimes in the world.

COMMENTARY

This describes her method of disappearing. *Saṁsr̥teḥ* means “from moving clearly, from her appearance for pastimes in this world.” She suddenly disappeared (*upararāma*). Or the moment she heard the news, she showed a condition of an aged person (inactive) because of the separation from the Lord.

|| 1.15.34 ||

*yayāharad bhuvo bhāram tām tanuṁ vijahāv ajaḥ |
kaṅṭakam kaṅṭakeneva dvayam cāpīśituḥ samam ||*

TRANSLATION

Regarding both burdens equally, the Lord separated himself from that portion of the Yadus by which he removed the burden of the earth, like removing a thorn with another thorn.

COMMENTARY

Here the esoteric conclusion is presented to pacify Śaunaka and the sages who were in grief on hearing about the final condition of the Yadus. By that body consisting of the Yadus in the form of the *devatās*, he removed the burden of the earth (*bhuvah*) which arises from the Lord, like removing a thorn with the tip of another thorn, and then gave up that body. It is like saying “Devadatta gave up his cloth.” He let that body fall away from his presence. The verse does not say he gave up that body of the Yādavas by which he performs eternal pastimes. The meaning is this. The *devatās*, at the time of appearing with the Lord in their *amśa* forms, entered into the eternal forms belonging to the Yādavas. Separating from those eternal forms by the power of *yoga* when they went to Prabhāsa, they were made to attain Svarga with the forms of *devatās* after drinking the liquor by the Lord who showed to the world that they had given up bodies by the power of *māyā*. This is according to the explanation in the Eleventh Canto. The Yādavas

who were eternal associates of the Lord disappeared from the sight of the world but remained in pastimes with Kṛṣṇa in the same Dvārakā as before. This is understood from *Bhāgavatāmṛta*'s conclusions. The two burdens —the burden to the earth in the form of the demons and the burden in the form of *devatās* who entered the forms of Yādavas — were regarded as the same by the Lord (*īśituḥ samam*). However in the example though two thorns are equal, the tip of the thorn as the instrument, is the internal portion (under the Lord's influence) acting as assistant to the Lord's pastimes. The other thorn, the object of action, though also acting as an assistant to the Lord's pastimes, is the external portion (under the influence of *māyā*). *Amara-koṣa* says *sūcy-agre kṣudra-śatrau ca lomaharṣe ca kaṇṭakaḥ*: *kaṇṭaka* means the tip of a needle, an insignificant enemy, hair standing on end.

|| 1.15.35 ||

yathā matsyādi-rūpāṇi dhatte jahyād yathā nataḥ |
*bhū-bhāraḥ kṣapito yenajahau tac ca kalevaram ||*⁶⁸

TRANSLATION

Just as the Lord maintains forms such as Matsya and gives them up, and just as a magician makes a show of giving up his body, the Lord made a show of giving up his body by which he relieved the burden of the earth.

COMMENTARY

Like a magician, Kṛṣṇa displayed a false show of giving up of his own body. The Lord maintains (*datte*) various forms and gives them up. He does not assume forms and then give them up. Even when he gives up these forms, he still has these forms. That is the meaning. How can one understand this? Just as a magician (*nataḥ*) gives up his body by cutting it, burning it or losing consciousness, and shows this to all people and makes them believe it, and still maintains his body and does not die, the Lord maintains his forms such as Matsya, and while maintaining gives them up also. Just as the magician still has his body and the giving up of the body is illusion, so Lord has real forms such as Matsya and giving them up is illusory. And just as the Lord maintains various forms and produces the illusion of giving them up, in giving up that body by which he removed the burden of the earth, Kṛṣṇa did not give up his body. That is an illusion. The Lord does not take on a form of a human like an actor, though he is *brahman* in human form, since his body is not material. In *Mahābhārata* it is said *na bhūta-saṅgha-saṁsthāno deho 'sya paramātmanaḥ*: the body of the Lord is not associated with material elements. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

yo veti bhautikaṁ dehaṁ kṛṣṇasya paramātmanaḥ |
sa sarvasmād bahiḥ kāryaḥ śrauta-smārta-vidhānataḥ |

⁶⁸ In the Gētā Press edition and translation of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa by C. L. Goswami it is stated that verses 34 and 35 are missing in the oldest manuscript yet found of Āṣṛmad Bhāgavata, existing in the Saraswati Bhavana Library attached to the Queen's College at Vārāṇasī. Vijayadhvaja rejected these two verses, as well as the one immediately preceding them, as interpolated.

mukhaṁ tasyāvalokyāpi sa-caiḥ śnānam ācared ||

He who thinks that Kṛṣṇa's body is material should be excluded from all actions of *śruti* and *smṛti*. If one sees him one should bathe with one's clothes on.

In *Vaiṣampāyana-sahasra-nāma-stotra* the Lord is called *amṛtāṁśo 'mṛta-vapur*: he has a body which is immortal; he has limbs which are immortal. In his commentary Śaṅkarācārya says *amṛtaṁ maraṇa-rahitaṁ vapur*: *amṛta* means that his body is without death. There is another meaning of *jahyāt*. *Jahyāt* means “he gives up” and but it also implies (by giving up) “he gives or bestows.” The Lord bestows forms like Nārāyaṇa who had entered his body when he appeared on earth to the devotees situated in *Vaikuṅṭha* and other spiritual abodes for nourishing them. This is explained at the end of the Eleventh Canto.

|| 1.15.36 ||

*yadā mukundo bhagavān imām mahīm
jahau sva-tanvā śravaṇīya-sat-kathāḥ |
tadāhar evāpratibuddha-cetasām
abhadra-hetuḥ kalir anvavartata ||*

TRANSLATION

When Lord Mukunda, whose topics are worthy of hearing, left this earth by means of his spiritual body, from that day onwards Kali, the cause of inauspiciousness, entered those whose intelligence was sleeping.

COMMENTARY

This verse clarifies the condition of his giving up his body. “When he left with his body (*sva-tanvā*)” means according to Śrīdhara Svāmī “leaving to *Vaikuṅṭha* with his body.” He gave up the earth by means of his body. It does not mean “He gave the earth along with his body.” That is a wrong interpretation, because of the rule *upapada-vibhakteḥ kāraka-vibhaktir baliyasī*: instrumental meaning of inflection is stronger than the meaning “accompanying.”

*pradarśyātapta-tapasām avitṛpta-dṛśām nṛṇām
ādāyāntar adhād yas tu sva-bimbaṁ loka-locanam*

The Lord, having shown his form, the center of attraction for all eyes, then took that form and disappeared from the men, who had not performed austerities but had attained the Lord's mercy, and were continually craving a vision of his form. SB 3.2.11

In this verse after showing his form (*sva-bimbam*) to the eyes of the world, he again withdrew it and disappeared. The verse does not say he gave up a body. The *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā* makes this point. From that moment onwards (*tadāhaḥ*), Kali entered those with sleeping intelligence. Kali did not affect those who had discrimination. The thief steals wealth from a sleeping person, but is afraid to steal

from someone awake.

|| 1.15.37 ||

*yudhiṣṭhīras tat parisarpaṇam budhaḥ
pure ca rāṣṭre ca gr̥he tadātmani⁶⁹ |
vibhāvya lobhāṅṛta-jihma-himsanādy-
adharmā-cakram gamanāya paryadhāt ||*

TRANSLATION

Wise Yudhiṣṭhira, seeing the wheel of irreligion with greed, lying, dishonesty, and violence spreading everywhere in towns, road, houses and body, dressed himself suitably to leave.

COMMENTARY

Paryadhāt means he put on the appropriate clothing for traveling.

|| 1.15.38 ||

*sva-rāṭ⁷⁰ pautram viniyatam ātmanaḥ susamaṁ guṇaiḥ⁷¹ |
toya-nīvyāḥ patim bhūmer abhyaṣiṅcad gajāhvaye ||38||*

TRANSLATION

The King enthroned in Hastināpura his grandson Parīkṣit who had observed the rules suitable for kings and had qualities equal to his own as master of the lands surrounded by the ocean.

COMMENTARY

He enthroned as king Parīkṣit who had observed rules proper for a king (*viniyatam*), and was equal in qualities to himself. *Toya-nīvyāḥ* means “of the land belted by the oceans.”

|| 1.15.39 ||

*mathurāyām tathā vajram śūrasena-patim tataḥ |
prājāpatyām nirūpyeṣṭim agnīm apibat īśvaraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He enthroned Vajra as the king of Śūrasena in Mathurā and then being capable, performing *prājāpatya* sacrifice, placed within himself the fires.

COMMENTARY

Vajra was the son of Aniruddha. *Nirūpya* means “performing.” *Apibat* means “he fixed within himself.” *Īśvaraḥ* means “capable.”

⁶⁹ ‘tathātmani’ iti pāḍhau |

⁷⁰ ‘samrāḍ’ iti pāḍhau |

⁷¹ ‘ātmanau sadāçāḡ guēaiù’ ‘ātmano ’navaà guēaiù’ iti pāḍhau |

|| 1.15.40 ||

*visṛjya tatra tat sarvaṁ dukūla-valayādikam |
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sañchinnāśeṣa-bandhanaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Giving up all clothing and bracelets, he was free of thoughts of “I” and “mine” and the unlimited bonds of attraction.

|| 1.15.41 ||

*vācam juhāva manasi tat prāṇa itare ca tam |
mṛtyāv apānaṁ sotsargaṁ taṁ pañcatve hy ajohavīt ||*

TRANSLATION

He offered the voice and other senses into the mind, the mind into the *prāṇa*, the *prāṇa* into *apāna*, *apāna* along with excretion into death, and death into the body.

COMMENTARY

Like Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira attempts to stop the senses from acting externally. *Vācam* (speaking) represents all the senses. He offered all the senses into the mind, because the senses are dependent on the mind. He offered the mind into the *prāṇa* because the mind is dependent on *prāṇa*. He gave the mind to the *prāṇa*. “O mind! I have given the senses to you. They are yours. I have no use for them now.” This is the contemplation. This is the method because it is actually impossible to offer them since the senses are independent. Thus the dative case is not used. All other steps in the procedure are similar. “To whom do I belong?” He offered the mind into *prāṇa*. He offered the *prāṇa* into the *apāna* (*itare*). This is understood from the context. *Apāna* is in charge of excretion. He offered the *apāna* and excretion into death, the presiding deity of excretion. In offering voice and other senses and mind and *prāṇa*, it should be understood that he also offered the actions, speaking, thinking etc. He offered death into the combination of the five gross elements, the body. His meditation was “O death! You belong to the body.”

|| 1.15.42 ||

*tritve hutvā ca pañcatvaṁ tac caikatve ’juhon munih |
sarvam ātmany ajuhavīd brahmaṇy ātmānam avyaye ||*

TRANSLATION

He offered the body into the three *guṇas* and the three *guṇas* into *prakṛti*. He offered everything into the *jīva* and offered the *jīva* into indestructible Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Where will the five elements be situated? He offered the body of five elements into the three *guṇas* (*tritve*). He offered the three into one aggregate, a portion of *māyā*. He offered all that into the *jīva*. *Ajuhavit* is poetic license for *ajohavit*. “*Jīva!* This portion of *māyā*, with the three *guṇas* is yours. Remain separate from that and do not come under its control.” He offered the *jīva* into the *brahman*. Offering the kingdom to Parīkṣit, Mathurā to Vraja, distancing himself from all those relationships, he became oblivious to the external world. Offering the senses and the rest to their respective controllers, he became oblivious to internal functions. The *jīva* belongs to Kṛṣṇa or *brahman*. The aggregate of *māyā* belongs to the *jīva*. The *guṇas* belong to the aggregate. The five elements belong to the *guṇas*. Death belongs to the five elements of the body. *Apāna* belongs to death. *Prāṇa* belongs to *apāna*. The mind belongs to *prāṇa*. The senses belong to the mind. The sense objects belong to the senses. The enjoyer of the sense objects is Parīkṣit, not me. It should be understood however that because Yudhiṣṭhira is an eternal associate of the Lord, this meditation where he considers his eternal form to be a temporary body is of no significance at all.

|| 1.15.43 ||

cīra-vāsā nirāhāro baddha-vāñ mukta-mūrdhajaḥ |
darśayann ātmano rūpaṃ jaḍonmatta-piśācavat ||

TRANSLATION

He wore torn cloth, did not eat, stopped speaking, shaved his head, and showed himself as a dumb or insane person or a ghost.

COMMENTARY

Two verses describe his total disregard for the external world. *Baddha-vāk* means not speaking.

|| 1.15.44 ||

anavekṣamāṇo⁷² niragād aśṛṇvan badhiro yathā |
udīcīṃ praviveśāśāṃ gata-pūrvām mahātmabhiḥ ||
hr̥di brahma param dhyāyan nāvarteta yato gataḥ

TRANSLATION

Not waiting for his brothers, not hearing anything as if deaf, he left the house. Meditating on Kṛṣṇa in the heart, he went in the northern direction where great souls had previously gone, from which one does not return.

COMMENTARY

He did not wait for his brothers (*anavekṣamāṇaḥ*). He decided to carry out the method taught by the Lord in *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktaḥ* to attain Kṛṣṇa in some solitary place, without disturbance, since he had now given up all

⁷² ‘*anapekṣamāṇaḥ*’ iti pāḍhaḥ |

responsibilities. This verse describes his action to achieve that. *Param brahman* means Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.15.45 ||

*sarve tam anunirjagmur bhrātaraḥ kṛta-niścayāḥ |
kalinādharmamitrena dr̥ṣṭvā spr̥ṣṭāḥ prajā bhuvī ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing that Kali, the friend of irreligion, had influenced the citizens on earth, all his brothers decided to follow him.

COMMENTARY

They decided, “Let us also take up his mentality to attain Kṛṣṇa.”

|| 1.15.46 ||

*te sādhu-kṛta-sarvārthā jñātvātyantikam ātmanaḥ |
manasā dhārayām āsur vaikuṅṭha-caraṇāmbujam ||*

TRANSLATION

They who had performed all duties such as *dharma* and *artha* as it should be done, understanding the endless nature of those duties, meditated on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with their minds.

COMMENTARY

They performed everything such as *dharma* and *artha* as it should be done (*sādhu-kṛta-sarvārthā*), and understanding that these duties were endless for them, they concentrated on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with their minds. Śrīdhara Svāmī takes *ātyantikam* to modify Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. “Having executed *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* perfectly, understanding the infinite nature of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, they meditated on those feet.”

|| 1.15.47-48 ||

*tad-dhyānodriktayā bhaktyā viśuddha-dhiṣaṇāḥ pare |
tasmin nārāyaṇa-pade ekānta-matayo gatim ||
avāpur duravāpām te asadbhir viṣayātmabhiḥ |
vidhūta-kalmaṣāsthānam virajenātmanaiva hi ||*

TRANSLATION

Having pure intelligence, with minds solely on the Lord, whose portion is Nārāyaṇa, by profuse *bhakti* with meditation on Kṛṣṇa, they attained the goal, unattainable by the materialists, the pure abode of the Lord, with their pure bodies.

COMMENTARY

They had intelligence unmixed with *jñāna*, *yoga* or other things. Thus they were fixed in intelligence (*ekānta-matayaḥ*). What was the goal? They attained the dwelling place free of all faults (*vidhūta-kalmaṣāsthānam*). Or this can refer to Kṛṣṇa's abode where there was the *Sudharmā* hall. How did they attain it? They attained it in their same spotless bodies (*virajenātmanā*) devoid of their *devatā* expansions such as Yamarāja (for Yudhiṣṭhira). They did not give up their bodies.

|| 1.15.49 ||

viduro 'pi parityajya prabhāse deham ātmanah |
kṛṣṇāveśena tac-cittaḥ pitṛbhiḥ sva-kṣayam yayau ||

TRANSLATION

Vidura also, by absorbing his mind in Kṛṣṇa, gave up his body at Prabhāsa and went to his abode escorted by Pitṛs.

