

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)

The Story of the Fortunate One



Canto 8

Translated by Anand Aadhar

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CANTO 8:

Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations

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Introduction

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

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

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



or fortunate. The word *bhāga* means fortune or luck, while the term *bhaga* refers to gracious lord, happiness and wealth. To be fortunate Vedicly means to be of the opulence, or to carry, or live by, the fullness of God's riches, beauty, fame, power, knowledge and detachment.

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

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

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

The purpose of the translation is first of all to make this glorious text available to a wider audience over the Internet. Since the Bible, the Koran and numerous other holy texts are readily available, the translator, the undersigned, meant that this book could not stay behind on the shelf of his own bookcase as a token of material possessive-

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

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

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

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With love and devotion,
[Anand Aadhar Prabhu](#),
 Sakhya Devi Dāsī,
 Enschede, The Netherlands, January 24, 2024.

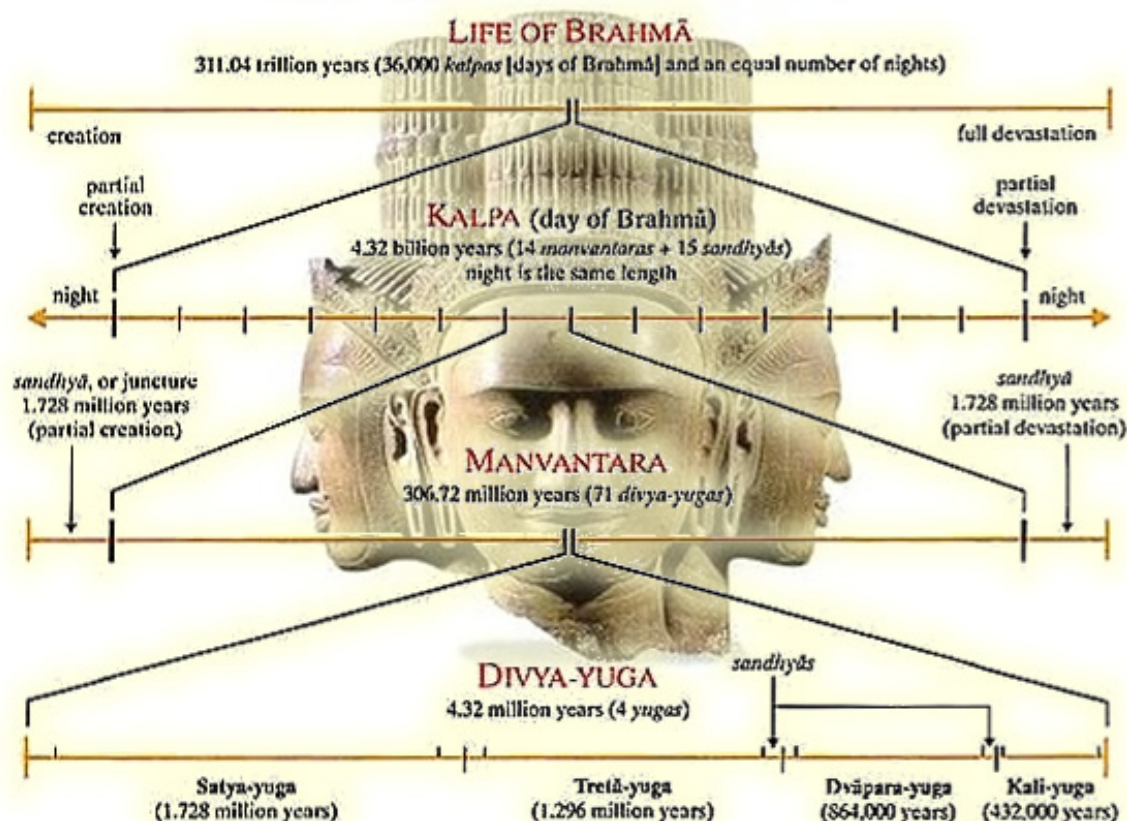
Chapter 1

The Manus, Administrators of the Universe

(1) **T**he honorable king [Parīkṣit] said: 'Oh guru, thus far I extensively heard about the dynasty of Svāyambhuva Manu wherein the great rulers of the universe have contributed to the creation. Can you please also describe the other Manus to us [see also 3.11: 23-28]? (2) Oh brahmin, the scholars speak about the appearances and activities of the Supreme, Glorified Lord during the *manvantaras* [the periods of the Manus*, see also 2.1: 36, 2.3: 9, 2.7: 2, 2.10: 4]. Can you please also describe these to us, your eager listeners? (3) As for the past, the present and the future, oh brahmin, what are for each particular era the activities that

the Supreme Lord, the creator of this universe, was engaged in, is now engaged in and will be engaged in [compare B.G. 2: 12 and **]?'

(4) **T**he great *ṛṣi* said: 'This day of Brahmā [*kalpa*] six Manus have passed: Svāyambhuva and five others. I already described the period of the first one [Svāyambhuva] including the divine personalities who appeared during that time [see 2.7: 43-45, 3.12: 54, 4.1 and 4.8: 6]. (5) From Ākūti and Devahūti, two daughters of [Svāyambhuva] Manu, sons were born [Yajña and Kapila] known as [incarnations of] the Supreme Lord for [respectively] instructing dharma and *jñāna* [spiritual knowledge]. (6) Kapila I have fully described to you [see Canto 3b], let me now tell you everything that Yajña[mūrti or Yajñapati] did, oh best of the Kurus. (7) The master of the world [Svāyambhuva Manu], the husband of Śatarūpā, detached from enjoying his senses, after renouncing his kingdom, went together with his wife into the forest



for doing his *tapas* [see 3.22: 31]. (8) At the river Sunandā he performed for a hundred years the severest austerities, in which he on one leg touching the earth [see also 4.8: 78-79] murmured the following, oh scion of Bhārata.

(9) **L**ord Manu said: 'He by whom this entire universe is set in motion, is not moved by the universe himself. He who is always awake while one is asleep in this body, He, the One knowing, is not known by the living entity itself [see also B.G. 18: 55]. (10) One may enjoy that what is allotted by Him, the Supersoul who is present everywhere with everything and everyone in the universe, but one should not covet the wealth of others. (11) He whose eye sees all and who is not seen by the living entity, He, the original source of all beings who knows no diminution, is the godhead and companion [see 6.4: 24] everyone should worship. (12) There is no beginning, no end, nor a middle to Him, no one is his friend or foe. He is not [just] the inside nor [just] the outside of the cosmic creation. All these [aspects] of Him and the universe originating from Him, together constitute the Complete Reality [*Oṃ pūrṇam*, see also the Śrī Īsopaniṣad and 2.1: 24]. (13) That assemblage of the universe known by many names [like *puruṣa* and *virāt-rūpa*] is the Supreme Master, the Ultimate Truth of His person, the unborn self-effulgent one who is the oldest. By means of His external energy He gives rise to birth, death and maintenance, while He remains aloof, inactive and untouched by dint of His spiritual potency [compare 1.7: 23]. (14) For the purpose of being freed from karma [fruitive labor] all sages therefore to begin with request [people] to engage in [nonprofit, charitable, voluntary] activities [in *karma yoga*]. A person thus engaged almost always will become indifferent [about performing work with an ulterior motive, see also 1.5: 12, 1.2: 13 and B.G. 3: 9, 6: 3, 3: 6]. (15) Because He in His completeness is fully satisfied from within, the Supreme Lord, the Master [of yoga], never gets entangled in the matters He is engaged in, and that is why people who follow Him never get discouraged. (16) I surrender myself to Him who, free from selfhood, acts to our benefit, to Him who is complete in His knowledge, He who has no desire to enjoy, is fulfilled and is

not led by others. I offer my obeisances to that master of all principles and duties who is there to instruct all of mankind and map out His path.'

(17) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'When the Asuras saw how he [Svāyambhuva Manu] concentrated his mind with the philosophical mantras, the evil spirits chased him in order to devour him. (18) But Yajña [Viṣṇu], the Supreme Personality, the Lord in the heart of everyone, saw what the Asuras had in mind and killed them. Thereafter He ruled the heavenly worlds surrounded by the gods [named] the Yāmas [the ones sworn, His sons].

(19) **S**vārociṣa, the son of Agni became the second Manu. From his loins the sons headed by Dyumat, Suṣeṇa and Rociṣmat were born. (20) In that period [of Manu] Rocana [the son of Yajña] became the king of heaven [the Indra], Tuṣita and others faithful to the Absolute Truth were the gods, while Ūrja, Stambha and others were the seven sages. (21) From the saint Vedaśirā, impregnating his wife Tuṣitā, the Lord was born who is known as Vibhu. (22) From Him remaining a celibate *brahmacārī*, eighty-eight thousand saintly persons fixed in that vow took initiation and instruction.

(23) **T**he third Manu was named Uttama, he was a son of Priyavrata [see 5.1] and from him the sons called Pavana, Sṛñjaya, Yajñahotra and others were born. (24) The seven sages [during his reign] were the sons of Vasiṣṭha headed by Pramada. The Satyas, Vedaśrutas and Bhadras were the gods and Satyajit was the Indra. (25) [In this *manvantara*] the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead celebrated as Satyasena, was born from the womb of Sūnṛtā and the demigod Dharma. He appeared together with the Satyavratas. (26) He together with his friend Satyajit [as the Indra] killed all the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, the sworn liars and evil spirits, who with their misconduct constantly harassed the living beings.

(27) **T**he fourth Manu was the brother of Uttama known by the name of Tāmasa. He fathered ten sons headed by Pṛthu, Khyāti, Nara and Ketu. (28) The Satyakas, the Haris and the Vīras were the gods, Triśikha was the king of heaven and the sev-

en sages during the reign of Tāmasa were headed by Jyotirdhāma. (29) The [other] gods were called the Vaidhṛtis. They were the sons of Vidhṛti, oh King, who by their own strength managed to protect the Vedas that over time had been lost. (30) In that period the Supreme Lord appeared who was begotten by Harimedhā in the womb of Hariṇī. He was called Hari. Gajendra, the king of the elephants, was freed by Him from the mouth of a crocodile.'

(31) **T**he honorable king [Parīkṣit] said: 'Oh son of Vyāsa, we would like to hear from you how the king of the elephants who was harassed by a crocodile, was delivered by the Lord. (32) Whenever and wherever there are the narrations in which Hari, the Supreme Personality, Uttamaśloka [the Lord Praised in the Verses] is glorified, great piety, fortune, auspiciousness and virtue are found.' "

(33) **Śrī** Sūta said: "By the words of Parīkṣit, who awaited his impending death, thus being encouraged to speak, dear brahmins, the son of Vyāsa, after complimenting him, spoke with great pleasure to the sages who had assembled there to listen to him."

*: There are fourteen Manus during a day of Brahmā, and the age of each Manu lasts for seventy-one *yugas* (see picture). Thus there are thousands of Manus during the life of Brahmā. The six mentioned here are: Svāyambhuva, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata and Cākṣuṣa. A *manvantara* is a period to the measure of one cycle of the sun around the centre of our galaxy [see the Galactic Order].

** : Often quoted in this context is the dictum: '*nityo nityānāṁ cetanas cetanānām*'. Both the Lord and the living entities are eternal and sentient.

Chapter 2

The Crisis of the Elephant Gajendra

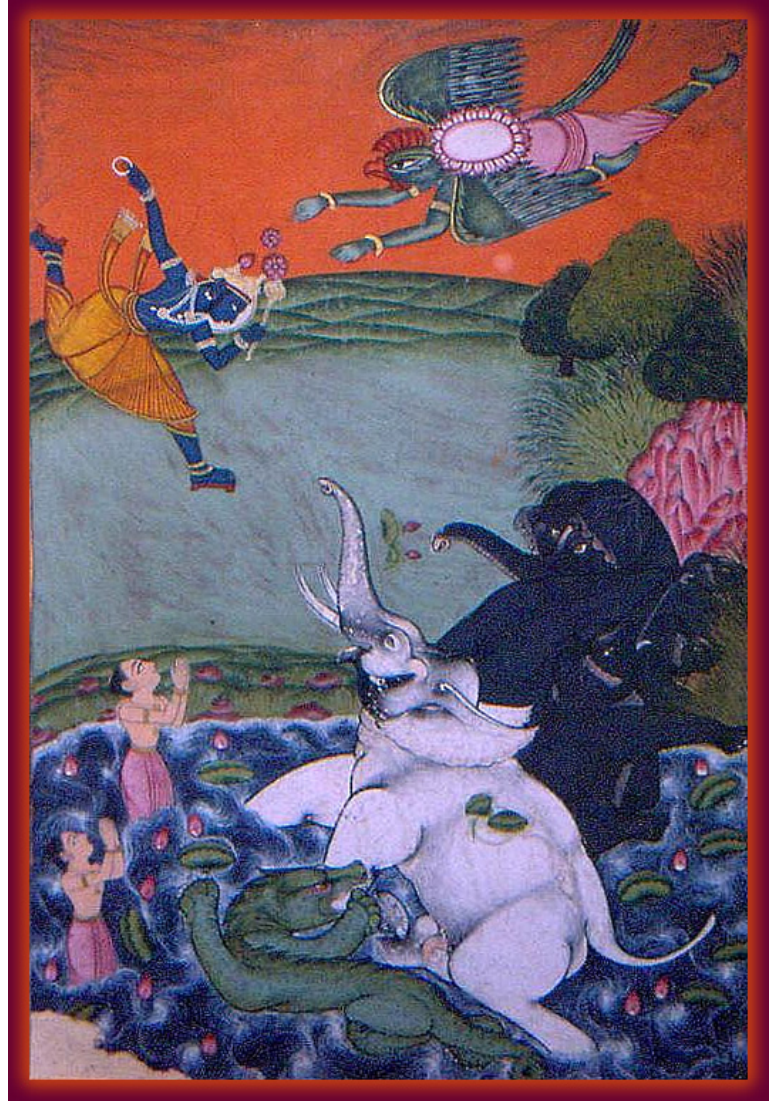
(1) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'Oh King, there was a very big mountain countless miles high, known as Trikūṭa

[three peaks']. It was surrounded by an ocean of milk [or plant-juice see 5.20: 18]. (2-3) With its three peaks full of silver, iron and gold in its circumference being as wide as it was long, it, as an island, lush with trees, creepers and shrubs and the sounds of waterfalls, stood radiant against the sky in every direction, with even more peaks on all sides containing precious stone and minerals. (4) At its foot, being washed by the waves of the sea all around, the earth had turned dark green from green emerald stones. (5) The souls of perfection, the venerable souls, the heavenly singers, the souls of knowledge and the great souls of the world of snakes, the souls of a superhuman nature and the dancing girls, enjoyed it in the valleys there to be engaged in pastimes. (6) The caves there resounded with the sounds of singers, that made the stout lions enviously roar for a mate. (7) The dales harbored great numbers of all thinkable jungle animals and the gardens, that were tended by the enlightened souls living there, were beautifully decorated with all types of trees and chirping birds. (8) In the rivers and lakes filled with crystal clear water, the damsels of the godly souls were bathing who, [entering the water] at the sand banks glittering with gems, enriched the air and the water with the fragrance of their bodies. (9-13) In one valley there was a garden of the great soul, the mighty personality of Varuṇa, that was named Ṛtumat. It was a sporting place of the Sura ladies that everywhere, to honor the divinity, was most beautifully tended with flowers and fruits and mandāra and pārijāta, pāṭala, aśoka and campaka trees. There were fruits like cūtas, piyālas, panasas, mangoes, āmrātakas, kramukas and pomegranates as also coconut and date trees. One found there madhukas, palm trees, tamālas, asanas, arjunas, ariṣṭas, uḍumbaras, plakṣas, banyans, kimśukas and sandelwood trees as also picumarda flowers, kovidāra fruits, sarala- and sura-dāru trees, grapes, sugar cane, bananas, jambu, badarī, akṣa, abhaya and āmalakī fruits. (14-19) In that garden there was a very large lake, full of shining golden lotuses, surrounded by bilva, kapittha, jambīra, bhallātaka and other trees. Next to the great beauty of the kumuda, kahlāra, utpala and śatapatra flowers, the intoxicated bees were humming around accompanied by the most melodious songs of the birds. It was crowded with

swans and kārāṇḍavas, cakrāvakas, flocks of water chickens, koyaṣṭis and dātyūhas who all made their noises. The water, surrounded by kadamba, vetasa, nala, nīpa and vañjulaka flowers, agitated by the movements of the fish and tortoises, stirred the lotuses, so that the pollen falling from them covered the surface. The trees growing on the banks, like kundas, kurubakas, aśokas, śirīṣas, kūṭajas, iṅgudas, kub-jakas, svarṇa-yūthīs, nāgas, punnāgas, jātīs, mallikās, śatapratras, mādhavī-latās, jālakās and others, adorned the place [bearing fruits and flowers] abundantly during all seasons.

(20) **T**he leader of the elephants, who in the company of his wives lived in the forest, one day wandered around on that mountain and [searching for water] broke through many thickets full of thorns, creepers and all kinds of trees and plants. (21) Just his smell was enough to make all the lions and other beasts of prey, the other elephants, the rhinoceroses, big snakes and the white and black camarī deer flee in fear. (22) By his mercy the foxes, boars, buffaloes, bears, porcupines, gopucchās and other deer, wolves, monkeys and small animals like rabbits and such, could freely roam without fear. (23-24)

Dripping from his temples and agitated [in musth] he, surrounded by intoxicated, drinking bees and followed by the other he and she elephants and the young in their midst, made the earth all around the mountain tremble. From a distance smelling the water with the pollen of the lotus flowers carried by the breeze he, with his thirsty company and his vision clouded under the influence, hurried for the bank of that lake. (25) Entering its pellucid, cool water he with his trunk drank his fill from the nectarean lotus pollen mixture, took a good bath and was thus relieved of all fatigue. (26) Drawing the water with his trunk and spraying it over him, he inspired his wives and children also to take a bath and drink. Thus being engaged he, like a concerned householder being overly at-



tached to his family, took under the control of the deluding material world, no heed of any possible danger. (27) Then the lot fell to him that his foot, oh King, right there was caught by a mighty and angry crocodile. The elephant thereupon with all his strength strenuously tried to get out of this dangerous position. (28) When the wives saw that their leader was suddenly attacked and captured, they in shock started to lament. But the other elephants trying to free him from behind, were equally helpless. (29) While the elephant and the crocodile this way were fighting, pulling one another in and out of the water, a thousand years passed in which they both stayed alive. That, oh King, was a thing the immortal souls considered most wonderful. (30) Gajendra, the elephant king, in the period

thereafter more and more lost his strength because of the fatigue of having fought so long against being pulled into the water. The crocodile by contrast, was at home in the water and became more frantic, strong and powerful over the years.

(31) **W**hen Gajendra saw that his life was in danger and that he, by the will of providence, could not free himself from this helpless condition, he thought for a long time and reached the following conclusion: (32) 'Neither all these relatives can deliver me from my distress, nor can I as an elephant expect to be freed by my wives from this fate of being captured tightly by the crocodile [of passion]. I, just like anybody else, therefore have to take shelter of Him who is the transcendence and the refuge of the most exalted souls [compare 7.9: 18]. (33) He, the Lord, protects anyone who is of surrender. He protects those who are afraid of death against the so very strong serpent of time that chases someone endlessly with its terrifying force [see B.G. 11: 32]. I surrender to Him, who is the refuge and for whom even death flees away.'