COMMENTARY

Vidura was an incarnation of a *devatā*, not an eternal associate. Therefore he gave up his body. The Pitṛs had come to lead him to his abode. *Svakṣayam* means his place of jurisdiction.

|| 1.15.50 ||

draupadī ca tadājñāya patinām anapekṣatām |
vāsudeve bhagavati hy ekānta-matir āpa tam ||

TRANSLATION

Draupadī, understanding that her husbands had become indifferent to her, concentrated her mind on Vāsudeva and attained him.

COMMENTARY

Subhadṛā and others did the same. Since it is not mentioned that she gave up her body, in that body she attained the Lord (since she was an eternal associate).

|| 1.15.51 ||

yah śraddhayaitad bhagavat-priyāṇām
pāṇḍoḥ sutānām iti samprayānam |
śṛṇoty alam svastyayanam pavitram
labdhvā harau bhaktim upaiti siddhim ||

TRANSLATION

He who hears with faith about the departure of the Pāṇḍavas, dear to the Lord, as described herein, after attaining pure blessings, will attain the perfect stage of devotion to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Iti samprayāṇam means the departure as herein described and not otherwise. *Siddhim* means the state of perfection.

Chapter Sixteen

Dharma and Earth talk in the presence of Parīkṣit

|| 1.16.1 ||

sūta uvāca—

*tataḥ parīkṣid dvija-varya-śikṣayā
mahīm mahā-bhāgavataḥ śaśāsa ha |
yathā hi sūtyām abhijāta-kovidāḥ
samādiśan vipra mahad-guṇas tathā ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: O *brāhmaṇa*! Just as those who knew about his birth had described him, Parīkṣit, the great devotee, possessing qualities of a great person, ruled the earth under the guidance of the best *brāhmaṇas*.

COMMENTARY

In the sixteenth chapter the victory tour of Parīkṣit, the question by *dharma* to the earth, and earth's lamentation about separation from Kṛṣṇa are described.

O *brāhmaṇa* (*vipra*)! He who possessed qualities of a great person (*tathā mahad-guṇas*) ruled.

|| 1.16.2 ||

*sa uttarasya tanayām upayema irāvatīm |
janamejayādīnś caturas tasyām utpādayat sutān ||*

TRANSLATION

He married Irāvatī, the daughter of King Uttara, and bore four sons starting with Janamejaya.

COMMENTARY

The third *pada* has nine syllables instead of eight. This is special version of *anuṣṭubh* meter with nine syllables in one line, as in a sentence like *pradhāne karmaṇy abhidheye 'nyādīn āhur dvi-karmaṇām*

|| 1.16.3 ||

ājahārāśva-medhāms trīn gaṅgāyām bhūri-dakṣiṇān |

śāradvataṁ gurum kṛtvā devā yatrākṣi-gocarāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Accepting Kṛpa as his *guru* and giving profuse donations, he performed three horse sacrifices on the banks of the Gaṅgā, in which the *devatās* became visible.

COMMENTARY

Śāradvata is Kṛpa.

|| 1.16.4 ||

*nijagrāhaujasā vīraḥ kalim dig-vijaye kvacit |
nṛpa-liṅga-dharam śūdram ghnantaṁ go-mithunam padā ||*

TRANSLATION

One time, while touring his kingdom, the hero valiantly punished Kali, a *śūdra* dressed as a king, who was kicking a cow and bull.

|| 1.16.5 ||

*śaunaka uvāca—
kasya hetor nijagrāha kalim digvijaye nṛpaḥ |
nṛdeva-cihna-dhṛk śūdrako 'sau⁷³ gām yaḥ padāhanat |*

TRANSLATION

Śaunaka said: Why did the king while touring punish Kali but not kill him? The person dressed as a king who was kicking the cow was a very low *śūdra*.

COMMENTARY

Why did he punish him but not kill him (*nijagrāha*)? That low *śūdra* deserved to be killed.

|| 1.16.6 ||

*tat kathyatām mahā-bhāga yadi kṛṣṇa-kathāśrayam ||
athavāsya padāmbhoja- makaranda-lihām satām |*

TRANSLATION

O great soul! Please tell us if it concerns Kṛṣṇa, or concerns his devotees who lick the honey from his lotus feet.

COMMENTARY

If the punishment of Kali is related to the devotees, please tell us.

|| 1.16.7 ||

⁷³ 'cūdrako 'sau' iti pāḍhau |

*kim anyair asad-ālāpair āyuso yad asad-vyayah ||
kṣudrāyusām nṛṇām aṅga martyānām ṛtam icchatām |*

TRANSLATION

O Sūta! For those men who desire Kṛṣṇa, what is use of material talks which are a waste of life for short-lived humanity?

COMMENTARY

Ṛtam means the true object, Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.16.8 ||

*ihopahūto bhagavān mṛtyuḥ śāmitra-karmaṇi
na⁷⁴ kaścīn mriyate tāvad yāvad āsta ihāntakaḥ |*

TRANSLATION

The Lord as death has been called here to this sacrifice of animals. As long as he is here, no one will die.

COMMENTARY

How can we hear auspicious talks about Kṛṣṇa if we are perishable? In this place (*iha*) there is animal sacrifice with death as the executioner. Death has been called for that. Then what happens? No one dies.

|| 1.16.9 ||

*etad-artham hi bhagavān āhūtaḥ paramarṣibhiḥ |
aho nṛ-loke pīyeta hari-līlāmṛtam vacaḥ⁷⁵ ||*

TRANSLATION

The sages have called death here so that no one dies. Therefore, men should drink the words containing sweet pastimes of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Then what should men do? They should drink the nectar of the Lord's pastimes.

|| 1.16.10 ||

*mandasya manda-prajñasya vayo mandāyusāś ca vai |
nidrayā hriyate naktam divā ca vyartha-karmabhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The lives of those who are lazy, foolish and short lived, are wasted at night in sleeping and in the day by useless actions.

COMMENTARY

⁷⁴ 'yateta buddhimān mātīyora bhāvāya puraiva hi' iti tātēya-caturtha-caraēau kvacit |

⁷⁵ atra 'yasmin pēte kātā sarvam iñōpūrtādikaā bhavet' ity artham adhikaā kvacit |

Anything other than hearing about the Lord is useless.

|| 1.16.11 ||

*sūta uvāca—
yadā parīkṣit kuru-jāṅgale 'vasat
kalim praviṣṭam nija-cakravartite |
niśamya vārtām anatipriyām tataḥ
śarāsanam samyuga-śauṇḍir ādade ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: When Parīkṣit, expert in battle, was staying in Kuru-jāṅgala inspecting his kingdom, hearing the rather unpleasant news that Kali had entered, he took up his bow.

COMMENTARY

When Parīkṣit was inspecting his kingdom protected by his troops, hearing the rather unpleasant news that Kali had entered, he took up his bow. It was somewhat pleasant also, since he had the opportunity to punish him. This expression is used to make it the subject of discussion later. This sentence is connected with the next verse. *Śauṇḍi* means skilful. An alternative version is *samyuga-śauriḥ* with the same meaning.

|| 1.16.12 ||

*svalaṅkṛtam śyāma-turaṅga-yojitam
ratham mṛgendra-dhvajam āśritaḥ purāt |
vṛto rathāśva-dvipapatti-yuktayā
sva-senayā dig-vijayāya nirgataḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He had gone out from his city to gather tribute with his troops along with chariots, horses, and elephants on a chariot with lion flag, pulled by black horses and well decorated.

|| 1.16.13 ||

*bhadrāśvam ketumālam ca bhārataṁ cottarān kurūn |
kimpuruṣādīni varṣāṇi vijitya jagṛhe balim ||*

TRANSLATION

Conquering Bhadrāśva, Ketumāla, Bhārata, the northern Kuru provinces, and other countries such as Kimpuruṣa, he received taxes.

|| 1.16.14-16 ||

tatra tatropaśṛṅvānaḥ sva-pūrveṣāṁ mahātmanām |

pragīyamāṇaṁ ca yaśaḥ kṛṣṇa-māhātmya-sūcakam ||

*ātmānaṁ ca paritrātam aśvatthāmno 'stra-tejasah |
snehaṁ ca vṛṣṇi-pārthānām teṣāṁ bhaktiṁ ca keśave ||*

*tebhyah parama-santuṣṭah prīty-ujjṛmbhita-locanaḥ |
mahā-dhanāni vāsāṁsi dadau hārān mahā-manāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

In those places, hearing the glories of his ancestors being sung which indicated glory to Kṛṣṇa, his deliverance from the *brahmāstra* of Aśvatthāmā, and the great devotion and affection of the Pāṇḍavas and Vṛṣṇis for Kṛṣṇa, highly satisfied and very generous, his eyes filled with affection, he gave those glorifiers great wealth and cloth.

|| 1.16.17 ||

*sārathya-pāraśada-sevana-sakhya-dautya-
vīrāsanānugamana-stavana-praṇāmān |
snigdheṣu pāṇḍuṣu jagat-praṇatim ca viṣṇor
bhaktim karoti nṛ-patiś caraṇāravinde⁷⁶ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing through their praises that Kṛṣṇa acted as charioteer, follower, servant, friend and messenger of the dear Pāṇḍavas and that Viṣṇu was respected by the whole world, he expressed devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the activities such as being the charioteer for the dear Pāṇḍavas, and hearing that the whole world offered respects to him, Parīkṣit showed devotion to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa acted as follower by presiding over the assembly. He acted as servant by satisfying their wishes such as staying up at night with sword in hand protecting them.

|| 1.16.18 ||

*tasyaivam vartamānasya pūrveṣāṁ vṛttim anvaham |
nātidūre kilāścaryam yad āsīt tan nibodha me ||*

TRANSLATION

Hear from me the most astonishing event that suddenly occurred while he was following this procedure of the previous kings daily.

COMMENTARY

An extra *anu* should be added. Thus every day (*anu aham*) he followed the

⁷⁶ 'nā-patiù sma padāravinde' iti pāöhau |

procedure (*anuvartamānasya*).

|| 1.16.19 ||

*dharmah padaikena caran vicchāyām upalabhya gām |
pṛcchati smāśru-vadanām vivatsām iva mātaram ||*

TRANSLATION

Dharma, moving about on one leg, seeing a cow with no effulgence, with tears in her eyes as if she had lost her calf, inquired from her.

COMMENTARY

The moment that Kali-yuga had started *dharma*, the earth and Kali appeared in this situation. Though this was not seen by the people, Parīkṣit, who meditated with a desire to see this, saw it with his mystic eyes. Dharma in the form of a bull asked questions to the cow who had lost her effulgence (*vicchāyām*).

|| 1.16.20 ||

*dharma uvāca—
kaccid bhadre 'nāmayam ātmanas te
vicchāyāsi mlāyateṣan mukhena |
ālakṣaye bhavatīm antarādhiṁ
dūre bandhum śocasi kañcanāmba ||*

TRANSLATION

Dharma said: Auspicious cow! Are you well? You appear pale and your face is slightly withered. I think that you are in great anxiety. O mother! Are you lamenting for a friend in a distant land?

COMMENTARY

Ātmanaḥ means of the body. *Anāmayam* means health. The bull asks the cause since she has internal affliction.

|| 1.16.21 ||

*pādair nyūnam śocasi maika-pādam
ātmānam vā vṛṣalair bhokṣyamāṇam |
āho surādīn hṛta-yajña-bhāgān
prajā uta svin maghavaty avarṣati ||*

TRANSLATION

Do you lament because I am standing on only one leg? Or are you lamenting for

yourself being enjoyed by sinners? Or are you lamenting because the *devatās* have been deprived of their share of the sacrifices? Or are you lamenting for the citizens without rain?

COMMENTARY

Mā means *mām*. Are you lamenting because you are being enjoyed by sinful persons (*vṛṣalaih*). It is in the masculine gender in referring to *ātmā*.

|| 1.16.22 ||

*araksyamāṇāḥ striya urvi bālān
śocasy atho puruṣādair ivārtān |
vācam devīm brahma-kule kukarmaṇy
abrahmaṇye rāja-kule kulāgryān ||*

TRANSLATION

O earth! Are you lamenting because the women are not protected by the husbands, children are not protected by parents and moreover suffer at the hands of merciless people? Are you lamenting about learned words being spoken in *brāhmaṇa* families with sinful conduct? Are you lamenting the best of *brāhmaṇas* serving kings with no respect for *brāhmaṇas*?

COMMENTARY

Are women are not protected by their husbands? The children are not protected by the parents. Moreover they are suffering because of merciless persons. Are you lamenting apparent learned words (*devīm vācam*) in *brāhmaṇa* families of bad conduct? Are you lamenting those of noble family who are serving kings who have no devotion to *brāhmaṇas*?

|| 1.16.23 ||

*kiṁ kṣatra-bandhūn kalinopasṛṣṭān
rāṣṭrāṇi vā tair avaropitāni |
itas tato vāśana-pāna-vāsaḥ-
snāna-vyavāyonmukha-jīva-lokam ||*

TRANSLATION

Are you lamenting about degraded *kṣatriyas* influenced by Kali, or countries ruled negligently by them? Are you lamenting because people are engaged in eating, drinking, dressing, bathing, and sexual relationships without regard for restrictions?

COMMENTARY

Upasṛṣṭān means spread. *Avaropitāni* means abandoned.

|| 1.16.24 ||

*yadvāmba te bhūri-bharāvatāra-
kṛtāvatārasya harer dharitri |
antarhitasya smarati viṣṣṭā
karmāṇi nirvāṇa-vilambitāni ||*

TRANSLATION

O mother! O earth! Are you lamenting on remembering the activities — which make a mockery of liberation by their sweetness — of the Lord who appeared to relieve your heavy burden and then disappeared, leaving you alone?

COMMENTARY

Remembering the activities of the Lord who appeared (*kṛtāvatārasya*) to relieve (*avatāra*) your burden. The activities made liberation a laughing stock (*vilambitāni*) because of their sweetness. The syllables *ḍa* and *la* can be exchanged and thus the word becomes *viḍambitāni* (mocking).

|| 1.16.25 ||

*idaṁ mamācakṣva tavādhi-mūlaṁ
vasundhare yena vikarṣitāsi |
kālena vā te balinām balīyasā
surārcitaṁ kiṁ hṛtam amba saubhagam ||*

TRANSLATION

O earth! Please tell me the cause for your anxiety by which you have become extremely thin. O mother! Has time which is strongest of the strong, stolen your good fortune worshipped by the *devatās*?

COMMENTARY

Vikarṣitāsi means “made extremely thin.”

|| 1.16.26-31 ||

*dharāṇy uvāca—
bhavān hi veda tat sarvaṁ yan mām dharmānupṛcchasi |
caturbhir vartase yena pādair loka-sukhāvahaiḥ ||

satyaṁ śaucaṁ dayā kṣāntis tyāgaḥ santoṣa ārjavam |
śamo damas tapaḥ sāmyaṁ titikṣoparatiḥ śrutam ||
jñānaṁ viraktir aiśvaryaṁ śauryaṁ tejo balaṁ smṛtiḥ |
svātantryaṁ kauśalaṁ kāntir dhairyaṁ mārḍavam eva ca ||
prāgalbhyaṁ praśrayaḥ śīlaṁ saha oja balaṁ bhagaḥ |
gāmbhīryaṁ sthairyam āstikyaṁ kīrtir māno 'nahanḥkṛtiḥ ||
ete cānye ca bhagavan nityā yatra mahā-guṇāḥ |*

prārthyā mahattvam icchadbhir na viyanti sma karhicit ||

*tenāham guṇa-pātreṇa śrī-nivāseṇa sāmpratam |
śocāmi rahitam lokam pāpmanā kalinekṣitam ||*

TRANSLATION

The earth said: You know all the *dharma* about which you are asking me. I am lamenting the population which is now influenced by the sinful glance of Kali, and which is devoid of the Lord, the abode of Lakṣmī, the abode of qualities, by whose power you existed with four legs which gave benefit to the people, and in whom reside the following eternal, great qualities, which do not disappear at any time: truthfulness, purity, compassion, control of anger, generosity, self-satisfaction, straightforwardness, control of mind, control of external senses, following his caste role during pastimes, neutrality to all, tolerance, indifference to material enjoyment, consideration of scripture, omniscience, distaste for material enjoyment, control of others, determination in battle, influence, skill, defining social duties, independence, expertise in arts, beauty, lack of confusion, tenderness, boldness, modesty, being good-natured, sharpness of mind, sharpness of the knowledge senses and action senses, the abode of enjoyment, imperturbability, steadiness, faith, fame, respectability, lack of pride, and as well, other qualities desirable for those who want greatness.