Chapter 3

Gajendra's Prayers of Surrender

(1) **T**he son of Vyāsa [Śuka] said: 'With that decision he [Gajendra], led by his intelligence, focussed his mind on his heart by reciting a supreme prayer he had practiced in a previous birth [see also B.G. 6: 43-44]. (2) Śrī Gajendra said: 'My obeisances unto the Supreme Godhead who moves this materially controlled existence to consciousness, let me meditate on Him, the original person, the transcendental Lord who is the root cause. (3) The universe rests in Him, exists because of Him and originates from Him, I surrender to Him, that independent Godhead who is our cause and who is transcendental to us. (4) He who from His own energy expanded this cosmic manifestation that sometimes is manifest and sometimes is not visible, in both cases oversees all and everything as the witness. I beg that root Soul, the Supreme Transcendence of the beyond, to protect me! (5) When in due course of time everything in this world has come to naught, when all the worlds

and all their maintainers and directors and everything that was active, has ended, there is a dense and deep darkness, above and beyond which He, the Almighty One, is radiating. (6) When a dancer dances it is difficult to understand the different forms he represents. The same way the gods, the sages and the common creatures cannot understand His movements or express them in words. May He who is so hard to grasp give me protection. (7) The Lord of those who long to see His all-auspicious lotus feet, of those who are free from all attachment, of the great sages who faultless in the forest, highly elevated above the material world practice their vows in accordance with the different spiritual positions in life [the *āśramas*], the Lord of those who are equal and friendly towards all, He is my destination. (8-9) He who is without birth has no karma, no name or a form, and is free from [the basic material] qualities and from faults. He who is the destruction and the creation of this cosmic manifestation, nevertheless by His own potency occasionally engages in [personal] activities [as an *avatāra*]. I offer Him my respects, the transcendental Lord, the Controller, the Supreme Brahman of unlimited potency, who without a form has assumed forms and performed so many wonderful activities. (10) I offer Him my obeisances who is the enlightenment of the soul, the witness present within all, the Supreme Self, Him who defies description and is beyond the mind and even consciousness. (11) For Him who, by learned souls free from material desires, [in devotion] can be reached through the mode of goodness, for the master of emancipation and salvation and bestower of happiness, there is my respectful reverence. (12) I offer my obeisances to the Lord of Peace, the Lord of Equilibrium, who free from the modes assumes the form of the modes in a dangerous or animal appearance [like with Nṛsimha and Varāha]. I dedicate my prayers to the Lord of the diversity of spiritual knowledge. (13) My respects for the knower of the field [see B.G. 13: 1-5], for You the superintendent of all, the witness and the Original Person who are the primal source. You, the origin of the material creation, I offer my obeisances. (14) You are the one whom I respect because You oversee the motives of the senses. You are the source of all forms of belief concerning the apparent reality that one

takes for real because it is a reflection of You. With respect for that reflection my reverence for You. (15) I offer You, the causeless supreme cause of all, my obeisances. You who are the miraculous root cause of all, the science of the sacred tradition and the great ocean, I honor, You the granter of liberation and the shelter of the transcendentalist. (16) I honor Him who is the fire of consciousness hidden in the wood of the modes of nature, Him whose [creative] spirit spurs into action when nature loses its equilibrium, Him who personally reveals Himself to those who gave up on the formal approach because of their spiritual understanding. (17) I offer my obeisances to Him, the immaculacy of infinite mercy, who releases a surrendered animal like me from being entangled. You, the Supreme Unlimited Lord, He who is celebrated as the direct witness within, You who are ever attentive by a single part of Your self [the *Paramātmā*, see also B.G. 10: 42], I offer my respects. (18) You are difficult to attain for everyone who is [overly] attached to his mind and body, to his offspring and relatives, to his home, wealth and support. But for those liberated souls who [absorbed in the soul] are not disturbed by the modes of nature, You are present in the core of the heart [see B.G. 6: 47]. I offer You, on whom one always meditates, You, the reservoir of all spiritual knowledge, You, the Supreme Lord and Con-

troller, my respects. (19) They who desire *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* [the regulation of their civil virtue] worship Him and thus succeed in attaining their desired objective, not to mention other benedictions; He even endows one with an immortal [spiritual] body. May His unlimited mercy bring me salvation [see also 2.3: 10 en 7.9: 27]. (20-21) They who are fully surrendered to the Supreme Lord are, by reciting and hearing about His all-auspicious, wondrous activities, immersed in an ocean of transcendental bliss. With no other but Him as their purpose in life, they do not desire any [other] benediction. He, the eternal and Absolute Spirit of transcendence, the Supreme Master of all great personalities, the unseen Soul above and beyond all who in yoga can be reached [by devotional service] is, because of His subtle and elusive nature, out of reach of the senses. Him the unlimited, all-inclusive origin I worship. (22-24) The different moving and unmoving entities, the Vedic knowledge, the gods, *Brahmā* and the souls belonging to him, as also His less important expansions, were created by the Lord with all their names and forms. Just like sparks that emanate from, and merge with, the fire and rays of light that emanate from and dissolve in the sun, there are similarly, time and again, the manifestations from the basic qualities of nature of creations and creatures of intelligence and mind, senses and



[of the gross and subtle aspect] of the body, that as parts and parcels repeatedly originate from, and merge again with, the Lord. He, [that fire,] is neither a demigod nor a demon, neither a human being nor an animal, He is neither feminine nor masculine, neither neuter nor another kind of creature. He is not the fruitful action nor the mode of nature, neither the manifest nor the non-manifest; He is the conclusion of the exclusion [of this or that, of *neti neti*, see also 7.7: 23]. All hail to Him, the One Unlimited!

(25) **I** do not want to live like this in the world. What is the use of this captivation from within and from without in being born as an elephant? I do not want the misery and destruction because of the time factor. I want to be liberated from that covering of my spiritual existence [see also 1.2: 3, 6.15: 16]! (26) I bow down before the transcendental shelter, the unborn Absolute Spirit who created the universe, who is the universe and who is beyond the universe, who is the knower of the universe and the soul of the universe. (27) The devotees and ascetics who with yoga subdued their karma, see Him, the Lord of Yoga, clearly in their hearts. I offer Him my obeisances. (28) My respects again and again for You, the force of whose threefold energy is formidable, You, the intelligence of the completeness, the Lord of all qualities who shelters the surrendered souls and whose [deluding] potency [of *māyā*] is difficult to overcome [see B.G. 16: 21], You who are unattainable for those on the path of poor sense control. (29) I seek my refuge with Him, the Supreme Lord whose glories are unfathomable, whose Self is not known by the common man and by whose forces and intelligence I have been defeated.'

(30) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Since he with this description was not directed at any particular personal appearance, Gajendra was not approached by any of the diverse appearances of Brahmā's independent demigods. Instead of that choice of gods the Lord in person appeared, because He stands for the complete of them [compare B.G. 7: 20-23 and 9: 23; 4.31: 14]. (31) Hearing his prayer the Lord of all worlds, who understood his plight, then came as fast as He could, together with the denizens of heaven who offered their prayers. Carried by

Garuḍa and equipped with His disc and other weapons, He soon arrived where Gajendra was situated. (32) The moment he, who in the water so violently was captured and was suffering, saw the Lord on the back of Garuḍa with His disc raised in the sky, he lifted his trunk while holding a lotus flower and uttered with difficulty: 'Oh Nārāyaṇa, Teacher of Completeness, oh Supreme Lord, You I offer my obeisances.' (33) Seeing him in pain, the Unborn One, so full of mercy, alighted immediately and saved him with His disc, before the eyes of all the godly souls present, by severing the snout from the crocodile's trunk and pulled Gajendra out of the water.'

Chapter 4

Gajendra Returns to the Spiritual World

(1) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Thereafter [when Gajendra was freed] the gods, the *ṛṣis* and the heavenly singers headed by Brahmā and Śiva, showered flowers to praise that accomplishment of the Lord. (2) The sky vibrated because of the kettledrums, the Gandharvas sang and danced and the saints, the venerable souls and perfected souls offered prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (3-4) That very moment the crocodile assumed the most wonderful form of Hūhū, the best of the Gandharvas who, now that he was freed from a curse pronounced by sage Devala, with his head bowed down began to offer his obeisances to the Supreme Eternal Master Hailed in the Verses and thereafter chanted the glories of His transcendental pastimes and qualities. (5) Enjoying the Lord's grace, he circumambulated Him while offering his respects, whereupon he, being freed from all sin, before the eyes of everyone returned to his abode.

(6) **Gajendra** was because of the touch of the Supreme Lord instantly freed from the ignorance of his state of bondage and acquired the form of the Lord with four arms and yellow garments [*sārūpya-mukti*, see also 3.29: 13]. (7) In his former life he had been born as the best of Dravida-deśa, the king of Pāṇḍya. Known as Indradyumna



he swore by Viṣṇu as his ultimate refuge. (8) [In that life] he, when the time to do penance had arrived, with the greatest care had taken the vow of silence and performed, with matted locks, his austerities in Kulācala [the Malaya hills] where he had his *āśrama*. One day worshiping the Infallible Lord, he was immersed in his love for the Supreme Controller. (9) The renown Agastya, surrounded by his disciples, then on his own initiative arrived there and saw him sitting silently alone in meditation without offering him a respectful welcome. The *ṛṣi* got very angry about it. (10) He then cursed him by saying: 'This degraded soul, so unfriendly and indifferent of mind, despises [me as] a brahmin. May he enter darkness, as a dull-minded elephant.'

(11-12) Śrī Śuka said: 'After thus condemning him, the so very powerful Agastya departed together with his associates, oh King, leaving Indradyumna thinking that to be cursed as a king because of his past deeds was his fate. When he

got born as an elephant the remembrance of his identity was lost, but because he worshiped the Lord by offering prayers, he nevertheless in that elephant's body managed to remember [his past devotion]. (13) After the Lord of the Lotus navel thus had delivered the king of the elephants and He for His wonderful deeds was praised by the Gandharvas, the perfected souls and the sages, he [after first having given a declaration] returned to His heavenly abode sitting on the back of Garuḍa, in the company of him [Indradyumna] who was awarded the position of being His associate.

(14) **W**hat I have described to you, oh great King, concerning the belief in Lord Kṛṣṇa that delivered King Gajendra, promotes those who hear

about it to the heavenly spheres and increases their reputation. It takes away the darkness of the immorality of Kali-yuga [see 1.17: 24-25] and puts an end to bad dreams, oh best of the Kurus. (15) In order to find peace in the morning after waking up from unpleasant dreams, twice-born souls, who are motivated for this blessing, rise early, purify themselves and faithfully chant this story.

(16) **T**his is what the All-pervading Great Lord, being pleased, in the presence of everyone said to Gajendra, oh best of the Kuru dynasty. (17-24) The Supreme Lord said: 'They will be delivered from all their worries who, when they get up at the end of the night, by carefully concentrating their minds remember My forms - the forms of Me and you, the forms of the lake, this hill, these caves and gardens, those of the cane and the bamboos, the groups of trees, these peaks and the abodes of Me as also those of Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva; this ocean of milk, this white island with its bril-

liant luster so dear to Me, My Śrīvatsa mark, Kaustubha jewel, [Vaijayantī] garland, Kaumodakī club, Sudarśana disc and Pāñcajanya conch; Garuḍa, Ananta Śeṣa, My subtle plenary portion the Goddess of Fortune, all who depend on Me, Lord Brahmā, Nārada ṛṣi, Śiva and Prahlāda; My Matsya incarnation, Kūrma, Varāha, the other *avatāras* and the countless number of all My auspicious deeds; the deities of the sun, the moon and the fire, the Omkāra mantra, the Absolute Truth and that what is not manifest [of the universe]; the cows, the brahmins, the eternal dharma, the daughters of Dakṣa, the dutiful wives of the moon god and Kaśyapa, as also the Ganges, the Sarasvatī, the Nandā and the Yamunā, Airāvata [Indra's elephant], Dhruva, the seven so very pious sages and the human beings. (25) My best one, they who offer Me prayers this way when they rise at the end of the night, I will grant the eternal destination when they expire their last breath.'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'After having declared this, Hṛṣīkeśa, to the pleasure of the host of demigods, blew on His conch, the best one of the sea, and climbed on the back of Garuḍa.'