COMMENTARY

“You know all about *dharma* since you are *dharma* personified.”

“Though I know, I want to hear from your mouth.” Therefore she speaks. You know the *dharma* because of which you exist with four legs. Present tense is used since the condition is near the present. The sentence continues till verse 31.

Satyam means speaking about things as they are. *Śaucam* means purity. *Dayā* means sympathizing with other’s suffering, protecting those who have surrendered, and being friendly to devotees. *Kṣānti* means having control of the mind even when angry. *Tyāga* means generosity. *Santoṣa* means satisfied in the self. *Ārjavam* means honesty, not being crooked. *Śama* means control of the mind, by which one has firm vows. *Dama* means control of the external senses. *Tapas* means acting according to one’s nature such as *kṣatriya* during pastimes. *Sāmyam* means devoid of thinking one is an enemy and another is a friend. *Titikṣa* is tolerance when others offend you. *Uparati* is indifference to attaining material enjoyment. *Śrutam* means judging by scripture. *Jñānam* means omniscience and gratitude etc. *Virakti* means absence of taste for material enjoyment. *Aiśvaryam* is control of others. *Śauryam* is determination in battle. *Tejas* is influence. *Balam* is skill. *Smṛti* means searching out what should be done as duty. *Svātantryam* is non-dependence on others. *Kauśalam* is skill in arts and play. *Kāntih* is beauty. *Dhairyam* is not being agitated. *Mārdavam* is being very young and being tender with *prema*. *Prāgalbhyam* is extreme boldness. *Praśraya* is mildness. *Śīla* means

good natured. *Sahas* is sharpness of mind. *Tejas* is sharpness of knowledge senses. *Ojas* is sharpness of action senses. *Bhaga* is being the shelter of enjoyment. *Gāmbhīryam* means imperturbable. *Sthairyam* is not being fickle. *Āstikyam* is faith. *Kīrti* is fame. *Māna* is being worthy of worship. *Anahankṛti* is absence of pride. Other qualities include being true to one’s word, respecting *brāhmaṇas* and being affectionate to the devotees. These great qualities are eternal—existing over all time in the Lord. The Lord has said:

*mām bhajanti guṇāḥ sarve nirguṇam nirapekṣakam
suhṛdam priyam ātmānam sāmānyāṅgādayo 'guṇāḥ*

All superior qualities, which are eternal, such as equality to all beings and attachment to my devotee, reside in me, who am beyond the material *guṇas*, not dependent on material qualities, and the friend of my devotees, giving love to them. SB 11.13.40

Thus, though the Lord is beyond the *guṇas*, he possesses qualities, great qualities, which are spiritual, beyond matter, arising from his *svarūpa*. Even during universal destruction, these qualities do not disappear (*na viyanti*). If they continually reside in Kṛṣṇa, even during the final destruction, then the qualities just listed must all be eternal. If they are eternal, the objects in which they exist must also be eternal. Thus the pastimes, the participants in the pastimes, the places of the pastimes and all ingredients are eternal.

|| 1.16.32 ||

*ātmānam cānuśocāmi bhavantam cāmarottamam |
devān pitṛn ṛṣīn sādhuṇ sarvān varṇāns tathāśramān ||*

TRANSLATION

O best of the *devatās*! I lament for myself and you, and for the *devatās*, Pitṛs, sages, devotees and all the *varṇas* and *āśramas*.

COMMENTARY

The words “devoid of the Lord” apply to this sentence.

|| 1.16.33 ||

*brahmādayo bahu-titham yad-apāṅga-mokṣa-
kāmās tapaḥ samacaran bhagavat-prapannāḥ |
sā śrīḥ sva-vāsam aravinda-vanam vihāya
yat-pāda-saubhagam alam bhajate 'nuraktā ||*

TRANSLATION

Lakṣmī, desiring whose glance Brahmā and others, surrendered to the Lord for a long time, perform great penance, has left her abode of the lotus forest and with

great attachment worships the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's feet.

COMMENTARY

Though Brahmā and others have surrendered to the Lord for a long time (*bahutitham*), being devotees with material desires, they desire the glance of Lakṣmī.

|| 1.16.34 ||

*tasyāham abja-kuliśāṅkuṣa-ketu-ketaiḥ
śrīmat-padair bhagavataḥ samalaṅkṛtāṅgī |
trīn atyaroca upalabhya tato vibhūtiṁ
lokān sa mām vyaśjad utsmayatīm tad-ante ||*

TRANSLATION

Being ornamented with the footprints of the Lord marked with lotus, thunderbolt, goad, flag, I surpassed the three worlds in beauty. After I attained glory from the Lord, he left me who had become proud, even after the glory had dissipated.

COMMENTARY

Tasya refers to Kṛṣṇa. *Keta* is a mark. Surpassing the three worlds, I became most beautiful. After attaining glory from the Lord, after that glory had vanished, I still had inner pride, thinking, “Vaikuṅṭha is not equal to me.”

|| 1.16.35 ||

*yo vai mamātibharam āsura-vaṁśa-rājñām⁷⁷
akṣauhiṇī-śatam apānudad ātma-tantraḥ |
tvām duḥstham ūna-padam ātmani pauruṣeṇa
sampādayan yaduṣu ramyam abibhrad aṅgam ||*

TRANSLATION

The independent Lord destroyed my great burden of a hundred *auṣauhiṇīs* of those who were previously of demonic dynasty of kings. By his prowess he made you whole when you were suffering with loss of your legs and had taken shelter of him. He appeared with a beautiful form in the Yadu family.

COMMENTARY

Āsura-vaṁśa-rājñām means “made up of persons who were previously kings in the demon dynasty.” It is a compound similar to *chinna-prarūḍha* (cut but now grown up). An alternative version is *asura-veśa*, which means “those who assumed the nature of *asuras*.” He made you who were deficient in legs (*ūna-padam*) and had taken shelter of him (*ātmani*) whole (*sampādayan*).

|| 1.16.36 ||

⁷⁷ ‘*āsura-veṣa-rājñām*’ iti pāḥau |

*kā vā saheta viraham puruṣottamasya
premāvaloka-rucira-smita-valgu-jalpaiḥ |
sthairyam samānam aharan madhu-mānininām
romotsavo mama yad-aṅghri-viṭaṅkitāyāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Who can tolerate separation from that supreme person whose foot prints made my hair stand on end constantly, while he took away the pride and self-control of his queens who were proud by his loving glances, pleasant smiles and sweet speech?

COMMENTARY

Madhu-mānininām means Satyabhāmā and others. He took away their steadiness (*sthairyam*) and pride (*samānam*). *Vitaṅkitāyāḥ* means ornamented. Among all the dear women, I was always independent (such a woman is called *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*), and was never separate from him (since his feet always touched me). That is the meaning of the verse.

|| 1.16.37 ||

*tayor evaṁ kathayatoḥ pṛthivī-dharmayos tadā |
parīkṣin nāma rājarṣiḥ prāptaḥ prācīm sarasvatīm ||*

TRANSLATION

While the earth and *dharma* were conversing, the king named Parīkṣit came to the Sarasvatī River flowing east.

COMMENTARY

Prācīm here means “flowing east.”

Chapter Seventeen The Punishment of Kali

|| 1.17.1 ||

*sūta uvāca
tatra go-mithunam rājā hanyamānam anāthavat |
daṇḍa-hastam ca vṛṣalam dadṛṣe nṛpa-lāñchanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: At Kurukṣetra the King saw the *śūdra* dressed as a king beating an unprotected cow and a bull with a stick held in his hand.

COMMENTARY

In the seventeenth chapter the questions and answers between Parīkṣit and Dharma, and the punishment and mercy received by Kali are described.

Hanyamānām means “beating.” The *śūdra* wore the markings of a king, which broke the custom followed in Satya, Treta and Dvāpara yugas.

|| 1.17.2 ||

vṛṣaṁ mṛṇāla-dhavalam mehantam iva bibhyatam |
vepamānaṁ padaikena sīdantaṁ śūdra-tāḍitam ||

TRANSLATION

The *śūdra* was beating the bull, white like a water lily, fearful, trembling, weak and standing on one leg, who appeared to be urinating.

COMMENTARY

Mehantam iva means “as if urinating.” This means that Dharma, standing on one leg, was at every moment flowing away. It is a metaphor to express a perishing condition. Trembling of the bull indicated that the bull did not create an opposition to the actions of Kali.

|| 1.17.3 ||

gām ca dharmadughām dīnām bhṛśaṁ śūdra-padāhatām |
vivatsām āsru-vadanām kṣāmām yavasam icchatīm ||

TRANSLATION

He saw the cow, giver of ghee for sacrifice, without a calf, suffering greatly, as she was being kicked by the *śūdra*. The thin cow, with tears in her eyes, desired the share of sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

Dharma-dughām means giver of ghee for sacrifice. She (the earth) was without a calf (*vivatsām*) because the grains, the child of the earth, had been destroyed. She had tears in her eyes because of the destruction of *dharmā*. She was thin (*kṣāmām*) because sacrifices were not performed. She desired the share of sacrifice (*yavasam*).

|| 1.17.4 ||

papraccha ratham ārūḍhaḥ kārtasvara-paricchadam |
megha-gambhīrayā vācā samāropita-kārmukhaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Situated in his chariot, with his bow poised, in a voice deep as thunder, he

questioned the *śūdra* dressed in gold.

COMMENTARY

Kārtasvara means gold. He had his bow ready in case the *śūdra* tried to flee.

|| 1.17.5 ||

kas tvam mac-charaṇe loke balād dhamṣy abalān balī |
nara-devo 'si veṣeṇa naṭavat karmaṇādvijaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Who are you, having power? You attack the weak with force in the world under my protection. Like an actor, you appear to be a king by dress, but by actions you are a *śūdra*.

COMMENTARY

“Who are you to commit violence in my presence?” “I am a king.” “Since I am the king, how can you be the king?” “I am king because I am wearing the dress of a king, and acting like one.” “No! You are a *śūdra* by your actions. A real actor imitates the actions of another as truly as possible.”

|| 1.17.6 ||

yas tvam kṛṣṇe gate dūram saha-gāṇḍīva-dhanvanā |
śocyo 'sy aśocyān rahasi praharan vadham arhasi ||

TRANSLATION

Since Kṛṣṇa has departed with Arjuna, you are in pitiable position. By beating innocent creatures in a solitary place, you deserve to be killed.

COMMENTARY

“Just as you are king of your country, I am king of this time. Thus you do not have power over me.” The King answers in this verse. “Before Kṛṣṇa departed out of sight with Arjuna, where were you?” “I was present, but I did not have power because of fear of them. But I have fear of no one today.” “True. You are worthy of lamentation. You desire to die today.”

|| 1.17.7 ||

tvam vā mṛṅāla-dhavalāḥ pādair nyūnaḥ padā caran |
vṛṣa-rūpeṇa kim kaścid devo naḥ parikhedayan ||

TRANSLATION

You are white like a water lily, and move around on one leg without the other legs in the form of a bull. Are you some *devatā* coming to afflict us by such an appearance?

COMMENTARY

“Let that be. I will think of your first offense for a moment.” Thinking in this way the King then inquired from the bull. Are you some *devatā* who has come to produce lamentation for us? I have not seen such thinness and suffering even in my dreams.

|| 1.17.8 ||

*na jātu kauravendrāṇām dordanda-parirambhite |
bhū-tale 'nupatanty asmin vinā te prāṇinām śucaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Except for your tears, the tears of living beings have never fallen on the earth which was ruled by the Kuru kings and well protected by arms of punishment.

COMMENTARY

“You may be a king, but we have become miserable now.” The king then speaks with fiery pride. Except for your tears, tears have not fallen in the land which was well protected (*parirambhite*) by arms of punishment.

|| 1.17.9 ||

*mā saurabheyātra śuco vyetu te vṛṣalād bhayam |
mā rodīr amba bhadraṁ te khalānām mayi śāstari ||*

TRANSLATION

O son of Surabhī! Do not lament! Do not fear the *śūdra*! O mother! Do not weep! Since I am here as the punisher of sinners, you will have good fortune.

COMMENTARY

He then spoke consoling words to the bull who was showing the weeping cow his miserable condition. O son of Surabhi! Do not lament (*śucaḥ* for *śocaḥ*). Do not have fear, I will kill him now. He then speaks to the cow. *Mayi śāstari* means “while I am living as the punisher.”

|| 1.17.10-11 ||

*yasya rāṣṭre prajāḥ sarvās trasyante sādhy asādhubhiḥ |
tasya mattasya naśyanti kīrtir āyur bhago gatiḥ ||
eṣa rājñām paro dharmo hy ārtānām ārti-nigrahaḥ |
ata enam vadhiṣyāmi bhūta-druham asattamam ||*

TRANSLATION

O cow! The inattentive ruler in whose state all the citizens suffer from criminals loses his fame, lifespan, fortune and progress. This is the highest duty of the kings, to punish those who cause suffering to others. Therefore I will kill that sinful killer.

COMMENTARY

“But if you kill him because of us, then we become implicated in killing. Do not do that.” He replies. “I must kill him for my benefit. It is not because of your request.”

|| 1.17.12 ||

*ko 'vṛscat tava pādāms trīn saurabheya catuṣ-pada |
mā bhūvamś tvādr̥ṣā rāṣṭre rājñām kṛṣṇānuvartinām ||*

TRANSLATION

Son of Surabhī! You have four legs. Who has cut off three of your legs? There should never be such a condition in the state ruled by kings following Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.17.13 ||

*ākhyāhi vṛṣa bhadram vaḥ sādḥūnām akṛtāgasām |
ātma-vairūpya-kartāram pāṛthānām kīrti-dūṣaṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

O bull! May you, who is innocent and of pure character, have good fortune! Tell me who has disfigured you, who has spoiled the fame of the Pāṇḍavas.

COMMENTARY

“If you tell me, I will kill that person.” “I have nothing to say.” “O bull! You, who are good natured and offenseless, are auspicious in happiness and in suffering. But tell me the criminal who is spoiling the fame of the Pāṇḍavas. Who is the person who disfigured you by cutting off your legs?”

|| 1.17.14 ||

*jane 'nāgasy agham yuñjan sarvato 'sya ca mad-bhayam |
sādḥūnām bhadram eva syād asādhu-damane kṛte ||*

TRANSLATION

He who commits violence against the innocent must certainly fear me in all ways. By punishing the sinful, the innocent will be peaceful.

COMMENTARY

By telling me who he is, he will have fear of me. But even if you do not tell, under all conditions, he will fear me. He who harms the innocent will fear me by all causes (*sarvataḥ*).

|| 1.17.15 ||

*anāgaḥsv iha bhūteṣu ya āgas-kṛn nirāṅkuśaḥ |
āhartāsmi bhujam sāksād amartyasyāpi sāṅgadam ||*

TRANSLATION

I will cut off the arms along with the armbands of the person who without regard for rules commits violence against the innocent beings, even if he is a *devatā*.