Chapter 5

The Fifth and Sixth Manu and the Prayers of Brahmā with the Suras

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh King, I have described to you this [story], which drives away all impurity, about the action of the Lord delivering the pious Gajendra. Now hear about the time of Raivata Manu. (2) The fifth Manu, known as Raivata, was the brother of Tāmasa and his sons were Bali, Vindhya and others with Arjuna as the eldest one. (3) Vibhu ruled the heavens [as the Indra], oh King, the Bhūtaraṇas and others were the gods and Hiranyaṛomā, Vedaśirā, Ūrdhvaḥ and others were the ṛṣis [the seven sages]. (4) From Śubhra and his wife Vikunṭhā, Vaikunṭha appeared, the Supreme Lord in person, together with the God-conscious followers of the Truth, named the Vaikunṭhas, as His expansions. (5) Just to please the Goddess of Fortune, He upon her request and

to the appreciation of all, built a world free from carelessness, [another] Vaikunṭha. (6) If someone would try to enumerate His exploits, qualities and transcendental glories such a person would count as many transcendental qualities of Viṣṇu as there are particles of dust.

(7) **T**he sixth Manu was Cākṣuṣa, the son of Cakṣu and his sons were Pūru, Pūruṣa, Sudyumna and others after them. (8) Mantradruma was the heavenly king during that period, the gods were the Āpyas and so on and Haviṣmān, Vīraka and others, were the sages, oh King. (9) From Vairāja and his wife Devasambhūti there was in that period a son named Ajita, who was a partial incarnation [an *amśa-avatāra*] of the Lord, the Master of the Universe. (10) When the ocean [of milk] was churned, He, as Kūrma residing in the water in the form of a tortoise, with the left and right movements of Mandara Mountain [on His back], produced the nectar for the Suras.'

(11-12) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'Oh brahmin, for what purpose was the ocean of milk churned with the mountain, why did He reside in the water as a tortoise and what came along with the nectar that the godly souls thus obtained? Please be so kind to describe all these so very wonderful activities of the Supreme Lord. (13) My heart, for so long suffering the misery [of a material existence], is not yet fully satisfied with you describing the glories of the Master of the Devotees.' "

(14) Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: "The great son of Vyāsadeva thus being requested, oh dear twice-born souls, complimented him and began to describe the heroism of the Lord. (15-16) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the godly souls were besieged by the Asuras, who fought them with their sharp edged weapons, the majority of them had fallen [on the battlefield] so that they could not rise to their feet again. Because sage Durvāsā had cursed Indra and his three worlds [*], oh King, they [who had survived] were all poverty-stricken and could not perform the rituals and ceremonies any longer. (17-18) The Suras, the great Indra, Varuṇa and the other demigods who saw what took place, engaged in a discussion but could by themselves not reach

a satisfactory conclusion. They then went to the assembly of Lord Brahmā on top of mount Meru, offered him their obeisances and informed him about it all. (19-20) When the almighty Lord Brahmā, saw how Indra, Vāyu and the rest were bereft of their significance and power of expression and how the three worlds were plunged in ill fortune while the Asuras were flourishing, he focussed his attention by calling to mind the Original Person in the beyond and bright-faced addressed the godly souls: (21) 'I, Lord Śiva, you all, as also all the demons, the human beings, the animals, the trees, the plants, the insects and the germs, all generated from Him, from His partial incarnation [from me] and from all those who are part of me [the sages and such]. Let us all seek our refuge in the Inexhaustible Lord. (22) As for Him no one should be killed or be protected, no one should be neglected or be followed. Nevertheless He, at times [as an *avatāra*] siding with passion, goodness or ignorance, accepts it to be of creation, maintenance and annihilation [see also B.G. 9: 29 and 4: 8]. (23) It is now time to establish, for the welfare of all living beings, His rule of maintenance in the mode of goodness. Let us thus take to the shelter of the Teacher of the Universe. May He so full of affection for His people - us the Suras - bring the good fortune we crave for [see B.G. 14 and 18].'

(24) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Lord of the Veda thus talking to the Suras, oh subduer of the enemies, went together with the gods directly to the abode of [Viṣṇu,] the Invincible One beyond the world of darkness. (25) There, unto Him whose form cannot be seen but about whom one hears in the Veda, the master of the gods ut-

tered the divine prayer the vibrations of which then settled the rule over the senses. (26) Śrī Brahmā said: 'The Unchanging One, the Truth Unlimited, the Original Cause in everyone's heart, the Undiminishing, Inconceivable, Evanescent, Intangible and Indescribable One, the Unsurpassed and Greatest Godhead most desirable, we gods all offer our obeisances [compare 6.3: 20-21 and B.G. 15: 15 and 9: 4]. (27) I seek my refuge in the Supreme Spirit of the life force, mind and intelligence of all living beings, the One ever vigilant to everything objective, the senses and the knowledge, the One immaculate, impartial shelter and light of all the ones in darkness, in Him, the infallible Lord of the ether of all the three *yugas* [in the fourth He is there as His own devotee]. (28) Let us offer our obeisances to the truth of Him, whom one considers the axle of Lord Brahmā's lightning fast revolving sacred wheel of Time with its fifteen spokes [the knowing and working senses and the five airs], three naves [the modes] and eight segments [the five elements, mind, false ego and intelligence] that feed one's thought process [compare 3.21: 18, 7.9: 21, 5.21: 13 and B.G. 18: 61]. (29) He admits to one cause [that of goodness] and is transcendental to the material



darkness. He who is not manifested, cannot be located, is unlimited and beyond all measure, is carried by Garuḍa [the Vedic verses] on his back and is, by the unperturbed and sober person, worshiped with the vehicle of yoga [see also 4.3: 23]. (30) No one can defeat His illusory energy of *māyā*. People in general, being bewildered by that energy, do not understand the real purpose of life. We offer Him our respects who is in control of the self and its material qualities [*māyā*], Him ruling all living beings, who is the transcendental controller equal unto all. (31) You, being present inside and outside and kindly disposed towards us [the gods] who rely on a body created from goodness, cannot [even] be understood by the saints and sages for being this most subtle destination. How then can the demons and atheists who follow a different lead understand [this purpose]? (32) This earth that He created together with the four types of living beings He gave life to [as born from wombs, eggs, moist and seed, see also 2.10: 37-40], constitutes His lotus feet. May He, the Absolute Truth, the independent Supreme Personality, be merciful unto us. (33) The three worlds including all their local rulers flourish on the water that, as His semen, is so powerful in generating all life. May He, the one of the greatest might, be pleased with us. (34) They [the scholars] say that Soma, the moon, is His mind, the strength of the denizens of heaven, of the food grains and of the duration of life. May He, the Supreme Lord who makes the trees and all other living entities grow, may that source of all opulence be happy with us [see also 2.10: 30 and 6.6: 24-26]. (35) The fire that consumes all the elements [of the food] within the stomach and in the depths of the ocean, provides, engaged in ritualistic ceremonies, as His mouth all wealth and Vedic knowledge. May that All-Powerful Lord be pleased with us [see also B.G. 3: 10]. (36) He whose eye became the deity of the sun who leads the God-conscious souls on their threefold Vedic path, who is the gate for the realization of the nectar of eternity, the Absolute Truth and one's liberation, and who also constitutes the cause of one's death, may that All-Powerful Lord be content with us [see also 2.1: 30, B.G. 7: 8, 10: 21 and 11: 19]. (37) By following His life force, His breath in all moving and unmoving living entities, by following that *prāṇa*,

that vital air, as the basic principle like subjects who follow an emperor, one finds all the strength and vitality. May He, the All-powerful Lord be satisfied with us. (38) His ears constitute the different directions, from His heart the [nine] apertures of the body were generated and the navel of the Original Person constitutes the refuge of the ether for the life breath, the senses, the mind and the breathing process of the body. May the Almighty Lord have mercy with us [2.1: 27 and 29]. (39) His strength constitutes the great Indra, His contentment constitutes His servants in all the three worlds, from His anger there is the Master on the Mountain [Lord Śiva] and from His sober mind Viriṇca originated [Lord Brahmā]. From the apertures of His body the mantras sprouted while from His genitals the saints and founding fathers found their existence. May we carry the approval of the Powerful Lord. (40) His chest produced the Goddess of Fortune, His shadow constitutes the ancestors, religion became possible from His front and irreligion found its existence from His back. The higher worlds are there from the top of His head and from His sense enjoyment the dancing girls of heaven are found. May He, the greatest One of all prowess, be pleased with us. (41) The scholars [the brahmins], the Vedic literatures and His confidential knowledge are there from His mouth, the administrators [*kṣatriyas*] with their power are there from His arms, from His thighs there are the traders [the *vaiśyas*, see also 2.1: 37], including their know-how, and from His feet there are the workers [*sūdras*] unconcerned about the Veda. May He, so Supremely Powerful, be satisfied with us all [see also 12.11: 6-8]. (42) Greed is there from His lower lip and affection from His upper lip, from His nose there is the bodily luster and from His touch animalistic love manifested. From His brows there is the Lord of Death [Yamarāja] but from His eyelashes there is eternal Time. May He, the One of all Prowess, be favorably disposed towards us. (43) The material elements, their weaver [*kāla*, time], fruitive labor [*karma*], the modes of nature [the *guṇas*] and the diversity brought about by His creative potency [*yoga-māyā*], constitute a difficult to fathom completeness from which the great sages turn away [in their aversion against the delusional quality of the material world]. May He, the Controller of All and

Everything, be contented with us. (44) Let there be our respectful obeisances unto Him, the Soul of all souls, who, free from endeavoring in not depending on a profit motive, is of peace, unto Him who, just like the ether, does not attach to matters of the external energy that, ruled by the natural modes, stimulates the senses. (45) Can You please show us Your original form so that we see You clearly before us? We, who surrendered ourselves to You, would like to see Your smiling lotus face. (46) Oh Almighty One, You, in different incarnations time after time personally appearing in different forms according to Your desire, engage in uncommon activities because of which You are the Supreme Lord to us [B.G. 4: 7]. (47) For embodied souls who wish to enjoy, there are many obstacles and little results, so that one's actions run futile. But that does not hold for those who are devoted to You. (48) Not even the slightest activity properly performed [for Your sake] is in vain, because being dedicated to the Controller [who is the Time], You are realized as the Original Soul friendly and beneficial to all persons. (49) Just as one by watering the root of a tree also waters the trunk and the branches, it is with the worship of Viṣṇu, the Soul of everyone [see also 4.31: 14]. (50) I offer You my obeisances, oh Lord of Eternity, oh worker of the wonders of a higher existence, oh Controller of the Modes who are now established in goodness.'