COMMENTARY

“What happens if there is someone stronger than you?” Even if the person is a *devatā*, I will cut off his arms at the root—with the armbands. Actually there is no person among men and *devatās* who is as strong as me.

|| 1.17.16 ||

rājño hi paramo dharmah sva-dharma-sthānupālanam |
śāsato 'nyān yathā-śāstram anāpady utpathān iha ||

TRANSLATION

The highest duty of the king is to protect those who follow the rules given to them in the scriptures, and to punish the sinful who deviate from the scriptures when there is no emergency.

COMMENTARY

“What is the use in punishing one person and not punishing another person?” This verse answers. He punishes those who are sinful (*anyān*).

|| 1.17.17 ||

dharmā uvāca—
etad vaḥ pāṇḍaveyānām yuktam ārtābhayaṁ vacaḥ |
yeśām guṇa-gaṇaiḥ kṛṣṇo dautyādau bhagavān kṛtaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Dharma said: These words which make one fearless of suffering are suitable for you, descendent of the Pāṇḍavas. Being attracted to their qualities of *prema*, Kṛṣṇa engaged in playing dice and other activities.

COMMENTARY

Kṛṣṇa was attracted to all their qualities which were filled with *prema*. Because Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by *prema*, and since you are the son of Arjuna with qualities similar to his, Kṛṣṇa is controlled by your qualities as well. Therefore nothing is impossible for you.

|| 1.17.18 ||

na vyaṁ kleśa-bījāni yataḥ syuḥ puruṣarṣabha |
puruṣaṁ taṁ vijānīmo vākya-bheda-vimohitāḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O best of men! I do not know the person who is the cause of my suffering, since I am bewildered by different statements of scripture.

COMMENTARY

I do not know the person from whom the seeds of suffering will arise. “Why do you conceal the person? I even see the person who is giving you suffering.” “True, he is giving me suffering, but there should be a seed of my suffering, because of which he gives me suffering. It cannot be otherwise. I do not know that person from whom the seed arises.” “But you know scriptures. Why do you not know?” “True. Knowledge of many scriptures is the cause of misunderstanding them.

|| 1.17.19 ||

*kecid vikalpa-vasanā āhur ātmānam ātmanaḥ |
daivam anye 'pare karma svabhāvam apare prabhum ||*

TRANSLATION

Some say the self is the cause of suffering. Others say planets are the cause of suffering. Others say *karma* is the cause. Others say the inherent property of matter is the cause.

COMMENTARY

Here the different opinions are described. Some, the *yogīs*, who cover up (*vasanā*) the difference (*vikalpa*), say the soul, master of the self, gives happiness and suffering. The *Gītā* (6.5) says *ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmana*: the *ātmā* itself is the friend of the soul and the enemy of the soul. Or the meaning can be: some, the *advaitins*, who say that the *jīva* and the lord become one say that the *ātmā* is the source of happiness and suffering. They also say that *devatās* cannot be the cause since they are controlled by *karma* as well, and *karma* cannot be the cause because it is not independent. Thus only the *ātmā* is the cause and nothing else. Others, those who believe in planets controlled by *devatās*, say that planets are the cause. The *Mīmāṃsakas* say that *karma* is the cause. Others, the *Lokāyatas*, say that *svabhāva*, the inherent property of matter, is the cause.

|| 1.17.20 ||

*apratarkyād anirdeśyād iti keṣv api niścayaḥ |
atrānurūpaṃ rājarṣe vimṛśa sva-manīṣayā ||*

TRANSLATION

And among these, some ascertain that happiness and distress come from that which is beyond reason and perception, O sage among kings! Consider the proper truth by your intelligence.

COMMENTARY

The Vaiṣṇavas ascertain that the happiness and suffering come from the Supreme Lord who cannot be determined by designations. Śruti says *tvad-avagamī na vetti bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor guṇa-viguṇānvayān*: one who knows you cannot understand your connection with good and bad qualities which give auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

*sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo 'bhāvo bhayaṁ cābhayaṁ eva ca
ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśo 'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānām matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ*

Pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame, infamy--all these various states of the living beings arise only from me. BG 10.4-5

“But why should it be impossible to designate the Lord as the cause?” From seeing people’s suffering arising from time, *karma*, property of matter, planets, ghosts, kings, snakes and sickness, even those things cannot be determined as the cause since in reality, those causes are not independent. Everything arises from the Lord. But it is improper for the worshippers to say that the Lord is the cause of happiness and distress.

“But like and dislike do not exist in the Lord.” Yes, he is beyond conjecture (*apratarkyād*) because being beyond our logical abilities, he does not have like and dislike (in spite of being the ultimate cause of happiness and distress.) Bhīṣma has said:

*na hy asya karhicid rājan pumān veda vidhitsitam
yad vijijñāsayā yuktā muhyanti kavayo 'pi hi*

O King! No one can understand the plan of Kṛṣṇa because even those engaged in reasoning and scripture are bewildered by that inquiry. SB 1.9.16

“It can be inferred that the Lord gives suffering to me for benefiting the devotees. He desires to increase remembrance of the Lord by increasing the miserable condition of developing devotees, like me, the bull. As well he wants to announce the fame of the highest devotee like you by your punishing Kali.

Among the various opinions which is the best? You decide by your intelligence the proper truth (*anurūpam*), because you are a sage among kings (*rājarṣi*).”

By using the word *niścayaḥ* (certainty) at the end of the list of opinions, this final opinion should be taken as the correct conclusion according to the Vaiṣṇavas. By saying “among all of them (*keṣu*)” it is indicated that this idea is rare. The king should consider this (*vimṛśa*) among the various alternatives. Happiness and

distress are not illusory because suffering is actually experienced. Its cause is not the *ātmā* itself, since the *jīva* is dependent. The cause is not the planets because they are dependent on movement of time. The cause of suffering and happiness is not *karma* because it is insentient. Moreover the man of *dharma* (following the path of the Mīmāṃśakas) has *prārabdha* and *aprārabdha* *karmas*. If so, then their idea that following their path of *karma* destroys suffering is negated. *Svabhāva* is not the cause since it is not an exclusive cause. The Lord as the cause is absolute. Bhīṣma has said already that the plan of the Lord however is impossible for everyone to understand.

|| 1.17.21 ||

sūta uvāca

*evam dharme pravadata sa samrād dvija-sattamāḥ |
samāhitena manasā vikhedaḥ paryacaṣṭa tam ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: O best of the *brāhmaṇas*! When *dharma*, the bull, spoke in this manner, the king, free from illusion by putting his mind in meditation, answered.

COMMENTARY

By mind in meditation (*samāhitena*) the King answered (*paryacaṣṭa*).

|| 1.17.22 ||

rājovāca—

*dharmam bravīṣi dharmajña dharmo 'si vṛṣa-rūpa-dhṛk |
yad adharmakṛtaḥ sthānam sūcakasyāpi tad bhavet ||*

TRANSLATION

The King said: O knower of *dharma*! You speak *dharma* (by not telling me the identity of your aggressor), because the person who points out the sinner attains the same place as the sinner. You are *dharma* in the form of a bull.

COMMENTARY

Though you should tell me, the king, who has beat you, you do not say, because the person who points out the sinner also goes to the same place as the sinner. I can guess that you are *dharma* himself.

|| 1.17.23 ||

*athavā deva-māyāyā nūnam gatir agocarā |
cetaso vacasaś cāpi bhūtānām iti niścayaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

It is certain that the course of the Lord's *māyā* is beyond the thought and words of the living entities.

COMMENTARY

You have said everything. What has been said is true. The cause is beyond reasoning (*apratarkyād*). The course of the Lord's energy which causes maintenance and destruction of the whole universe (*deva-māyāyāḥ*) is beyond the mind (*cetasah*). It is beyond words. Thus it is *apratarkya* and *anirdeśya*. Since *māyā* is only under his control, who can know and say how the Lord arranges happiness and distress in the form of maintenance and destruction for the living entities.

|| 1.17.24 ||

tapah śaucam dayā satyam iti pādāḥ kṛte kṛtāḥ |
adharmāmsais trayo bhagnāḥ smaya-saṅga-madaiḥ tava ||

TRANSLATION

In Satya-yuga you had complete *dharma* of four portions with four elements: austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truth. Three portions are broken by three portions of irreligion: pride, association with women, intoxication and other sins.

COMMENTARY

I know all your fortune and misfortune which you have not told me. Please hear. Two verses describe this. Three portions are broken by three parts of *adharma*: pride (*smaya*), association with women (*saṅga*) and intoxication (*madaiḥ*). These represent other actions such as violence as well. This means truth and the other qualities present in Satya-yuga cannot be present.

|| 1.17.25 ||

idānīm dharma pādas te satyam nirvartayed yataḥ |
taṁ jighṛkṣaty adharmo 'yam anṛtenaidhitāḥ kaliḥ ||

TRANSLATION

O Dharma! Now in Kali-yuga truth remains prominent on the one remaining portion of *dharma*, by which a person can attain truth. But Kali, irreligion, increasing by untruth, desires to devour even truth.

COMMENTARY

O dharma! Now, in Kali-yuga, of your four parts of *dharma* consisting of austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truth, only one fourth part remains, because of destruction

by the three portions of pride, women and intoxication. There is a rule that items are sometimes named because of their prominence.⁷⁸ Truth is named here because it is now more prominent (though the other three factors of *dharma* are also present). Because of truth you can concentrate the mind to some extent (*nirvartayet*). Or because of truth, a person can attain you (truth). Kali, in the form of *adharmā*, increasing with untruth (*anṛtena*), desires to destroy truth. This is confirmed by looking in the Twelfth Canto. In Satya-yuga, in the beginning, *dharma* was complete with four parts. In Treta-yuga one fourth of all four legs diminished. Pride diminished austerity, women diminished cleanliness, intoxication diminished mercy and untruth diminished truth. In Dvāpara-yuga these qualities were reduced by half. In Kali-yuga only one fourth of these qualities remain. At the end of Kali-yuga nothing remains.

|| 1.17.26 ||

iyam ca bhūmir bhagavatā nyāsitoru-bharā satī |
śrīmadbhis tat-pada-nyāsaiḥ sarvataḥ kṛta-kautukā ||

TRANSLATION

The cow is earth. The Lord relieved her of a great burden. She became most auspicious in all ways by the auspicious touch of his feet.

COMMENTARY

Nyāsitoru-bharā means “she who had her heavy burden created by others (demons) and herself (her own weight) removed by the Lord.”

|| 1.17.27 ||

śocaty āsru-kalā sādhvī durbhagevojhitā satī |
abrahmaṇyā nṛpa-vyājāḥ śūdrā bhokṣyanti mām iti ||

TRANSLATION

With tears in her eyes, the chaste earth filled with misfortune, being abandoned by the Lord, laments “*Śūdras* dressed as kings with no respect for *brāhmaṇas* will enjoy me.”

COMMENTARY

Āsru-kalā means “carrying tears.”

|| 1.17.28 ||

iti dharmam mahim caiva sāntvayitvā mahā-rathaḥ |
niśātam ādāde khaḍgam kalaye 'dharma-hetave ||

TRANSLATION

⁷⁸ *Prādhānyena vyapadeṣo bhavati.*

Pacifying Dharma and earth in this way, Parīkṣit took his sharp sword for killing Kali, the cause of *adharmā*.

COMMENTARY

He took his sword in order to kill Kali (*kalaye*). This expresses the King's intention. "By seeing the sword in my hand let this person wearing the marks of a king come to fight with me. I will quickly kill him."

|| 1.17.29 ||

*taṁ jighāṁsum abhipretya vihāya nṛpa-lāñchanam |
tat-pāda-mūlaṁ śirasā samagād bhaya-vihvalaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Seeing the King intending to kill him he gave up the markings of a king in great fear and bowed his head to Parīkṣit's feet.

COMMENTARY

Kali thought, "It is not possible for me to fight with him. A *kṣatriya* cannot surrender. Therefore giving up the king's clothing I will fall at his feet."

|| 1.17.30 ||

*patitaṁ pādayor vīraḥ kṛpayā dīna-vatsalaḥ |
śaraṇyo nāvadhīc chlokya āha cedam hasann iva ||*

TRANSLATION

The praiseworthy warrior, worthy of taking shelter, affectionate to the helpless, did not kill him out of his mercy. He spoke to him with a slight smile.

COMMENTARY

The King considered, "Since he has surrendered, I cannot kill him. If I kill this evil person, because of killing a surrendered person, irreligion which has just appeared will spread. He will enter into me even, and will not die." He slightly smiled, because he had not given up his anger. "This plan has been made by the Lord. Today you have been protected from my hand, though I want to kill you."

|| 1.17.31 ||

*rājovāca—
na te guḍākeśa-yaśo-dharāṇām
baddhāñjaler vai bhayam asti kiñcit |
na vartitavyaṁ bhavatā kathañcana
kṣetre madīye tvam adharmā-bandhuḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The King said: Coming with folded hands in front of the sustainer of Arjuna's

glory, you should have no fear at all. But you, friend of irreligion, cannot stay in my kingdom at all.

COMMENTARY

Contemplating his action he spoke. You have come with folded hands in front of me sustaining the fame of Arjuna. You cannot stay by any degree in this place.

|| 1.17.32 ||

*tvām vartamānaṁ nara-deva-deheṣv
anupravṛtto 'yam adharmā-pūgaḥ |
lobho 'nṛtaṁ cauryam anāryam aṁho
jyeṣṭhā ca māyā kalahaś ca dambhaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When you become situated in *devatās* and men, all sorts of irreligion follow: greed, untruth, theft, vulgarity, giving up *dharma*, poverty, deceit, quarrel and pride.

COMMENTARY

Hear the faults of your nature. The *devatās* being overcome by you will be fixed in greed and other qualities. What to speak of humans. These qualities follow you completely (*anu*) when you are situated in men and *devatās*. *Anārya* means inferior. *Aṁhah* means giving up one's *dharma*. *Jyeṣṭhā* means poverty. *Māyā* means deceit. *Dambhaḥ* means pride.

|| 1.17.33 ||

*na vartitavyaṁ tad adharmā-bandho
dharmeṇa satyena ca vartitavye |
brahmāvarte yatra yajanti yajñair
yajñeśvaraṁ yajña-vitāna-vijñāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

You cannot stay in *Brahmāvarta* where *dharma* and truth suitably reside, and where knowers of sacrifice worship the lord of sacrifice with sacrifice.

COMMENTARY

The word *dharma* covers everything. The word *satya* is added as an indicator of *dharma*, the main element. Without branches and twigs the root alone cannot accomplish the goal. *Dharma* and truth are suitable to exist in *Brahmāvarta*.

|| 1.17.34 ||

yasmin harir bhagavān iḥyamāna

*ijyātma⁷⁹-mūrtir yajatām śam tanoti |
kāmān amoghān sthira-jaṅgamānām
antar bahir vāyur ivaiṣa ātmā ||*

TRANSLATION

You cannot reside where the Lord, Bhagavān, who is the soul of the *devatās*, who exists inside and outside like the air, being worshipped, distributes material and spiritual prosperity, what is useful to all moving and non-moving beings to the worshipper.

COMMENTARY

“But the *devatās* should also be worshipped, not just Bhagavān.” He is the soul of those who are worshipped such as Indra. Or they are forms of him alone. He distributes material happiness (*kāmān*) for us citizens moving and non-moving, and spiritual happiness (*śam*). Like air, he can be realized inside and outside. If you exist here, this will not be the situation.

|| 1.17.35 ||

sūta uvāca—

*parīkṣitaivam ādiṣṭaḥ sa kalir jāta-vepathuḥ |
tam udyatāsim āhedam daṇḍa-pāṇim ivodyatam ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Directed in this way by Parīkṣit, trembling Kali spoke to Parīkṣit who had his sword raised, appearing like Yama ready to kill him.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit had his sword raised (*udyatāsim*). Kali trembled. This showed his great intelligence in protecting himself. He felt, “He is about to kill me.” The intention of the King was “If he does not follow my order, I will kill him right now. That is my desire. If he obeys my order, though I will not kill him, I do not have any fault.” *Daṇḍa-pāṇim* means Yama.

|| 1.17.36 ||

kalir uvāca—

*yatra kva vātha vatsyāmi sārva-bhauma tavājñayā |
lakṣaye tatra tatrāpi tvām ātteṣu-śarāsanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Kali said: King of the whole earth! Wherever I will live, following your order, I will see only you with bow and arrow in your hand.