*: The story goes: 'While Durvāsā Muni was passing on the road, he saw Indra on the back of his elephant and was pleased to offer Indra a garland from his own neck. Indra, however, being too puffed up, took the garland and placed it without respect for Durvāsā Muni on the trunk of his carrier elephant. The elephant, being an animal, could not understand the value of the garland, and thus the elephant threw the garland between its legs and crushed it. Seeing this insulting behavior Durvāsā Muni immediately cursed Indra to be poverty-stricken, bereft of all material opulence. The demigods, afflicted on the one hand by the fighting demons and on the other hand by the curse of Durvāsā Muni, thus lost all the material opulences in the three worlds.'

Chapter 6

The Suras and Asuras Declare a Truce

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Oh King, the Supreme Lord Hari, the Controller, thus being glorified by the godly souls then appeared before them with an effulgence of a thousand rising suns. (2) For that reason the vision of the demigods was blocked that very moment. They could not see each other any longer, nor see anything in any direction, neither in the sky nor on the land, not to mention the Almighty One Himself. (3-7) The moment the Supreme Lord Viriñca [Brahmā] and Lord Śiva discerned His immaculate appearance that was as beautiful as a dark gem, with [the white of] His eyes as pink as a lotus heart, His yellow silken dress that shone like molten gold, the great beauty and grace of all His limbs, the cheeks of His enchanting face, His smile, His beautiful eyebrows and the attractive arrangement of His jeweled helmet, the decoration of all His ornaments, the light from His earrings, His belt and bangles, His necklace and ankle bells, the Kaustubha gem on His chest that moved with Śrī Lakṣmī, His flower garlands and His *cakra* discus and other weapons pleasing Him in their personal forms, all the immortals together with the Supreme Personality of Destruction [Śiva] prostrated before Him. The master of all the gods [Brahmā], then worshiped Him [as follows].

(8) Śrī Brahmā said: 'The One who never took His birth but always makes His appearance, the One free from the modes of nature, that ocean of bliss beyond all existence, He, smaller than an atom, whose form can never be conceived, You, the Supreme Authority, we time and again offer our obeisances [see also B.G. 4: 6]. (9) This form of You, oh Best of all Persons, is worshipable and auspicious to all who in their yoga practice are striving in accordance with the Vedic directions of the Tantras [specific Vedic treatises]. Oh Supreme Director, we can see both ourselves and the three worlds within You having the form of the universe. (10) This framework of the soul has its beginning in You, its middle in You and its end in You. You, as the beginning, the middle and the end of the universe, are like the earth that is the ruling

element of an earthen pot. (11) This universe entirely depending on You, that You by means of Your deluding material energy have created, this universe that generated from You and of which You are the shelter, You have entered. Developed minds connected to You and who are versed in the scriptures, see from a spiritual perspective that, while [physically speaking] a transformation of the three modes takes place, You nevertheless are not determined by those modes. (12) People who by their practice of yoga are intelligent with the basic qualities of nature, will, so confirm the scholars, attain You the way one obtains fire from wood, the nectar of milk from cows, food grains and water from the earth and a livelihood from endeavoring. (13) Now that we today see You appear before us in the full of Your glory, as the Master with the lotus navel for whom we longed such a long time, we have attained our goal to see the supreme of happiness, like being elephants who, in distress because of a forest fire, reach the water of the Ganges. (14) About what could we inform You who are the witness of all and everything? Please, oh great Soul present within and without, can You for us, the rulers of the entire universe, do that for which we have sought Your lotus feet? (15) I, he from the mountain [Śiva], the enlightened souls and those led by founding fathers like Dakṣa, are like sparks in relation to the fire that You are. How can we independently from You arrive at understanding, oh my Lord? Kindly bestow upon us the good fortune of the mantras for the demigods and the brahmins.'

(16) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'Thus being worshiped by the godly souls led

by Viriñca [Brahmā], He, understanding their hearts, with a voice rumbling like the clouds replied those who with folded hands were holding their breath. (17) Even though the Lord independently could perform the duties of all the God-conscious souls together, He, as their Lord and Master, wanted to enjoy the pastime of churning the ocean and [therefore] spoke to them [as follows]. (18) The Supreme Lord said: 'Listen, oh Brahmā and Śiva, oh gods, to what I am going to tell you. All of you listen attentively, for that will assure you Suras of the ultimate happiness. (19) Just settle temporarily, until you flourish again, for the blessing of a truce with the Daityas and Danavas who presently enjoy a good time. (20) Oh gods, if it is important to one's duties, one should even make terms with one's enemies, like a snake would do with a mouse, depending the position he is in [*]. (21) Forthwith endeavor for producing the nectar, drinking which any living entity in the grip of death can become immortal. (22-33) Cast all kinds of creepers, grasses, vegetables and herbs into the ocean of milk and attentively en-



gage with My help, oh gods, in churning, using Vāsuki [the snake] for the rope and the mountain Mandara for the churning rod. It will engage your Daitya opponents, but you will reap the fruit of that activity [the nectar]. (24) Do not get angry about it, because to engage in peace is the best way to attain all one's goals. Accept therefore everything that the Asuras demand, oh Suras. (25) Do not fear the *kālakūṭa* ['false time'] poison that will appear from the ocean of milk, and take care not to be led by greed, lust or anger with the result of the churning.'

(26) Śrī Śuka said: 'After the Almighty Lord thus had advised the demigods, the Supreme Personality, the Controller moving independently, disappeared from sight, oh King. (27) Upon having offered Him, the Supreme Lord their obeisances, the Great Father and Lord Bhava [Śiva] returned to their abodes. The Suras then approached King Bali. (28) The honorable ruler of the Daityas [King Bali] saw that, even though his captains stood prepared, their [divine] enemies had no plans to fight them and thus he held back. He knew when it was time to fight and when it was time for negotiations. (29) They together approached the son of Virocana [Bali] who sat before them, he who, well protected by the Asura commanders, as the conqueror of all the worlds was blessed with great opulence. (30) The great Indra pleased him with friendly words to the best of his ability and submitted to him, with great intelligence, all that they had learned from the Supreme Personality. (31) That was [politically spoken] all very acceptable to both the Daitya ruler and the other Asura chiefs Śambara, Arīṣṭanemi and the rest of the inhabitants of Tripura. (32) After next having decided to be friendly with each other, Deva and Asura, embarked on the supreme enterprise of churning for the nectar, oh chastiser of the enemies. (33) For that purpose they, with great force and loud cries, uprooted Mandara Mountain, embraced it firmly and brought it to the ocean. (34) Carrying the load over a great distance, Indra and the son of Virocana, being fatigued, could not support the load any longer and dropped it on the road. (35) The gigantic golden mountain, falling down right there, crushed with its great weight many of the

enlightened and unenlightened souls. (36) The Supreme Lord, seated on the back of Garuḍa, then appeared before them who had broken their arms and legs as also had lost their courage. (37) Simply glancing over the immortals and mortals who were crushed by the falling mountain, He brought them back to life, unscathed and free from grief. (38) With the greatest ease He placed with one hand the mountain on Garuḍa, also sat on him and went to the ocean, surrounded by the Suras and Asuras. (39) Having arrived there Garuḍa, the greatest of all birds, unloaded the mountain from his shoulder, went to the waterside with it and put it down. Thereupon he was sent away by the Lord [so that he would not eat Vāsuki].'

*: The idea here is that of a mouse with a snake caught in a basket, wherein the mouse makes a hole for both to escape after which the snake eats the mouse.

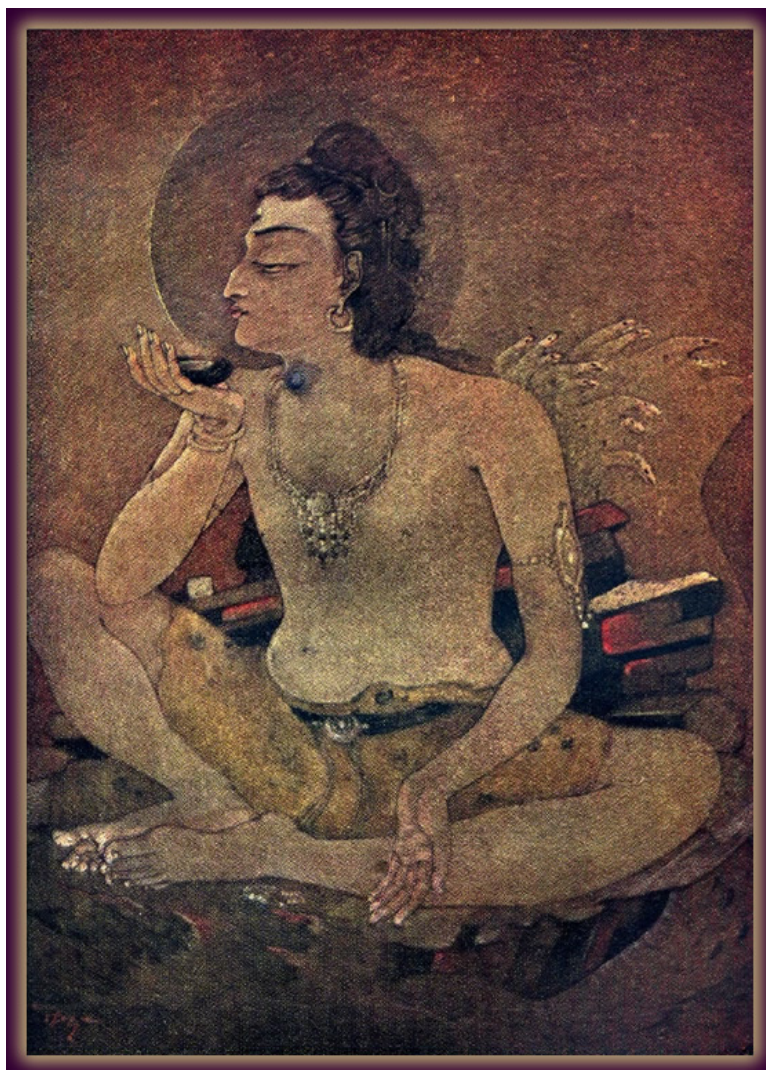
Chapter 7

Lord Śiva Drinks the Poison Churned with the Mountain Mandara

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Suras invited the king of the snakes Vāsuki, promised him a share of the result and wound him around the mountain to serve as a churning rope. Thereupon they in great delight began to churn the ocean in order to produce the nectar, oh best of the Kurus. (2) Lord Hari was the first to take him by the head, whereafter the demigods followed. (3) The Daitya leaders disliked the initiative of the Supreme Personality and said: 'We are not going to take the snake by its tail, that is its inferior part. It does not accord with the knowledge of our education and the honor of our birth and activities.' (4) Seeing how consequently the Daityas let it pass, the Supreme Personality smiled. He gave up the front portion and grasped together with the demigods the rear end. (5) Thus having determined where the snake should be held, the sons of Kaśyapa [the godly and the demoniac ones] with great zeal churned to get the nectar from the ocean of milk. (6) As they were churning the ocean with the mountain it had no support so that it, despite the

fact that it was held by the strong men, because of its weight sank in the water, oh son of Pāṇḍu. (7) Confronted with the fact that their manliness was defeated by the stronger will of providence, their faces, heavily disappointed, darkened. (8) The infallible Lord, whose ways and powers are inscrutable, saw the hindrance as arranged by providence and then expanded Himself into the wondrous form of a giant tortoise [Kūrma]. He entered the water with it and lifted up the mountain [see also Daśāvatāra-stotra verse 2]. (9) When the Suras and Asuras saw it rising, they decided to churn again with the mountain Mandara that, like a continent, extended a hundred thousand *yojanas* wide on His back. (10) The rotation of the mountain being moved by the strong arms of the Sura and Asura leaders, my best one, was by the primal tortoise who carried it on His back, considered an infinitely pleasant scratching. (11) Thereafter, to encourage them and increase their strength and energy, Lord Viṣṇu entered the Asuras in the form of passion, the godly souls in the form of goodness and the king of the serpents [Vāsuki] in the form of ignorance. (12) Standing on top of the great mountain like another mountain, He, who has thousands of hands, caught the king of the mountains with one hand, while from the sky Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and King Indra, the leader of the demigods, offered prayers to Him who was showered with flowers. (13) With the Lord, the Supreme One, present on top of the mountain, below it, as also within themselves [as the three primal qualities] and within the snake, all the alligators within the ocean, which with the great mountain with great strength was churned vehemently, got seriously agitated. (14) The serpent king, hissing violently in all directions, spitted fire and smoke from his thousands of heads. The Asuras headed by Pauloma, Kāleya, Bali and Ilvala, being troubled by the heat of his radiation, therefore all began to look like sarala trees

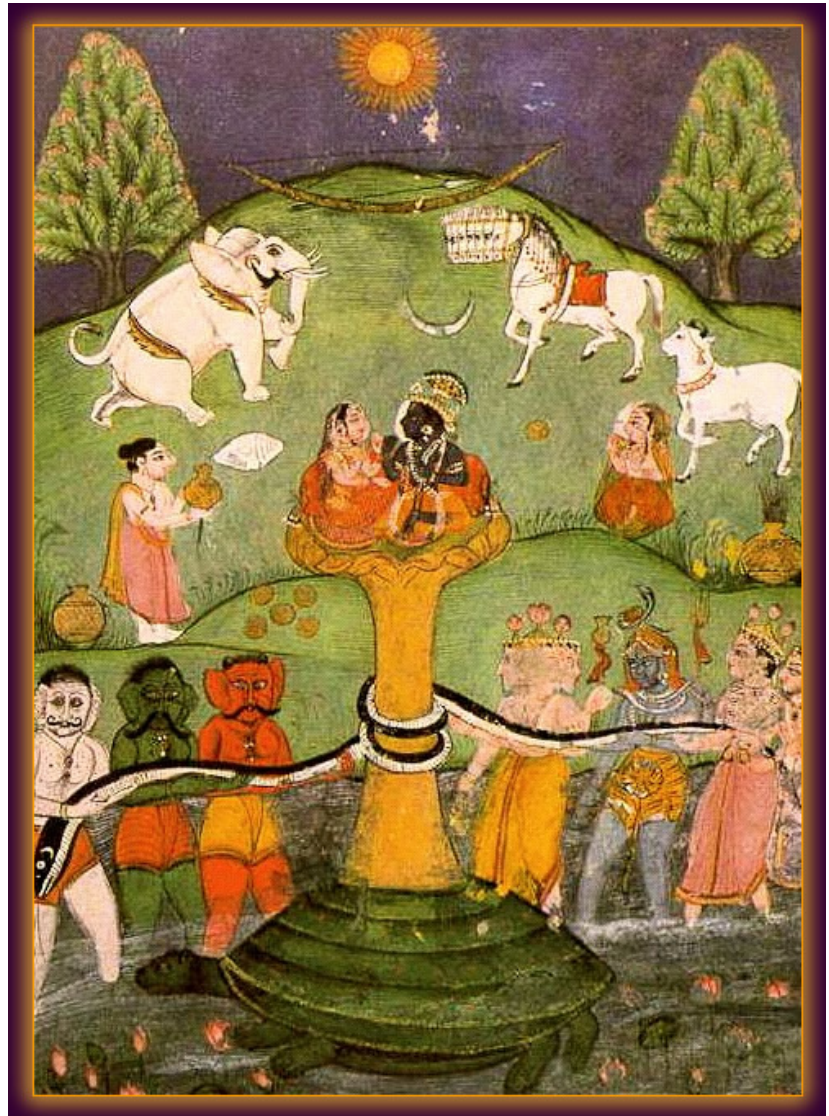
scorched in a forest fire. (15) Also the luster of the gods was affected by his fiery breath that smoked their dresses, fine garlands, armament and faces. Ordained by the Supreme Lord, it then profusely began to rain, while breezes were blowing clouds of vapor that originated from the waves of the ocean. (16) When the ocean by the best of the godly souls and the Asuras was duly churned but no nectar appeared, the Invincible One Himself began to churn. (17) As dark as a cloud, in yellow silks, with lightning earrings on His ears, with the gleaming hair on His head disheveled, with His garland, reddish eyes and victorious arms securing the universe, He grabbed the snake to churn with the churning rod for which the mountain was used and assumed [also] for that purpose a size as big



as a mountain. (18) The churning of the ocean that agitated all kinds of fish, sharks, snakes, tortoises, whales, water elephants, crocodiles and timiṅgilas [whale-eating whales], first of all produced a very strong poison called Hālahala [or *Kālakūṭa*, see 8.6: 25]. (19) The terribly strong, unbearable poison, that unstoppably spread itself in all directions upwards and downwards, scared all the people such that they, missing the protection of their Lord and Master, oh my best, sought the shelter of Lord Śiva. (20) When they saw him, who for the welfare of the three worlds together with his wife sits on his mountain [Kailāsa], he, the best of the demigods served by saints who in austerity walk the path of liberation, they offered him their obeisances.

(21) **T**he lords of the created beings [the Prajāpatis] said: 'Oh Lord of Lords, oh Mahādeva, oh soul of each, oh love of all, deliver us, who took shelter at your lotus feet, from this poison burning the three worlds. (22) You are the one lord and master over bondage and liberation in the entire universe. You, whom we worship, are the spiritual master capable of taking away the pain of the surrendered followers. (23) Oh mighty one, oh greatness, you, by your material potency, operating with the three modes of nature, manifest yourself as Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Śiva for the creation, maintenance and destruction of this material world. (24) You are the Supreme Brahman, the secret of the cause and effect of all the life forms of creation. You are, with all the potencies you manifest, the Controller and Supersoul of the universe. (25) You are the source of the [spiritual, Vedic] sound, the origin of the universe, the soul, the life breath, the senses and the elements. You are the basic qualities of nature and the natural dis-

position, the eternal time, the sacrifice and the dharma of truth [*satya*] as also truthfulness [*rta*]. It is unto you that one utters the original syllable consisting of the three letters [A-U-M]. (26) Oh soul of all godly souls, fire constitutes your mouth, oh Lord of all the worlds, the surface of the globe is known as your lotus feet, oh self of the gods, time constitutes your movement, the directions are your ears and the controller of the waters [Varuṇa] is your taste. (27) With the ether for your navel, the air for your breath, the sun globe for your eyes, the water for your semen, the moon for your mind and the higher worlds, oh Lord, for your head, your self constitutes the shelter of all living beings high and low [compare 8.5: 33-43]. (28) The



oceans are your belly, the mountains are your bones, all the plants, creepers and herbs are your hairs, the [seven types of] mantras [see 5.21: 15] are your seven layers [*koṣas*] and all the religions, oh you three Vedas [R̥g, Yajur and Sāma] in person, constitute the core of your heart [see also 2.1: 32]. (29) The five sacred texts of [Vedic] philosophy [called Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva and Īśāna] constitute your faces together with the collection of the thirty-eight important mantras [derived from them*] that describe the reality of the Supersoul, of you, oh Lord, who in your position of enlightenment are celebrated as Śiva. (30) The waves of irreligion [lust, anger, greed and illusion] are nothing but your shadow, the shadow on the basis of which there are so many secondary creations. Your three eyes stand for the goodness, the passion and the darkness and simply glancing over [the creation with them] brought about the analytic scriptures replete with verses about the Supersoul, oh Lord, oh god of the Vedic literatures and their supplements [the Purāṇas]. (31) None of the directors of the world, oh Ruler on the Mountain, neither Brahmā, nor Viṣṇu, nor the king of the Suras [Indra], can fathom your transcendental effulgence, the impersonal spirit [of Brahman] equal to everyone, wherein the basic qualities of passion, ignorance and goodness are not found. (32) In this world, which has originated from you and at the time of her destruction is burned to ashes by you with the sparks of the fire emanating from your eyes, you have, out of your mercy for the living beings, annihilated Tripura [7.10: 53] as also put an end to the sacrifices out of desire [see e.g. 4.5], the poison of [false] time [in this story] and many other forms of misery. But these matters are not part of the praises offered to you, since you ban this world from your mind. (33) People not knowing your help and kindness shamelessly criticize you, for being a savage person whom one always finds at the burial place [smeared with ashes] and for moving with your consort Umā, despite your highly advanced austerity and even though your lotus feet are remembered by the spiritual teachers of contentment with the soul. (34) Because of your elevated position above the moving and unmoving living beings, you are difficult to understand. When it is not possible for even Brahmā and those

belonging to him, to properly understand your real nature, oh great one, how much more would that not be true for us, who, living their lives in line with what was created with the creation [that is of Brahmā], nevertheless try to worship you as good as we can? (35) We can see you having manifested for the happiness of the world, but cannot see the full supreme of your transcendence, oh great Lord whose ways are inscrutable.'