⁷⁹ *iñōātma* appears to be Madhva’s reading.

COMMENTARY

O King of the whole earth! I directly see you in this way (*lakṣaye*). Since all moving and non-moving beings are your citizens, and you control the whole world, I do not have any place to live. Therefore kill me, who have fallen at your feet in front of you, with your hand right now.

|| 1.17.37 ||

*tan me dharmabhr̥tām śreṣṭha sthānam nirdeṣṭum arhasi |
yatraiva niyato vatsya ātiṣṭhaṁs te ’nuśāsanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Best of upholders of *dharmā*! You should designate for me that place where I can reside permanently abiding by your order.

COMMENTARY

“I do not kill those who have surrendered to me.”

“O best among protectors of *dharmā*! Then give me a place to stay.”

|| 1.17.38 ||

*sūta uvāca—
abhyarthitas tadā tasmai sthānāni kalaye dadau |
dyūtam pānam striyaḥ sūnā yatrādharmas̄ catur-vidhaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: He then gave to Kali who had made the request places where there were four types of irreligion: gambling, wine, unmarried women and slaughter of animals.

COMMENTARY

Dyūtam is clearly gambling. *Pānam* means drinking wine and other things. *Striyaḥ* means unmarried women. *Sūnāḥ* is killing other living entities. With the appearance of gambling comes untruth,⁸⁰ the loss of truthfulness. With the appearance of drinking comes intoxication⁸¹ and loss of mercy. With illicit women comes illicit sex and impurity. With violence to living entities comes all *adharmas*. Those who commit violence to living entities have no austerity, cleanliness or mercy. Truthful speaking does not exist in them at all.

|| 1.17.39 ||

punaś ca yācamānāya jāta-rūpam adāt prabhuḥ |

⁸⁰ This part of *adharmā* was mentioned in verse 25.

⁸¹ These parts of *adharmā* were mentioned in verse 24: pride, intoxication, and illicit association.

tato 'nṛtaṁ madam kāmam rajo vairam ca pañcamam ||

TRANSLATION

When implored again, the King gave the place where there was gold. In that place there will be untruthfulness, intoxication, illicit sex, pride, and enmity.

COMMENTARY

“O King! Having heard this news, no one will perform gambling, drinking, illicit sex or animal killing. First I must enter their minds. Therefore the King gave Kali materials represented by gold, but indicating other things like silver etc. as his living place. Because of Kali residing in this place, in a place where there is wealth, four times of *adharmā*—untruth, intoxication, illicit sex, and pride—and a fifth, enmity will also be present. *Mada* and *kāma* in neuter gender is poetic license.

|| 1.17.40 ||

*amūni pañca sthānāni hy adharmā-prabhavaḥ kaliḥ |
auttareyeṇa dattāni nyavasat tan-nideśa-kṛt ||*

TRANSLATION

Kali, propagator of irreligion, following the order of the King, took up residence in these five places given by the son of Uttarā.

COMMENTARY

Amūni pañca sthānāni should actually be in locative case. Or it can be in the accusative case because of the injunction *kāla-bhāvādhva-deśānām*: words denoting time, condition, length, and place can be put in the accusative.

|| 1.17.41 ||

*athaitāni na seveta bubhūṣuḥ puruṣaḥ kvacit |
viśeṣato dharma-śīlo rājā loka-patir guruḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The person who desires his own benefit, and particularly the religious king, the protector of people and the teacher, should not indulge in these five items.

COMMENTARY

One should not serve women beyond one's married wife. *Bubhūṣuḥ* means “desiring his own benefit.” “Not indulging in gold or wealth” means not being attached to it (though to some degree everyone has to use it.)

|| 1.17.42 ||

*vṛṣasya naṣṭāms trīn pādān tapaḥ śaucam dayām iti |
pratisandadha āśvāsya mahīm ca samavardhayat ||*

TRANSLATION

The King restored the three destroyed legs of the bull: austerity, cleanliness and mercy. Comforting the earth, he made her prosperous.

COMMENTARY

Punishing Kali, he restored the legs of the bull. This means that austerity and other qualities of *dharma* were made to flourish again.

|| 1.17.43-44 ||

*sa eṣa etarhy adhyāsta āsanam pāṛthivocitam |
pitāmahenopanyastam rājñāraṇyam vivikṣatā ||
āste 'dhunā sa rājarṣiḥ kauravendra-śriyollasan |
gajāhvaye mahā-bhāgaś cakravartī bṛhac-chravāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

He is presently sitting on the throne given by his grandfather King Yudhiṣṭhira who desired to go to the forest. This sage among kings, who is greatly fortunate, famous, ruling the world, shining with the wealth of a Kuru king, is now residing in Hastināpura.

COMMENTARY

Because of his influence, you can perform sacrifice here. This is expressed in three verses. *Adhyāste* means “he is presently protecting the kingdom.” The present tense is used because of nearness to the present (Parīkṣit had already disappeared).

|| 1.17.45 ||

*ittham-bhūtānubhāvo 'yam abhimanyu-suto nṛpaḥ |
yasya pālayataḥ kṣauṇīm yūyam satrāya dīkṣitāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

This King, the son of Abhimanyu, who, by protecting the earth, has allowed you to be consecrated for performing sacrifice, had such authority.

COMMENTARY

Satrāya means for performing sacrifice. This is different from the sacrifice which Balarāma saw.

Chapter Eighteen The Brāhmaṇa's Curse

|| 1.18.1-3 ||

sūta uvāca

yo vai drauṇy-astra-vipluṣṭo na mātur udare mṛtaḥ |
anugrahād bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasyādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ ||

brahma-kopotthitād yas tu takṣakāt prāṇa-viplavāt |
na sammumohorubhayād bhagavaty arpitāśayaḥ ||

utsṛjya sarvataḥ saṅgam vijñātājita-samsthitiḥ |
vaiyāsaker jahau śiṣyo gaṅgāyām svam kalevaram ||

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Parīkṣit, who, being burned up by the weapon of Aśvatthāmā, did not die in his mother's womb because of the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, performer of astonishing actions; who, because he had taken shelter of the Lord, did not become bewildered with great fear from the life threatening snake called Takṣaka called by the curse of the *brāhmaṇa*; who became the student of Śukadeva, and giving up all material association and being situated in realization of the Lord, gave up his body on the bank of the Gaṅgā.

COMMENTARY

In the eighteenth chapter, the king repents after placing a snake around the neck of the sage, and hears the curse of his son.

Sūta speaks in summary of the astonishing story of Parīkṣit's life from birth till attaining the Lord to the sages who were very astonished at hearing his punishment of Kali. *Vipluṣṭaḥ* means burned up. Becoming the pupil of Śukadeva (*vaiyāsakeḥ śiṣyaḥ*), he understood the truth (*samsthitiḥ*) about the Lord (*ajita*). Or *vijñātājita-samsthitiḥ* can mean “realizing the Lord at the time of death (*samsthitiḥ*).”

|| 1.18.4 ||

nottamaśloka-vārtānām juṣatām tat-kathāmṛtam |
syāt sambhramo 'nta-kāle 'pi smaratām tat-padāmbujam ||

TRANSLATION

Those who remember the lotus feet of the Lord; those who relish the nectar of pastimes concerning the Lord; and those whose very lives are the Lord do not have confusion even at the time of death.

COMMENTARY

This is not astonishing. This verse gives the reason. *Uttamaśloka-vārtānām* means “of those whose cause of living is the Lord.”

|| 1.18.5 ||

tāvāt kalir na prabhavet praviṣṭo 'pīha sarvataḥ |

yāvad īso mahān urvyām ābhimanyava eka-rāt ||

TRANSLATION

As long as Abhimanyu's son, the great lord, was the king of the earth, Kali, though he had entered everywhere, could not influence anyone.

COMMENTARY

After Parīkṣit punished Kali, what was the situation? This verse describes the condition.

|| 1.18.6 ||

*yasminn ahani yarhy eva bhagavān utsasarja gām |
tadaivehānuvṛtto 'sāv adharmā-prabhavaḥ kaliḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

On the day that the Lord left the earth, at that very instant, Kali, the source of irreligion, entered the world.

COMMENTARY

This verse describes Kali's entrance. *Gām* means earth.

|| 1.18.7 ||

*nānudveṣṭi kalim samrāt saraṅga iva sara-bhuk |
kuśalāny āsu siddhyanti netarāṇi kṛtāni yat ||*

TRANSLATION

The King did not kill Kali. He was like a bee, enjoying the honey—for at this time he understood that auspicious acts bear results just by deciding to do them, whereas sinful acts bear result only by undertaking them.

COMMENTARY

What was the condition of Parīkṣit after punishing Kali? He was like a bee, gathering the honey. What is the honey? Just by desiring to do them (*āsu*) pious acts bear their fruits whereas sinful acts bear fruit only when actually performed (*kṛtāni*). Even if one does not perform a pious act one gets the result. . One does not have to perform the action, but should simply make the decision to perform it. Results come simply by the desire to perform the act.

|| 1.18.8 ||

*kim nu bāleṣu sūreṇa kalinā dhīra-bhīruṇā |
apramattaḥ pramatteṣu yo vṛko nṛṣu vartate ||*

TRANSLATION

Kali was an attentive tiger among inattentive men. But what could powerful

Kali do to the innocent people since he was afraid of the devotees?

COMMENTARY

The king had another intention. Was there a disturbance to the foolish people by Kali? There was none, because he had fear of the devotees — those who were discerning in nature. Kali was a powerful tiger among the innocent.

|| 1.18.9 ||

*upavarṇitam etad vaḥ puṇyam pārīkṣitam māyā |
vāsudeva-kathopetam ākhyānam yad apr̥cchata ||*

TRANSLATION

I have described to you what you had asked concerning pure Parīkṣit, which is related to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.18.10 ||

*yā yāḥ kathā bhagavataḥ kathanīyora-karmaṇaḥ |
guṇa-karmāśrayāḥ pumbhiḥ saṁsevyās tā bubhūṣubhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Those who desire their own benefit should hear those topics concerning the qualities and activities of the Lord who performed the greatest actions.

COMMENTARY

Bubhūṣubhiḥ means “by those who desire their own good.” To do anything other than this is to waste one’s life.

|| 1.18.11 ||

*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
sūta jīva samāḥ saumya śāśvatīr viśadam yaśaḥ |
yas tvam śamsasi kṛṣṇasya martyānām amṛtam hi naḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The sages said: O auspicious Sūta! Live for eternal years, since you narrate to us, who are mortals, the shining glories of Kṛṣṇa!

|| 1.18.12 ||

*karmaṇy asminn anāśvāse dhūma-dhūmrātmanām bhavān |
āpāyayati govinda-pāda-padmāsavaṁ madhu ||*

TRANSLATION

You let us, blackened by the smoke at this uncertain sacrifice, drink the

intoxicating nectar of the lotus feet of Govinda.

COMMENTARY

At this performance of sacrifice (*karmaṇi*) which is not credible (*anāśvāse*), because the result cannot be guaranteed due to many irregularities (whereas the results of *bhakti* are certain), you let us, whose eyes and other limbs are discolored by the smoke, drink the nectar. The genitive case here indicates accusative case. Drinking the nectar shows that the results of *bhakti* are directly attained. It is intoxicating (*madhu*) honey (*āsavam*) since it gives us no experience of happiness and distress which is present in everything else and since it gives us the experience of the sweetness of the Lord.

|| 1.18.13 ||

tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam |
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Let us not compare even a particle of devotee association to Svarga or liberation, what to speak of any blessings in this world.

COMMENTARY

We speak of the glories of the great ocean of association of such devotees as you, from whatever realization we have. We should not compare the results of *karma*, attainment of Svarga, or the results of *jñāna* (liberation) with a small particle of association of devotees (*bhagavat-saṅgi*). We will not even compare the blessings of this world, such as a kingdom, with that. That is because by association with devotees the sprout of *bhakti*, which is most rare, appears. Let us not compare even the full results of *karma* and *jñāna* with a particle of association of devotees doing *sādhana-bhakti*. What then to speak of extended association, and what to speak of association with a devotee having *bhāva*, the result of *sādhana*, and what to speak of association with a devotee having *prema*? Imperative form is used to indicate impossibility. One does not compare a mustard seed to Mount Meru! The plural tense indicates that no one can disprove this fact since this is the consensus of many persons. *Bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya* is mentioned in the following verse:

na tathāsya bhaven moho bandhaś cānya-prasaṅgataḥ |
yoṣit-saṅgād yathā puṁso yathā tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ ||

The infatuation and bondage which accrue to a man from attachment to any other object is not as complete as that resulting from attachment to a woman or to the fellowship of men who are fond of women. SB 3.31.35

This verse says that more than association with women, association with those who associate with women (*tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ*) is condemned. Thus the intention of the verse is to show that association of the devotees of the Lord is more

praiseworthy than association with the Lord.

|| 1.18.14 ||

*ko nāma tṛpyed rasavit kathāyām
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya |
nāntaṁ guṇānām aguṇasya jagmur
yogeśvarā ye bhava-pādma-mukhyāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

What knower of *rasa* could be satisfied with the topics of the Lord who is the sole, supreme shelter of the greatest devotees? Even those who are masters of yoga and the *devatās* headed by Brahmā and Śiva, cannot find an end to the spiritual qualities of the Lord who is without material qualities.

COMMENTARY

“It is true that association of devotees is praiseworthy because without that one cannot attain a taste for hearing about Kṛṣṇa. We have attained that taste! Then what should we say about continuous association?” With that intention they speak this verse. If a person is knowledgeable about *rasa*, how can he be satisfied with the discussion of that person who is the sole and supreme shelter of the greatest devotees? This indicates the great sweetness of Kṛṣṇa. His great power is then indicated. Those who are masters of *yoga*, they also cannot find an end to the spiritual qualities of the Lord who is without material qualities (*aguṇasya*).

|| 1.18.15 ||

*tan no bhavān vai bhagavat-pradhāno
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya |
harer udāraṁ caritaṁ viśuddham
śuśrūṣatām no vitanotu vidvan ||*

TRANSLATION

O learned one! You are the one who prominently serves the Lord among us! Please describe in detail to us who desire to hear the great, pure and transcendental activities of the Lord who is the supreme shelter of the greatest devotees.

COMMENTARY

Among us, you are the person who prominently serves the Lord. Speak to us who desire to hear. Genitive is used to denote their relationship to Sūta who is prominent among them. *Viśuddham* means beyond *māyā*.

|| 1.18.16 ||

*sa vai mahā-bhāgavataḥ parīkṣid
yenāpavargākhyam adabhra-buddhiḥ |*

*jñānena vaiyāsaki-śabditena
bheje khagendra-dhvaja-pāda-mūlam ||*

TRANSLATION

Parīkṣit, the great devotee, with pure intelligence, attained liberation, in the form of the feet of the Lord having a flag marked with Garuḍa, through knowledge spoken by Śukadeva.

COMMENTARY

“By *jñāna* one attains liberation. Why do you not desire liberation as a result of your knowledge?”

“For us devotees, *jñāna* actually means tasting the activities of the Lord. Its result, liberation, means attaining the feet of the Lord. Parīkṣit is the example. Please talk about the Lord’s activities by which Parīkṣit attained the lotus feet of the Lord who has a flag with Garuḍa.”

“But in the Twelfth Canto it is said that Parīkṣit attains liberation.”

“That is true. He attained *apavarga*. *Apavarga* means the lotus feet of the Lord for the devotees. This is explained in the Fifth Canto. *Yathāvarṇa-vidhānam apavargaś ca bhavati yo ’sau bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ*: liberation by methods according to *varṇa* is *bhakti* to the Lord. (SB 5.19.19-20) Just as *apavarga* is defined as the lotus feet of the Lord, *jñāna* is defined as pastimes of the Lord, as described by Śukadeva. Thus it is not untrue that Parīkṣit attained *apavarga* by *jñāna*. This answers the question previously asked, “How did his death take place, and what did he achieve after his death?” (SB 1.12.2)

|| 1.18.17 ||

*tan naḥ param puṇyam asaṁvṛtārtham
ākhyānam atyadbhuta-yoga-niṣṭham |
ākhyāhy anantācaritopapannam
pārīkṣitam bhāgavatābhirāmam ||*

TRANSLATION

Please tell us clearly the most pure *Bhāgavatam* containing unlimited pastimes, which is devoted to astonishing *bhakti*, since it is dear to the devotees and was recited to Parīkṣit.

COMMENTARY

Tell us clearly (*asaṁvṛtārtham*) the *Bhāgavatam* (*ākhyānam*), which is devoted to *bhakti-yoga*, because it is dear to the devotees and was recited to Parīkṣit.

|| 1.18.18 ||

sūta uvāca
aho vyaṁ janma-bhṛto 'dya hāsmā
vṛddhānuvṛtṭyāpi viloma-jātāḥ |
dauṣkulyam ādhim vidhunoti śīghraṁ
mahattamānām abhidhāna-yogaḥ ||

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Born of mixed castes, we have certainly made our birth successful today by following after Śukadeva, for glorification of great devotees quickly destroys the mental pains arising from low birth.

COMMENTARY

He expresses his good fortune to attain qualification by mercy of the sages to hear the *Bhāgavatam*. Though we are born of mixed caste and therefore condemned, today our births have certainly (*ha*) become (*āsmā*) successful by following the knowledge of the ancients or by following Śukadeva (*vṛddhānuvṛtṭyā*). This collection of conversations (*abhidhāna-yogaḥ*) of the great devotees, even though in common language, destroys mental affliction (*ādhim*) caused by birth in a low family.

|| 1.18.19 ||

kutaḥ punar grṇato nāma tasya
mahattamaikānta-parāyaṇasya |
yo 'nanta-śaktir bhagavān ananto
mahad-guṇatvād yam anantam āhuḥ ||

TRANSLATION

What doubt is there about this for one who chants the name of the unlimited Lord, who is the shelter of the greatest devotees, who has unlimited power, and who is called unlimited because he bestows his unlimited qualities to the devotee?

COMMENTARY

What more can be said for the person who chants the name which destroys the bad birth of the chanter? “But how can bad birth be destroyed without destroying the *prārabdha-karma* which causes the bad birth? It is well known that *prārabdha-karma* is destroyed only by experiencing it. How could chanting the name destroy it?” This verse answers. Because the Lord has unlimited energies, one of those energies certainly will destroy *prārabdha-karma*. Because he gives his qualities to his devotees (*mahad-guṇatvāt*), those devotees call him unlimited. Because of the Lord’s qualities in the devotees, *prārabdha-karmas* cannot remain in the devotee.

|| 1.18.20 ||

*etāvatālam nanu sūcitena
guṇair asāmyānatiśāyanasya |
hitvetarān prārthayato vibhūtir
yasyāṅghri-reṇuṃ juṣate 'nabhīpsoḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Enough with delineating the Lord, who has no equal or superior in qualities! Ignoring Brahmā and others who pray to her, even Lakṣmī, with a desire for receiving all those qualities in full, serves the dust of the feet of this Lord who has no material desire.

COMMENTARY

Who is able to speak about those qualities? Enough of so many attempts to describe the Lord who is unequal and, of course, unsurpassed in his qualities. Though he is without desire, Lakṣmī (*vibhūtīḥ*) serves the dust of his feet because she desires all those qualities in full, having given up Brahmā and others who pray to her.

|| 1.18.21 ||

*athāpi yat-pāda-nakhāvasṛṣṭam
jagad viriṅcopahr̥tārhaṇāmbhaḥ |
seśam punāty anyatamo mukundāt
ko nāma loke bhagavat-padārthaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Who can be called by the name Bhagavān except Mukunda whose toe-nail water purifies the universe along with Śiva and becomes *arghya* for Brahmā.

COMMENTARY

The water which flows from the toenail of the Lord, which acts as *arghya* water (*arhaṇa*) for Brahmā for worship (*upahr̥ta*), purified the whole universe along with Śiva (*seśam*). The meaning of the word Bhagavān cannot apply to anyone except Mukunda. He is the Lord of everyone. Since the most elevated persons in the universe — Lakṣmī, Brahmā and Śiva — serve his feet, they point out that he is supreme.

|| 1.18.22 ||

*yatrānuraktāḥ sahasaiva dhīrā
vyapohya dehādiṣu saṅgam ūḍham |
vrajanti tat pārama-haṁsyam antyaṁ
yasminn ahimsopaśamaḥ sva-dharmaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa, immediately giving up strong attachment to body and other material objects, attain the highest stage of life, *pārama-hamsa*, in which lack of hatred and absorption in Kṛṣṇa are the natural qualities.

COMMENTARY

Wise men who can be observed are the proof of this. *Ūḍham* means firm. *Antyam* means “reaching the highest stage.” *Yasmin* means “in which practice.”

|| 1.18.23 ||

*aham hi pṛṣṭo 'ryamaṇo bhavadbhir
ācakṣa ātmāvagamo 'tra yāvān |
nabhaḥ patanty ātma-samaṁ patattriṇas
tathā samaṁ viṣṇu-gatiṁ vipaścitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

You are like many suns! I will speak the knowledge requested by you according to what I have understood. Just as birds fly high in the sky only according to their ability, so the wise understand the pastimes of the Lord only according to their limited ability.

COMMENTARY

Rejoicing at his good fortune, Sūta begins to speak about Parīkṣit again. You are like suns (*aryamaṇah*)! I will speak knowledge according to how much I have understood. Just as birds fly in the sky according to their ability and not to the topmost height of the sky, even those who are wise can know the Lord's pastimes (*gatiṁ*) according to their intelligence (*samaṁ*).

|| 1.18.24 ||

*ekadā dhanur udyamya vicaran mṛgayām vane |
mṛgān anugataḥ śrāntaḥ kṣudhitas tṛṣṭito bhṛśam ||*

TRANSLATION

One day while taking his bow and hunting in the forest, after pursuing animals, he became tired, hungry and very thirsty.

|| 1.18.25 ||

*jalāśayam acakṣāṇaḥ praviveśa tam āśramam |
dadarśa munim āsīnaṁ śāntaṁ mīlita-locanam ||*

TRANSLATION

Not seeing water anywhere, he entered the hermitage of a sage, and saw the peaceful sage sitting with closed eyes.

COMMENTARY

Acakṣāṇaḥ means “not seeing.”

|| 1.18.26 ||

pratiruddhendriya-prāṇa-mano-buddhim upāratam |
sthāna-trayāt param prāptam brahma-bhūtam avikriyam ||

TRANSLATION

The sage had withdrawn his senses, life air, mind and intelligence after controlling them. Having surpassed the three states, he had entered into trance and realized *brahman*. He did not move at all.

COMMENTARY

The sage was Śamika. He had surpassed the three states of waking sleeping and deep sleep and reached the fourth state, *samādhi*, and had realized *brahman*.

|| 1.18.27 ||

viprakīrṇa-jaṭācchannaṁ rauraveṇājinena ca |
viśuṣyat-tālor udakaṁ tathā-bhūtam ayācata ||

TRANSLATION

Parīkṣit, having a dry palate, requested water from that the sage covered with unkempt, matted locks of hair and dressed in deer skin.

COMMENTARY

He was covered with the skin of the *ruru*, a type of antelope.

|| 1.18.28 ||

alabdha-tṛṇa-bhūmy-ādir asamprāptārghya-sūnṛtaḥ |
avajñātam ivātmānaṁ manyamānaś cukopa ha ||

TRANSLATION

Thinking that he had been disrespected by not being offered a grass seat, *arghya* or friendly words, the king became angry.

COMMENTARY

Thinking that the sage had done nothing to welcome him, he became angry.

|| 1.18.29 ||

abhūta-pūrvāḥ sahasā kṣut-tṛḍbhyām arditātmanaḥ |
brāhmaṇaṁ praty abhūd brahman⁸² matsaro manyur eva ca ||

⁸² *praty abhūt tasya', 'praty abhūd rājiaū' iti pāöhau |*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! Afflicted by hungry and thirst, he suddenly became angry and spiteful towards the *brāhmaṇa* as never before.

COMMENTARY

He could not tolerate the sage's sense of pride.

|| 1.18.30 ||

*sa tu brahma-ṛṣer amṣe gatāsum uragam rukṣa |
vinirgacchan dhanuṣ-kotyā nidhāya puram āgataḥ*⁸³ ||

TRANSLATION

In anger he placed a dead snake on the shoulder of the sage using the tip of his bow, left the hermitage and returned to his city.

COMMENTARY

Dhanuṣkotyā means “with the tip of his bow.” O *brāhmaṇa*! I am respecting you with this very delicate garland just as you have nicely welcomed me!”

|| 1.18.31 ||

*eṣa kim nibhṛtāśeṣa-karaṇo mīlitekṣaṇaḥ |
mṛṣā-samādhir āhosvit kim nu syāt kṣatra-bandhubhiḥ* ||

TRANSLATION

Was he actually closing his eyes in a state of withdrawing his senses? Or was he feigning trance, perhaps because a fallen *kṣatriya* had come?

COMMENTARY

After the king had left he began to reflect. Had the sage withdrawn his senses and actually been in trance? Or was it fake trance? What would be the reason? One should not think that the king had committed a sin because of bad habits. It was the desire of the Lord to bring Parīkṣit quickly to his side, by having him become detached from the world by the curse of the sage, having him take the association of Śukadeva, and appearing in the form of the *Bhāgavatam*, in order to deliver the world and give a taste for the pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā* that he performed to some devotees who would be born later in Kali-yuga. This is stated by the wise. This is understood from Parīkṣit's later statement:

*tasyaiva me 'ghasya parāvareṣo
vyāsakta-cittasya grheṣv abhīkṣṇam
nirveda-mūlo dvija-śāpa-rūpo*

⁸³ *āgataḥ' iti pāḥau*

yatra prasakto bhayam āśu dhatte

As he was thus thinking, he heard about how he would die from the bite of Takṣaka because of the curse issued by the sage's son. He considered it beneficial that soon the fire of Takṣaka would be the cause of detachment from material life. SB 1.19.4

This also shows that the sinful actions of his pure devotee which are committed accidentally lead to benefit in the future.

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham ||*

Whenever there is destruction in *dharmā*, O Bhārata, and a rise in *adharmā*, I manifest my own body. BG 4.6

Parīkṣit's condition was produced by the Lord himself, in order to create an apparent reason for the Lord's appearance in the form of the *Bhāgavatam*. Parīkṣit never had such conduct, even his dreams. Thus it is said that this was something he had not experienced before (verse 29). His state of anger did not arise from bad *karma*, since the result of this act was the great fortune of meeting Śukadeva. Nor should one say that the cause was his great thirst. A moment later, without drinking water, being pained by a hundred repentances, he returned home and immediately fasted till death. Since he was filled with spiritual power in birth and death, and had conquered time in his middle age (by restricting Kali), he must be considered to have exceptional strength by the mercy of the Lord.

|| 1.18.32 ||

*tasya putro 'titejasvī viharan bālako 'rbhakaiḥ |
rājñāgham prāpitaṁ tātaṁ śrutvā tatredam abravīt ||*

TRANSLATION

The sage's powerful son, playing with other young boys, hearing that the King had offended his father, spoke the following words to them.

COMMENTARY

His son was Śṛṅgī.

|| 1.18.33 ||

*aho adharmāḥ pālānām pīvnām bali-bhujām iva |
svāminy agham yad dāsānām dvāra-pānām śunām iva ||*

TRANSLATION

This is the sin of kings who are like fat crows! It is a sin committed by servants

or door-keepers, who are like dogs, acting against their masters.

COMMENTARY

Pālānām means kings. *Pīvnām* means fat. *Bali-bhujām* means crows

|| 1.18.34 ||

brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatra-bandhur hi dvāra-pālo⁸⁴ nirūpitaḥ |
sa katham tad-grhe dvāḥ-sthaḥ sabhāṇḍam bhoktum arhati ||

TRANSLATION

The fallen *kṣatriya* is designated as a door-keeper by the *brāhmaṇas*. How can he, guarding the door, enter the house and eat the food in the pots?

COMMENTARY

The protector of the house enters the house and eats items such as ghee which are in pots (*sabhāṇḍam*). How is it proper for the king to boldly enter the hermitage of the sages and ask for water?

|| 1.18.35 ||

kṛṣṇe gate bhagavati śāstary utpatha-gāminām |
tad bhinna-setūn adyāham śāsmi paśyata me balam ||

TRANSLATION

Since Lord Kṛṣṇa, the punisher of those who deviate from the path, has departed, I will punish this breaker of rules. See my power!

|| 1.18.36 ||

ity uktvā roṣa-tāmrākṣo vayasyān ṛṣi-bālakān⁸⁵ |
kauṣiky-āpa upaspr̥śya vāg-vajram visasarja ha ||

TRANSLATION

Saying this to his friends who were sages' sons, eyes red with anger, performing *ācamana* with water from the Kauṣikī River, he released a thunderbolt of words.

COMMENTARY

He spoke to his friends. The *sandhi* in the phrase *kauṣikyāḥ apāḥ* is poetic license.

|| 1.18.37 ||

iti laṅghita-maryādam takṣakaḥ saptame 'hani
danḁsyati sma kulāṅgāram codito me tata-druham

⁸⁴ 'gāha-pālaù' iti pāḥau |

⁸⁵ 'āni-bālakaù' iti pāḥau |

TRANSLATION

By my order Takṣaka will bite this black sheep of his family, offender of my father, and a trespasser of boundaries.

COMMENTARY

Because he placed a dead snake on the body of my father, Takṣaka a living snake, will bite him. Another version has *dhakṣayti*, “he will burn him to ashes.” Inspired by me (*coditaḥ me*) the snake will bite. *Tata-druham* means the same as *tāta-druham* (offender of my father).

|| 1.18.38 ||

*tato 'bhyetyāśramaṁ bālo gale sarpa-kalevaram |
pitaraṁ vīkṣya duḥkhārto mukta-kaṇṭho ruroda ha ||*

TRANSLATION

Returning to the hermitage, the boy, seeing his father with the snake around his neck, began crying loudly, afflicted with suffering.

COMMENTARY

Gale should actually be part of the compound without a declension ending.

|| 1.18.39-40 ||

*sa vā āṅgirasō brahman śrutvā suta-vilāpanam |
unmīlya śanakair netre dṛṣtvā cāmse mṛtoragam ||*

*visṛjya putraṁ papraccha⁸⁶ vatsa kasmād dhi rodiṣi |
kena vā te 'pratikṛtam⁸⁷ ity uktaḥ sa nyavedayat ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! The descendent of Aṅgirasa, hearing the wailing of his son, eventually opened his eyes and saw the dead snake on his shoulder. Casting off the snake, he asked, “O son! Why are you crying? Who has wronged you?” Having been asked, his son explained everything.

|| 1.18.41 ||

*nīśamya śaptam atad-arhaṁ narendram
sa brāhmaṇo nātmajam abhyanandat |
aho batāmho mahad adya te kṛtam
alpīyasi droha urur damo dhṛtaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

⁸⁶ 'taà ca papraccha' iti pāöhau |

⁸⁷ 'te 'py akātam', 'te viprakātam', 'te 'pakātam' iti pāöhau |

Hearing that Parīkṣit had been undeservedly cursed, the sage was not pleased with his son. “Oh! You have committed a great sin today. For a small offense you have given great punishment.”