(36) Śrī Śuka said: 'Seeing their pernicious predicament he, Mahādeva, the friend of all living beings out of his compassion for the great distress spoke to his beloved Satī. (37) Lord Śiva said: 'Dear Bhavānī, just see how pitiable this situation is of all the living beings under the threat of the poison produced by churning the ocean. (38) Feeling responsible for all their lives, I must do something for their safety; it is my duty as the master to protect against distress. (39) Devotees at the cost of their own lives protect other living beings who, time bound and bewildered by the external energy, are of enmity with one another. (40) The Soul of All, the Lord, is pleased when one in benevolent to others, oh gentle one. When the Supreme Personality of the Lord is pleased, I am happy as well, as also all other moving and unmoving entities. May there be the well-being of all creatures with me drinking this poison.'

(41) Śrī Śuka said: 'After Lord Śiva, the well-wisher of the universe thus had addressed Bhavānī she gave her permission, very well knowing his capabilities, whereupon he proceeded to drink the poison. (42) Mahādeva out of compassion for the welfare of all living beings consequently took the widespread Hālahala poison in his hand and drank it. (43) That poison from the water exhibited its potency by turning his neck dark-blue, a feature considered an ornament by the virtuous souls, the saints and the sages. (44) Good and honest people practically always take to heart the sufferings of their fellow men. This is considered the highest form of worshiping the Original Person, He who stands for the completeness of the soul [see also 1.5: 17-19, B.G. 18: 68-69 and 4: 7-8]. (45) Hearing about that act of Śiva, the god of gods, the graceful one, he was highly praised by the daughter of Dakṣa [Satī see also 4.3-4], by Brahmā, by

the Lord of Vaikunṭha and by all the people. (46) Scorpions, cobras and other poisonous animals and plants are the beings that took care of the little bit of poison that was scattered here and there as he drank from his palm.'

*: The thirty-eight mantras called *pañcopaniṣadas taveśa* are: (1) *tat puruṣāya vidmahe śāntyai*, (2) *mahā-devāya dhīmahi vidyāyai*, (3) *tan no rudraḥ pratiṣṭhāyai* (4) *pracodayāt dhṛtyai* (5) *aghorebhyas tamā* (6) *atha ghorebhyo mohā* (7) *aghorebhyo rakṣā* (8) *aghoratarebhyo nidrā* (9) *sarvebhyah sarva-vyādhyai*, (10) *sarva-sarvebhyo mṛtyave* (11) *namas te 'stu kṣudhā* (12) *rudra-rūpebhyas tṛṣṇā* (13) *vāmadevāya rajā* (14) *jyeṣṭhāya svāhā* (15) *śreṣṭhāya ratyai* (16) *rudrāya kalyāṇyai* (17) *kālāya kāmā* (18) *kala-vikaraṇāya sandhinyai* (19) *bala-vikaraṇāya kriyā* (20) *balāya vṛddhyai* (21) *balacchāyā* (22) *pramathanāya dhātryai* (23) *sarva-bhūta-damanāya bhrāmaṇyai* (24) *manaḥ-śoṣiṇyai* (25) *unmanāya jvarā* (26) *sadyojātaṁ prapadyāmi siddhyai* (27) *sadyojātāya vai namaḥ rddhyai* (28) *bhave dityai* (29) *abhava lakṣmyai* (30) *nātibhave medhā* (31) *bhajasva mām kāntyai* (32) *bhava svadhā* (33) *udbhavāya prabhā* (34) *tīśanaḥ sarva-vidyānām śaśinyai* (35) *tīśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām abhaya-dā* (36) *brahmādhīpatir brahmaṇodhipatir brahman brahmeṣṭa-dā* (37) *śivo me astu marīcyai* (38) *sadāśivaḥ jvālīnyai*.

Chapter 8

More Appears from the Churning: Mother Lakṣmī and Dhanvantari

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the poison had been drunk by him who rides the bull [Lord Śiva], the immortals and Dānavas gladly resumed the churning of the ocean quickly, whereupon the cow of plenty appeared [named Surabhi, the source of the ghee]. (2) The sages conversant with the injunctions for the *yajñas* took care of her, oh King, for she was useful for the divine sacrifices because of her clarified butter.

(3) Next a horse as white as the moon manifested, named Uccaiḥśravā, that Mahārāja Bali liked to have, while Indra desisted from claiming it on the advise of the Lord [see B.G. 10: 27 and compare 4.19: 23].

(4) Thereafter the king of resistance, the elephant Airāvata appeared, that with its four tusks defied the glories of the white mountain [Kailāsa, the abode] of the First Devotee [Lord Śiva, see 6.11: 11 and again B.G. 10: 27]. (5) The first of eight elephants manifesting for each direction of the sky was named Airāvata. Also a group of eight she-elephants appeared that was headed by one named Abhramu, oh King.

(6) Then a valuable lotus-hued gem known as the Kaustubha jewel was generated from the wide expanse of milk. Lord Hari, who desired to possess it, decorates His chest with it. Thereupon the pārijāta tree was generated that adorns the heavenly places and that, just as you who like to fulfill the wishes of all, fulfills every wish on this planet by providing whatever that is wanted, oh King.

(7) Next the Apsaras were generated, the extremely beautiful and attractive inhabitants of heaven who, exquisitely dressed and decorated with gold, smoothly moving around divert everyone's heart.

(8) After that had happened the Goddess of Splendor [Rāmā or Lakṣmī] manifested in person. With her lightening luster she, as [bright as] Saudāmanī [mountain], illumined along with the Lord all the directions [to deal with that splendor see the 'peace formula' of B.G. 5: 29]. (9) Each Sura, Asura and human being desired her, for the magnificent beauty of her features, youth, complexion and glories had caught their minds. (10) The great Indra brought a glorious, wonderful seat for her and the most sacred rivers and reservoirs assumed a personal form by filling golden water pots with pure water. (11) The land offered all the herbs needed for installing the deity. The cows contributed with their five pure products [milk, yogurt, ghee, dung and urine] and springtime delivered fresh flowers and fruits. (12) The sages performed the bathing ceremony as prescribed, the Gandharvas sang the all-auspicious mantras and

their wives danced and sang along. (13) From the clouds two-sided drums vibrated, kettledrums, *murajas* and *ānakas* [two other types of drums] and that created, combined with the sounds of bugles, conch shells, flutes and *vīṇās*, a great tumult. (14) While the twice-born souls, the brahmins, were singing hymns, the elephants next poured jugs full of sacred water over the chaste goddess so beautiful with the lotus in her hand [see also a classic picture of Lakṣmī]. (15) The ocean presented yellow silks for her to dress from top to toe and Varuṇa offered a large garland swarming with bumblebees intoxicated by its sweetness. (16) From Prajāpati Viśvakarmā there was a choice of ornaments, Sarasvatī [the goddess of learning] supplied a necklace, Lord Brahmā provided a lotus flower and the Nāgas [the excellent ones] gave earrings. (17) Thereupon being worshiped in a ritualistic ceremony she, radiating a natural beauty with the decoration of the earrings to her cheeks and a coy smile on her face, went around [the sacrificial arena] with the lotus garland in her hand and the bees about it. (18) With her two symmetrical breasts, her thin waist in harmony and smeared with sandalwood pulp and *kuṅkuma*, she, moving here and there with the sweet tinkling of her ankle bells, appeared exactly like a golden creeper. (19) Looking for a faultless eternal shelter, she could not find a single soul stable in every good quality among the indwellers of heaven, the perfected souls, the unenlightened souls, the keepers of the wealth, the venerable souls and the rest of all the demigods.

(20) [She contemplated:] 'When one is certain of one's austerity one has not yet conquered anger, to have spiritual knowledge does not mean that one is

not contaminated by one's association with others and a great personality might not have conquered material desires. How can a person controlled by something or someone else like this, be his own master [a master of his senses]? (21) Someone might be of dharma but is he friendly towards other living beings? Someone can be of renunciation but he might miss the cause of liberation. A person may have power over people, but still not be liberated from the great force of material nature [from the power of time]. Someone may be free from the influence of the modes of nature but never be a second one [another Lord of Control and Yoga, see also 1.2: 8]. (22) Someone may live a long time but still not know how to behave and be happy, someone may master the art of living but still not know how to get old. And when someone knows the both of them, such a person still might be unlucky in another respect. Nor is of someone excelling in all walks of life said that he wishes Me [in my position of devotion unto Viṣṇu]!'



(23) **W**ith these considerations in mind the Goddess of Wealth and Splendor turned to Him, Mukunda, the reservoir of Transcendence who was so desirable and qualified in every way as the husband of her choice - even though He had no desire for it. He, after all, did not depend on others and had the extraordinary, supreme qualities perfect in every respect. (24) After placing on His shoulders a ravishing, fresh garland of lotuses vibrating with humming, maddened bumblebees, she remained, with a shy smile and glittering eyes, at His side with His bosom as her true resort. (25) He, the father of the three departments of the universe, made His bosom the residence of the mother, the goddess, the supreme [representative of all] opulence. She installed there, mercifully overseeing the three worlds, increases the fortune of His servants and leaders. (26) The servants of the gods and their women [the dancers and singers of heaven], all became engaged in singing and dancing accompanied by the loud sound of musical instruments like conch shells, bugles and drums. (27) Brahmā, Śiva and all the directors of the world headed by Aṅgirā, honored the Supreme Personality by showering flowers and chanting mantras that described His true nature. (28) With the merciful glance of the Goddess resting upon the godly souls, the fathers of mankind and their generations, they were all blessed with good conduct and good qualities and thus achieved the ultimate satisfaction.