COMMENTARY

The curse was not suitable (*atad-arham*). The sage spoke words to express his disapproval. *Dama* means punishment.

|| 1.18.42 ||

*na vai nṛbhir nara-devaṃ parākhyam
sammātam arhasy avipakva-buddhe |
yat-tejasā durviṣaheṇa guptā
vindanti bhadraṇy akutobhayāḥ prajāḥ ||*

TRANSLATIONBy this king’s intolerable power the citizens, protected and without any fear, enjoy prosperity. He is equal to Viṣṇu in fame. You cannot consider to be the same as ordinary men by immature intelligence.

COMMENTARY

Para refers to Viṣṇu. *Ākhyā* means fame. He has fame like Viṣṇu. You cannot consider him as equal to ordinary men.

|| 1.18.43 ||

*alakṣyamāṇe nara-deva-nāmni
rathāṅga-pāṇāv ayam aṅga lokāḥ |
tadā hi caura-pracuro vinaṅkṣyaty
arākṣyamāṇo ’vivarūthavat kṣaṇāt ||*

TRANSLATION

O child! When this King, representative of Viṣṇu, disappears, the people, suffering from thieves, will be destroyed in an instant like unprotected sheep,.

COMMENTARY

Alakṣyamāṇe means disappearing. *Avivarūthava* means “like a herd of sheep.”

|| 1.18.44 ||

*tad adya naḥ pāpam upaity ananvayam
yan naṣṭa-nāthasya vasor vilumpakāt |
parasparam ghnanti śapanti vṛñjate
paśūn striyo ’rthān puru-dasyavo janāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The sin, though it is unrelated to us, arising from theft of wealth from people without a protector, will affect us at that time. The crowd of thieves will kill

each other, curse each other and steal from each other animals, women and wealth.

COMMENTARY

The wealth of the people who are without a protector (*naṣṭa-nāthasya*) will be stolen. Because of this theft, sin will arise. Because of that sin, even though unrelated to us, (*ananvayam*) we also will enter into sin. The sin is shown. They will kill each other, curse each other, and steal from each other (*vṛñjate*) animals, women and wealth.

|| 1.18.45 ||

*tadārya-dharmaḥ praviliyate nṛṇām
varṇāśramācāra-yutas trayīmayah |
tato 'rtha-kāmābhiniveśitātmanām
śunām kapīnām iva varṇa-saṅkaraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Proper conduct of men, prescribed through actions of *varṇa* and *āśrama* which are described in the Vedas will be destroyed. Mixed castes will arise for the dogs and monkeys absorbed in money and women.

COMMENTARY

Āryadharmah means proper conduct.

|| 1.18.46 ||

*dharma-pālo nara-patiḥ sa tu samrāḍ bṛhac-chravāḥ |
sākṣān mahā-bhāgavato rājarṣir haya-medhayāt |
kṣut-trṭ-śrama-yuto dīno naivāsmac chāpam arhati ||*

TRANSLATION

King Parīkṣit, the protector of *dharma*, the renowned emperor, a sage among kings, a very great devotee of the Lord, performer of horse sacrifices, suffering from hunger, thirst and fatigue, does not deserve our curse.

COMMENTARY

Having said that he should not be cursed simply because he is the king, the sage now explains other reasons why he should not be cursed.

|| 1.18.47 ||

*apāpeṣu sva-bhṛtyeṣu bālenāpakva-buddhinā |
pāpaṁ kṛtaṁ tad bhagavān sarvātmā kṣantum arhati ||*

TRANSLATION

The Lord, the soul of all beings, should forgive the sin committed to your

innocent devotee by this boy of immature intelligence.

COMMENTARY

Seeing no other means of atonement because of the seriousness of the sin (committed by his son), explaining the sin, he prays to the Lord

|| 1.18.48 ||

*tiraskṛtā vipralabdhāḥ śaptāḥ kṣiptā hatā api |
nāsyā tat pratikurvanti tad-bhaktāḥ prabhavo 'pi hi ||*

TRANSLATION

Though the devotees are capable of counteracting, they do not react when scolded, cheated, cursed, insulted or beaten.

COMMENTARY

Since he was the King, he could counter curse and make the first curse ineffective. This did not happen, because Parīkṣit was a great devotee. Though criticized, cheated, insulted, and beaten, they do not react, though they are capable (*prabhavaḥ*). They do not take counter measures against those who criticize or scold.

|| 1.18.49 ||

*iti putra-kṛtāghena so 'nutapto mahā-muniḥ |
svayaṁ viprakṛto rājñā naivāghaṁ tad acintayat ||*

TRANSLATION

The great sage was sorry for the sin committed by his son, and did not think at all that the King had committed an offense when he (the sage) was treated badly.

COMMENTARY

He did not think it an offense when the king treated him badly

|| 1.18.50 ||

*prāyaśaḥ sādhaso loke parair dvandveṣu yojitāḥ |
na vyathanti na hr̥ṣyanti yata ātmāguṇāśrayaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Generally the devotees in this world, on experiencing distress and happiness by others' actions, do not become agitated and do not rejoice, since they do not take shelter of material happiness and distress.

COMMENTARY

This is reasonable. *Dvandveṣu* means in happiness and distress. *Agūṇāśrayaḥ*

means “they are not the shelter of material happiness and distress.”

Chapter Nineteen The Arrival of Śukadeva

|| 1.19.1 ||

*sūta uvāca—
mahī-patis tv atha tat-karma garhyaṁ
vicintayann ātma-kṛtaṁ sudurmanāḥ |
aho mayā nīcam anārya-vat kṛtaṁ
nirāgasi brahmaṇi gūḍha-tejasi ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: The King, reflecting that his act was reprehensible, became very depressed. I have performed a deplorable act like an uncivilized person towards an innocent *brāhmaṇa* with great power.

COMMENTARY

In the nineteenth chapter, Parīkṣit repents for his act, renounces the kingdom, fasts till death, and Śukadeva arrives in the assembly of great sages.

When he returned home, he became sad. His thoughts are described in two and half verses. I have done a deplorable act (*nīcam*). Sometimes the word *amīvam* (sin) is seen instead. *Brahmaṇi* means *brāhmaṇe*.

|| 1.19.2 ||

*dhruvaṁ tato me kṛta-deva-helanād
duratyayaṁ vyasanam nāti-dīrghāt |
tad astu kāmam hy agha-niṣkṛtāya me
yathā na kuryām punar evam addhā ||*

TRANSLATION

Because of my disrespect for this godly person it is certain that unpreventable misfortune will come very soon. Let that be direct atonement for my sin in full force, so that I will not commit such an act again.

COMMENTARY

It (the misfortune) should affect me directly (*addhā*), not my sons and others.

|| 1.19.3 ||

*adyaiva rājyaṁ balam ṛddha-kośaṁ
prakopita-brahma-kulānalo me |
dahatv abhadrasya punar na me 'bhūt
pāpīyasī dhīr dvija-deva-gobhyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Let the fire of an angry *brāhmaṇa* family burn up my kingdom, strength, and wealth today, since I am so sinful! May I never again think sinfully of giving suffering to *brāhmaṇas*, *devatās* or cows!

COMMENTARY

May my intelligence not cause suffering to the *brāhmaṇas* and *devatās*.

|| 1.19.4 ||

*sa cintayann ittham athāśṛṇod yathā
muneḥ sutokto nirṛtis takṣakākhyāḥ |
sa sādhu mene na cireṇa takṣakā-
nalaṁ prasaktasya virakti-kāraṇam ||*

TRANSLATION

As he was thus thinking, he heard about how he would die from the bite of Takṣaka because of the curse issued by the sage's son. He considered it beneficial that soon the fire of Takṣaka would be the cause of detachment from material life.

COMMENTARY

He heard how he would die from Takṣaka in seven days as pronounced by the son of the sage, from a student called Gauramukha sent by Śamīka. "O King! Hearing about the curse made by his ignorant son, regretting it repeatedly, our *guru* scolded his son and not seeing any remedy, fell into grief. Full of suffering he sent me to you with a message. Understanding this, the King should make preparations for departing." When the messenger had departed, the King wanted to go there to beg forgiveness for his offense, but considering that the sage would be embarrassed, and also because he did not desire negation of the curse, he did not go. He considered the fiery poison of Takṣaka beneficial because it would produce detachment from all his attachments.

|| 1.19.5 ||

*atho vihāyemam amuṁ ca lokaṁ
vimarśitau heyatayā purastāt |
kṛṣṇāṅghri-sevām adhimanyamāna
upāviśat prāyam amartya-nadyām ||*

TRANSLATION

Having previously concluded that both were to be rejected — giving up this world and Svarga — *and* thinking that service to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet was the highest goal, he sat down with a vow of not eating on the bank of the Gaṅgā.

COMMENTARY

How did he give up the goals of this world and the next? Previously before the curse, he had already concluded that both should be rejected. Then, thinking that service to the Lord’s feet was supreme among all goals (*adhi*), he sat down with the vow of not eating (*prāyam*).

|| 1.19.6 ||

*yā vai lasac-chrī-tulasī-vimiśra-
kṛṣṇāṅghri-reṇv-abhyadhikāmbu-netrī|
punāti lokān ubhayatra seśān
kas tām na seveta marīṣyamāṇaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Who at the point of death would not serve the Gaṅgā who, carrying water made excellent by the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet mixed with beautiful *tulasī*, purifies the worlds along with their leaders inside and outside, above and below?

COMMENTARY

The Gaṅgā is described. She carries (*netrī*) most excellent (*abhyadhika*) water. The water purifies internally and externally, above and below.

|| 1.19.7 ||

*iti vyavacchidya sa pāṇḍaveyaḥ
prāyopaveśam prati viṣṇu-padyām|
dadhau mukundāṅghrim ananya-bhāvo
muni-vrato mukta-samasta-saṅgaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Making this decision to sit without eating on the bank of the Gaṅgā, Parīkṣit, without thoughts of other processes or deities, peaceful, and free of all material attachments, concentrated on the feet of Mukunda.

COMMENTARY

Deciding (*vyavacchidya*) to sit and fast, he did not think of *karma*, *jñāna* or other deities (*ananya-bhāvaḥ*).

|| 1.19.8 ||

*tatropajagmur bhuvanam punānā
mahānubhāvā munayaḥ sa-śiṣyāḥ |*

*prāyena tīrthābhigamāpadeśaiḥ
svayaṁ hi tīrthāni punanti santaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Noble-minded sages who purify the world came along with their disciples to see Parīkṣit there on the pretext of visiting a holy place. The devotees, being holy places personified, actually purify the holy places.

COMMENTARY

The sages came to see Parīkṣit, not to bathe, since they were already pure. “But they are seen to visit holy places.” This is only a pretext (*prāyena*). They had understood that seeing Parīkṣit was superior to seeing the holy places. Understanding suddenly by their omniscience that they could not taste astonishing bliss in any other way, they came to drink the sweetness of the *Bhāgavatam*.

|| 1.19.9-10 ||

*atrir vasiṣṭhaś cyavanaḥ śaradvān
ariṣṭanemir bhṛgur aṅgirās ca |
parāśaro gādhi-suto 'tha rāma
utathya indrapramadaḥ subāhuḥ ||*

*medhātithir devala ārṣṭiṣeṇo
bhāradvājo gautamaḥ pippalādaḥ |
maitreya aurvaḥ kavaṣaḥ kumbhayonir
dvaipāyano bhagavān nāradaś ca ||*

TRANSLATION

Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Śaradvān, Ariṣṭameni, Bhṛgu, Aṅgirās, Parāśara, Viśvamitra, Paraśurāma, Utathya, Indrapramada, Subāhu, Medhātithi, Devala, Ārṣṭiṣeṇa, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurava, Kavaṣa, Agastya, Vyāsa and Nārada came there.

|| 1.19.11 ||

*anye ca devarṣi-brahmarṣi-varyā
rājarṣi-varyā aruṇādayaś ca |
nānārṣeya-pravarān sametān
abhyarcya rājā śirasā vavande ||*

TRANSLATION

Other exalted sages among the *devatās*, sages of great penance, sages among kings and Aruṇas also came. Welcoming the best of sages, the king bowed his head.

COMMENTARY

Aruṇas are certain sages who are expert in certain parts of the Vedas.

|| 1.19.12 ||

*sukhopaviṣṭeṣv atha teṣu bhūyaḥ
kṛta-praṇāmaḥ sva-cikīrṣitaṁ yat |
vijñāpayāṁ āsa vivikta-cetā
upasthito 'gre 'bhigrhīta-pāṇiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When they were all comfortably seated, standing in front of them, with pure heart and folded hands, he again offered respects and inquired from them concerning what he wanted to do.

COMMENTARY

Abhigrhīta-pāṇiḥ means “with folded hands.”

|| 1.19.13 ||

*rājovāca—
aho vyaṁ dhanyatamā nṛpāṇāṁ
mahattamānugrahaṇīya-śilāḥ |
rājñāṁ kulāṁ brāhmaṇa-pāda-śaucād
dūrād viṣṭam bata garhya-karma ||*

TRANSLATION

The King said: Oh! We are most fortunate among kings since we have been qualified for mercy of the great sages. The family of kings is generally cast off at a great distance from the foot washing place of the *brāhmaṇas*, since they are involved in impure activities.

COMMENTARY

The King expresses appreciation for the natural compassion towards him that he sees in the sages. We, among kings, are worthy of being blessed by the great souls. This is rare for kings. *Smṛti* says *dūrād ucchiṣṭa-viṇ-mūtra-pādāmbhāṁsi samutsṛjet*: one should keep at a distance leftover food, excrement, urine and foot water. (*Yājñavalkya-smṛti* 1.154) The family of kings is kept at a great distance even from the foot washing place in the hermitage and are not given even permission to remain there. This is because their actions are completely impure.

|| 1.19.14 ||

*tasyaiva me 'ghasya parāvareṣo
vyāsakta-cittasya grheṣv abhīkṣṇam |
nirveda-mūlo dvija-śāpa-rūpo
yatra prasakto 'bhayam āśu dhatte ||*

TRANSLATION

For me, whose impure action was the sin of disrespecting an innocent *brāhmaṇa*, and whose heart was very attached to family life, the Lord has come in the form of the *brāhmaṇa*'s curse, which has become the cause of detachment from material life. By the Lord's presence the attached person quickly becomes fearless.

COMMENTARY

Impure action (*tasya eva*) was in my case a great sin (*aghasya*), since I disrespected the *brāhmaṇa* by putting a snake around his neck. The Lord (*parāvareśaḥ*—the Lord who is distant and near) in order to show how he delivers the most fallen, has come in the form of the curse of the *brāhmaṇa* to my side. He is the cause of detachment from the world (*nirveda-mūlaḥ*). Masculine form of *mūlam* instead of neuter form is poetic license. He infers that the cause of detachment is the coming of the great sages, for where the Lord comes, there his devotees naturally come. Where the Lord resides, materially attached people quickly become fearless.

|| 1.19.15 ||

*taṁ mopayātaṁ pratiyantu viprā
gaṅgā ca devī dhṛta-cittam īse |
dvijopasṛṣṭaḥ kuhakas takṣako vā
daśatv alam gāyata viṣṇu-gāthāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The *brāhmaṇas* and Gaṅgā-devī should know that I am surrendered, and have dedicated my heart to the Lord. Let the snake released by the *brāhmaṇa*, even if it is an imposter, bite me. Please sing topics concerning the Lord.

COMMENTARY

He prays to the sages in two verses. *Mā* means “me.” The sages should know that I am surrendered. Gaṅgā as a *devatā* (*devī*) should also know this. *Vā* indicates his disregard for countermeasures. *Gāthāḥ* means stories.

|| 1.19.16 ||

*punaś ca bhūyād bhagavaty anante
ratiḥ prasaṅgaś ca tad-āśrayeṣu |
mahatsu yām yām upayāmi sṛṣṭim
maitry astu sarvatra namo dvijebhyaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

On the other hand, in whatever birth I receive, may I have *rati* for the unlimited Lord, excellent association with his devotees who take shelter of him and friendship with all living beings! I offer respects to the *brāhmaṇas*.

COMMENTARY

Punar ca means “on the other hand.” In whatever birth I take, may I have *rati* for the Lord and excellent association (*prasāṅgaḥ*) with his devotees, and friendship with all living entities! May these three desires be fulfilled! After praying for these, he then offers his respects. Or offering respects can be considered a fourth wish, out of repentance for disrespecting a *brāhmaṇa*. May I have respect for the *brāhmaṇas*! (*dvijebhyaḥ namo bhūyāt*).

|| 1.19.17 ||

*iti sma rājādhyavasāya-yuktaḥ
prācīna-mūleṣu kuṣeṣu dhīraḥ |
udañ-mukho dakṣiṇa-kūla āste
samudra-patnyāḥ sva-suta-nyasta-bhāraḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Having decided in this way the wise King, entrusting the country to his son, sat down facing north on *kuśa* grass with tips facing east, on the right bank of the river.

COMMENTARY

Samudra-patnyāḥ means “of the Gaṅgā.”

|| 1.19.18 ||

*evam ca tasmin nara-deva-deve
prāyopaviṣṭe divi deva-saṅghāḥ |
praśasya bhūmau vyakiran prasūnair
mudā muhur dundubhayaś ca neduḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When the best of the kings sat fasting, the *devatās* in the sky showered the earth with flowers in praise and continually drums sounded in joy.

COMMENTARY

Vyakiran means that they made a shower. The drums sounded spontaneously (*neduḥ*) by themselves.

|| 1.19.19 ||

*maharṣayo vai samupāgatā ye
praśasya sādhu ity anumodamānāḥ |
ūcuḥ prajānugraha-śīla-sārā
yad uttama-śloka-guṇābhirūpam ||*

TRANSLATION

Because the great sages gathered there had the quality and ability to give mercy to the citizens, they approved of his decision by praising it, and spoke to the King who was beautiful with the qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

Because they had the quality and ability to give mercy to the people (*yad prajānugraha -śīla-sārāḥ*), they approved of his decision; they spoke to the King who was beautiful (*anurūpam*) with the qualities of Kṛṣṇa. Or they said that he would have qualities like those of Kṛṣṇa.

|| 1.19.20 ||

*na vā idam rājarṣi-varya citram
bhavatsu kṛṣṇam samanuvrateṣu |
ye 'dhyāsanam rāja-kirīta-juṣṭam
sadyo jahur bhagavat-pārśva-kāmāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O best of kings! It is not surprising that those desiring to associate with the Lord, born in the Pāṇḍava family and devoted solely to Kṛṣṇa, immediately gave up the royal throne served by kings' crowns.

COMMENTARY

This refers to Yudhiṣṭhira and his family.

|| 1.19.21 ||

*sarve vyaṁ tāvad ihāmahe 'tha
kalevaram yāvad asau vihāya |
lokam param virajaskam viśokam
yāsyaty ayaṁ bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

We will all remain here until the King, the best of the devotees, gives up his body and attains the supreme planet which is without grief and passion.

COMMENTARY

Hearing the resolve of the king, they express their resolve to the king. They consulted each other and spoke this verse.

|| 1.19.22 ||

*āśrutya tad ṛṣi-gaṇa-vacaḥ parīkṣit
samaṁ madhu-cyud guru cāvyaḥ |
ābhāṣatainān abhinandya yuktān
śuśrūṣamāṇaś caritāni viṣṇoḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Hearing the words of the sages, which were impartial, flowing with nectar, profound in meaning and true, he then spoke with a desire to hear about the activities of the Lord after offering respect to the sages.

COMMENTARY

Samam means “impartial.” This is expressed when they said, “We will remain here.” The words were flowing with honey when they praised him as the best of the devotees. The words were profound because they mentioned the planet devoid of passion (not directly saying the Lord’ planet). The words were true because they said he would attain the planet of the Lord. Hearing these four types of statements, he offered respects to them. *Virajaska-lokam* means the planet of the Lord. He would attain only the planet of the Lord. This is understood from the phrases in the previous verse (verse 20). *Bhavatsu kṛṣṇam samanuvrateṣu*: the Pāṇḍavas were dedicated only to the Lord. *Bhagavat-pārśva-kāmā*: they desired association with the Lord.

|| 1.19.23 ||

*samāgatāḥ sarvata eva sarve
vedā yathā mūrti-dharās tri-prṣṭhe |
nehātha nāmutra ca kaścanārtha
ṛte parānugraham ātma-śīlam ||*

TRANSLATION

You who have gathered here from many places are full knowledge like the Vedas situated in Satya-loka, above the three worlds. And you have no goal except to give mercy to others in this world and in the next. Actually that is your very nature.

COMMENTARY

You are like the Vedas situated in Satya-loka (*tri-prṣṭhe*). Having spoken of their great knowledge, he speaks of their great mercy. You have no goal except to give mercy to others. Is that their goal? No, it is their nature.

|| 1.19.24 ||

*tataś ca vaḥ pṛcchyaṃ imāṃ vipṛcche
viśrabhya viprā iti kṛtyatāyām |
sarvātmanā mriyamāṇaiś ca kṛtyaṃ
śuddhaṃ ca tatrāmṛśatābhiyuktāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇas*! I thus ask about your mercy. That should be determined. Since I have develop faith in your mercy, please consider and tell me in common agreement what is the pure activity, though there are many duties to be

performed and many duties for those who are dying.

COMMENTARY

I ask about your mercy---what form will it take? This should be asked; it should be determined (*prcchyam*). Since I have develop faith in that (*viśrabhya*), decide with common agreement (*sarvātmanā*), after considering the pure activity for me, though there are many duties to be done in austerity, *yoga* or *jñāna* (*itīkṛtyatāyām*) and many duties to be done for those who are dying. Decide and tell me (*āmṛṣataḥ*).

|| 1.19.25 ||

*tatrābhavad bhagavān vyāsa-putro
yadṛcchayā gām aṭamāno 'napekṣaḥ |
alakṣya-liṅgo nija-lābha-tuṣṭo
vṛtaś ca bālair avadhūta-veṣaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The great son of Vyāsa, Śukadeva, wandering the earth as he pleased, ignoring everyone, without indications of any *āśrama*, satisfied with his own attainment, wearing discarded cloth, and surrounded by children, arrived at that time.

COMMENTARY

While the various sages, without agreement about the various processes of sacrifice, *yoga*, austerity, and charity, desired the appearance of Śukadeva in their minds, and were glancing at the path with their eyes, Śukadeva arrived.

|| 1.19.26 ||

*taṁ dvyāṣṭa-varṣaṁ su-kumāra-pāda-
karoru-bāhv-aṁsa-kapola-gātram |
cārv-āyatākṣonnasa-tulya-karṇa-
subhrv-ānanam kambu-sujāta-kaṇṭham ||*

TRANSLATION

He was sixteen years old, with tender feet, hands, thighs, arms, shoulders, and forehead. His face had beautiful, long eyes, raised nose, symmetrical ears, and shapely eyebrows. His throat was as beautiful as a conch.

COMMENTARY

He was sixteen. His face had beautiful, long eyes and raised nose. His ears were equal, not irregularly long or short. His eyebrows were beautiful. This was the appearance of his face. His throat was beautiful like a conch with three lines.

|| 1.19.27 ||

nigūḍha-jatruṁ pṛthu-tuṅga-vakṣasam

*āvarta-nābhim vali-valgūdaram ca |
dig-ambaram vaktra-vikīrṇa-keśam
pralamba-bāhum svamarottamābham ||*

TRANSLATION

His collar bone was well covered. His chest was broad and high. His navel was like a whirlpool. His abdomen was beautiful, indented with three horizontal lines. The directions were his clothing (. His hair was scattered on his face. His arms reached his knees. His complexion was that of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY

His collar bone (*jatrum*) was fleshy. His complexion was equal to that of Kṛṣṇa, best among the *devas* (*su amara*).

|| 1.19.28 ||

*śyāmam sadāpīvya-vayo-'nga-lakṣmyā
strīṇām mano-jñam rucira-smitena |
pratyutthitās te munayaḥ svāsanebhyas
tal-lakṣaṇa-jñā api gūḍha-varcasam ||*

TRANSLATION

He was dark in complexion, attractive to women with his pleasant smile, his bodily features and his attractive youthfulness. Though his splendor was covered, the sages, knowing the symptoms of a great person, rose from their seats to welcome him.

COMMENTARY

He was attractive to women because of his natural smile, the beauty of his limbs, and his ideal age, which was fixed (*sadā*) at new youth (sixteen years). Seeing him, even though his splendor was covered, the sages recognized him.

|| 1.19.29 ||

*sa viṣṇu-rāto 'tithaya āgatāya
tasmai saparyām śirasājahāra |
tato nivṛttā hy abudhāḥ striyo 'rbhakā
mahāsane sopaviveśa pūjitaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

When his guest arrived, Parīkṣit worshipped him with bowed head. The ignorant women and children disappeared. In the worship, Śukadeva sat on a huge seat.

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit (*viṣṇurātaḥ*) worshipped him while bowing with his head. The women and children then disappeared. Śukadeva sat on a huge throne which was offered

as part of the worship. The *sandhi* in *sopaviveśa* is poetic license.

|| 1.19.30 ||

*sa samvṛtas tatra mahān mahīyasām
brahmarṣi-rājarṣi-devarṣi-saṅghaiḥ |
vyarocatālam bhagavān yathendur
graharkṣa-tārā-nikaraiḥ parītaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

The greatest among the great, Śukadeva, seated there, surrounded by the crowd of sages among *brāhmaṇas*, sages among kings and sages among *devatās* shone like the moon surrounded by groups of planets, constellations, and stars.

COMMENTARY

There, sitting on the throne, Śukadeva, greatest among the great, surrounded by the sages, shone like the moon surrounded by the planets and stars. The planets are Venus and others. The constellations are Aśvini and others. The stars are all other luminaries in the sky. *Brahmarṣis* are headed by Vaśiṣṭha. *Rājarṣis* are headed by Ārṣṭiṣeṇa. *Devarṣis* are headed by Nārada.

|| 1.19.31 ||

*praśāntam āsīnam akunṭha-medhasam
munim nṛpo bhāgavato 'bhyupetya |
praṇamya mūrdhnāvahitaḥ kṛtāñjalir
natvā girā sūnṛtayānvapṛcchat ||*

TRANSLATION

The devotee King, approaching the sage peacefully sitting with unlimited knowledge, offered his respects with his head, folded his hands, again offered respects and then inquired with sweet words.

COMMENTARY

To ask a question he again offered respects. With sweet (*sūnṛtayā*) words he asked Śukadeva who had unlimited intelligence in all subjects (*akunṭha-medhasam*).

|| 1.19.32-33 ||

*parīkṣid uvāca—
aho adya vyaṁ brahman sat-sevyāḥ kṣatra-bandhavaḥ |
kṛpayātithi-rūpeṇa bhavadbhis tīrthakāḥ kṛtāḥ ||
yeṣāṁ saṁsmaraṇāt puṁsāṁ sadyaḥ śuddhyanti vai grhāḥ |
kim punar darśana-sparśa-pāda-śaucāsanādibhiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Parīkṣit said: O *brāhmaṇa*! Today we low *kṣatriyas* have become respected by the saints because we have been purified by your coming as a guest out of your mercy. Simply from remembering you, men's houses even become immediately purified. What to speak of seeing, touching, washing your feet and giving you a seat!

COMMENTARY

Parīkṣit speaks in eight verses. O *brāhmaṇa*! We low *kṣatriyas* have become respected by the saints because we have been purified (*tīrthakāḥ kṛtāḥ*) by your coming as a guest. By remembering you, or by being remembered by you, our houses become purified, what to speak of the bodies of our wives and sons.

|| 1.19.34 ||

*sānnidhyāt te mahā-yogin pātakāni mahānty api |
sadyo naśyanti vai puṁsām viṣṇor iva suretarāḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

O great *yogī*! The greatest sins are destroyed immediately by closeness to you, just as the demons are destroyed by closeness to the Lord.

|| 1.19.35 ||

*api me bhagavān prītaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ pāṇḍu-suta-priyaḥ |
paitṛ-śvasreya-prīty-arthaṁ tad-gotrasyātta-bāndhavaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Because of affection for his cousins the Pāṇḍavas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, dear to the Pāṇḍavas, has shown friendship with me, their descendent, by sending you.

COMMENTARY

Paternal cousins of Kṛṣṇa were the Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa has made friendship with me belonging to that family. You have been sent by him to deliver me.

|| 1.19.36 ||

*anyathā te 'vyakta-gate darśanaṁ naḥ kathaṁ nṛṇām |
nitarām mriyamāṇānām samsiddhasya vanīyasaḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Otherwise how is it possible that men like us at the moment of death can see a perfected being like you, whose movements are unknown, and is most munificent?

COMMENTARY

Vanayitā is one who is requested (and grants) benedictions. Superlative is

vanayitr̥tamaḥ. This becomes *vanīyas* by the rule *tu iṣṭhemeyaḥsu*: the affix *tr̥* is elided before the affixes *iṣṭan*, *imanic* and *īyāsun* (*īyās*) (Pāṇini 6.4.154) *Vanīyasaḥ* means “of the most generous.” Because he is so generous he will say, “Please ask me.”

|| 1.19.37 ||

*ataḥ pṛcchāmi saṁsiddhim yoginām paramam gurum |
puruṣasyeha yat kāryam mriyamāṇasya sarvathā ||*

TRANSLATION

I ask the supreme *guru* of the *yogīs* “What is complete perfection and what is to be done at all times for attaining that perfection for a man about to die?”.

COMMENTARY

I ask about the complete perfection (*saṁsiddhim*) and I ask the *sādhana* to be performed at all times for that perfection.

|| 1.19.38 ||

*yac chrotavyam atho japyam yat kartavyam nṛbhiḥ prabho |
smartavyam bhajanīyam vā brūhi yad vā viparyayam ||*

TRANSLATION

O master! Please tell me what men must hear, chant, remember and worship, or what they should not hear, chant, remember or worship.

COMMENTARY

Here he is more specific. *Kartavyam* should follow each of the four items. Tell me what men must hear among things worthy hearing, what they must chant among things worthy chanting, what they must remember among things worthy remembering, and what they must worship among things worth worshipping. *Viparyayam* means tell me what must not be heard, chanted, remembered or worshipped.

|| 1.19.39 ||

*nūnam bhagavato brahman grheṣu grha-medhinām |
na lakṣyate hy avasthānam api go-dohanam kvacit ||*

TRANSLATION

O *brāhmaṇa*! You do not stay in the houses of attached householders even for the time it takes to milk a cow.

COMMENTARY

Since it will be very rare to see you again, you should tell me everything now. You stay not even for the time it takes to milk a cow (*go-dohanam*).

|| 1.19.40 ||

sūta uvāca—

*evam ābhāṣitaḥ pṛṣṭaḥ sa rājñā ślakṣṇayā girā |
pratyabhāṣata dharma-jño bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ ||*

TRANSLATION

Sūta said: Being addressed and questioned by the King with sweet words, the great son of Vyāsa, knower of *dharma*, began to answer.

COMMENTARY

Ślakṣṇayā girā means “by sweet words.”