(29) **T**he Daityas and Dānavas though, oh King, who were neglected by Lakṣmī, being depressed in their aching greed, got disheartened and lost all sense of shame. (30) Thereupon Vāruṇī, the goddess of the drunkards appeared, a young lotus-eyed girl who, with the permission of the Lord, was accepted by the Asuras.

(31) **W**ith the sons of Kaśyapa thereupon [again] zealously churning the ocean for the nectar, there [finally] appeared a most wonderful man, oh great King. (32) He was tall, youthful, had stout and strong arms, a neck like a conch, a dark skin, reddish eyes, a garland and was adorned with all kinds of ornaments. (33) Being clad in yellow, with a broad chest, with well polished, jeweled earrings, with gleaming curly locks of hair and decorated with bangles he, as strong as a lion, came forward with a jar that was filled to the rim with nectar. (34) He was a partial appearance of a part of Lord Viṣṇu Himself, known by the name of Dhanvantari, who, seeing to medical science, was



one of the demigods entitled to a share in the offerings. (35) All the Asuras who saw him with the container full of nectar, greedy after the contents, immediately snatched the pot away. (36) When the pot of nectar was carried away by the Asuras, the demigods were desolate and turned to the Lord for their protection. (37) Seeing them distraught, the Supreme Lord, who always acts according to the desires of His servants, said: 'Do not grieve, I will personally arrange a dispute among them so that the nectar will be there for all of you.' (38) Oh master of man, there was a quarrel among them [the Asuras] about the nectar in which they with a thirsting heart said: 'Me first, me first, not you, not you!' (39-40) Oh King, the sons of Diti denied each other constantly jealous with force the pot of nectar, to which the weaker ones said: 'Just as each of the gods having been of an equal effort deserved an equal share of the nectar, it also applies to us. This is a matter of traditional duties [*sanātana dharma*]' (41-46) After this had passed, Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Controller who has a solution for any problem, assumed the form of a supremely beautiful, wonderful woman who mystified them all. Pleasing to behold she was as dark as a newly grown lotus. She was of the greatest beauty and harmony in all her limbs, she had a straight nose, fine cheeks and ornamented ears. She had fresh, firm, young but weighty breasts to her thin waist and a blissful expression on her face. She looked a bit anxious because of the humming bumblebees around her. With the mass of her beautiful, waving hair and the mallikā flower garland about her attractive neck, with the beauty of her arms that were ornamented with the finest jewelry and bangles, with the fair sari spread over her breast that was an island of beauty and with the belt that covered her waist, she moved about gracefully with her ankle bells. Coyly casting her glances while moving with her eyebrows, she gave rise to a constant lusty desire in the core of the hearts of the Daitya leaders.'

Chapter 9

The Lord Appears as a Beautiful Woman to Distribute the Nectar

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'While the Asuras were snatching away the nectar and threw it towards each other, they thus behaving like thieves, became very inimical. Then they saw [the Lord in the form of] a woman [called Mohinī-mūrti] coming their way. (2) 'What a figure, what a grace and youthfulness!' so they said, hasting to get Her attention while their hearts were aching to sleep with Her. (3) 'Who are You with Your lotus petal eyes? Where do You come from and why did You come here? To whom do You belong, oh You who with Your beautiful thighs upset our minds, please tell us! (4) Neither we, nor any immortal soul, demon, perfected soul, creature of heaven, venerable soul or any ruler of the universe, has seen You before or ever touched you, not to mention any normal human being. (5) Oh, may providence be praised for sending You with Your beautiful eyebrows! Is Your mercy not there to bring that what pleases the senses and mind of all who are of flesh and blood? (6) Oh smashing lady, are You maybe there as our fortune to settle the mounting differences between us, family members, who are increasingly inimical with each other over this one issue [of the nectar], oh You slim beauty? (7) Can You please see to it that [the nectar] justly, without any partiality, is divided among us, able and competent brothers, who are the descendants of Kaśyapa?'

(8) Looking at them with a smile and enchanting glances, the illusion of feminine beauty which was an incarnation of the Lord, thus being requested, spoke the following words to the Daityas. (9) The Supreme Lord said: 'How can it be that all of you, descendants of Kaśyapa, have faith in associating with a woman like me who runs after men, for to be enamored with women is something one never finds with men of wisdom! (10) Oh enemies of the Suras, the sages agree that jackals and unchaste women, who are fickle in their relationships, [always] look for a new, fresh mate.'

(11) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus having fun with them, the Asuras laughing all felt comforted by Her and with a serious expression on their face handed over the jar of nectar. (12) When the Lord took hold of the *amṛt* container He with a sweet smile



spoke the words: 'If you promise to accept Me whether I act honestly or not, I will divide this nectar.' (13) Having heard what She said, the chiefs of the Asuras, without giving it further thought, assented and said: 'So be it!' (14-15) They observed a fast, bathed, offered oblations of ghee into the fire, were of charity for the cows, the brahmins and many others, performed ceremonies according to the brahminical precepts, dressed up to their taste in new clothes, put on jewelry and next together sat down on seats of *kuśa* grass laid down towards the east. (16-17) As the Suras and Daityas, all with their faces [also] turned eastward, dressed up with garlands were sitting down with lamps in an arena full of incense smoke, She entered there holding the container, oh ruler of man. With Her youthful, restless eyes, the sounds of Her tinkling ankle bells and Her jug-like breasts striding slowly, She wore a beautiful sari around Her wide hips and elephant trunk-like thighs. (18) Looking at Her, the Lord Supreme who with golden earrings, charming ears, nose,

cheeks and face posed as a girlfriend of the Goddess, they were all enchanted by the way She with a smile glanced at them while Her sari was slightly waving over Her breasts. (19) Considering it a miscalculation to give the nectar to the demons who are as cruel as snakes, the Infallible One did not deliver it to them. (20) Arranging a different line for every group separately, the Master of the Universe let each of them orderly occupy a position at his own side. (21) Carrying the container, She deceived the Daityas with sweet words and made those sitting at a distance [opposite of them, the Suras] drink from the nectar that would free them from old age, death and disability. (22) The Asuras

considering it an abomination to fight with a woman, because of their feelings for Her according to their promise kept themselves in check, oh King, and remained silent. (23) Fearful of breaking the bond of friendship with Her they, moved by the greatest respect, all felt obliged and said not the slightest thing that would displease Her. (24) He who darkens the luminaries [Rāhu] dressed himself up like one of the demigods and sat among them to drink from the nectar, but he was, by sun and moon [the divinities of the ego and feeling he eclipses], quickly detected. (25) The moment Rāhu drank from the nectar his head was cut off by the razor sharp *cakra* of the Lord. The decapitated body that had not been reached by the nectar, fell dead to the ground. (26) The head, however, attained immortality and was by Lord Brahmā recognized as a planet. It is that very Rāhu that at times [e.g. during the changes of the moon] inimically chases away the [light of the] sun and the moon [see also 5.24: 1-3, 6.6: 37 and 6.18: 12-14].

(27) **W**hen the godly souls had almost finished drinking the nectar, the Supreme Lord Hari, the well-wisher of all the worlds, revealed His original form [once more] in the presence of all the Asuras and their leaders. (28) Although the Suras and Asuras all shared the same place, time, objective, cause, activities and ambition, they did not achieve the same result. The God-minded souls easily achieved the nectar because the benediction of the saffron dust of the lotus feet was theirs, but not so the Daityas [compare B.G. 4: 11]. (29) Whatever one does for the sake of one's own life and welfare, are human activities, ideas and words in relation to one's body and family that are all transient [*asat*, 'untrue']. Together they constitute one's separateness. But the same becomes something factual and permanent when it is not done in separation [when one not fails to be of devotion unto Him], for then they result in what one calls the 'watering of the root', the engagement in that what is beneficial to everyone [see 8.5: 49 and B.G. 3: 10].'

Chapter 10

The Battle Between the Demigods and the Demons

(1) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'The Dānavas and Daityas, oh Ruler, because they had turned away from Vāsudeva [and rather saw Mohinī-mūrti], thus with their combined efforts of churning failed to achieve the nectar. (2) After the *amṛt* had been generated, oh King, and had served as a drink for the Suras who belonged to Him, the Lord of all living beings who is carried by Garuḍa went away. (3) Seeing how their rivals enjoyed a good life, the sons of Diti could not accept it and therefore they raised their weapons to march against the demigods. (4) The godly souls, who under the shelter of Nārāyaṇa's feet had found new strength from drinking the nectar, thereupon took up their weapons to defend themselves. (5) There was a very fierce battle between those called the gods and the demons, oh King, with a tumult that made one's hair stand on end. (6) In that battle opposing as warriors, they angry minded fought against each other, wielding their swords, arrows and the

rest of their weaponry. (7) The sounds of the conches, trumpets, drums, bugles and kettledrums, combined with those of the elephants, horses, foot soldiers and chariot fighters, were tumultuous. (8) The enemies fought each other on the battlefield on an equal basis: charioteer against charioteer, infantry against infantry, cavalry against cavalry and elephantry against elephantry. (9) Some rode elephants, some sat on camels and some others fought sitting on asses. Some also used white-faced and red-faced monkeys, tigers and lions. (10-12) Both the parties of fighters faced each other using all kinds of differently shaped water animals, land animals and sea animals. There were vultures, eagles, ducks, hawks and *bhāsa* birds, killer whales, monkeys, buffalos, rhinoceroses, cows, bulls, wild cows and red cows, jackals and rats, lizards, rabbits, human beings and goats, while others entered the fight making use of black deer, swans and boars [as their 'vehicle', totemic animal or fighting spirit]. (13-15) With the nicely decorated flags and canopies, oh King, with the spotless white parasols with precious handles full of jewels and pearls, with the normal fans and peacock feather fans, with their upper and lower garments flapping in the wind, with the effulgence of their ornaments and shields and with their shining spotless weapons abundantly glittering in the sunshine, the two bannered parties of the demigod and Dānava heroes with their garlands all together looked like two oceans of aquatics, oh descendant of Pāṇḍu. (16-18) Bali the son of Virocana, the captain of the demons, drove for the sake of the battle a vehicle made by Maya that was called Vaiḥāyasa ['flying through the air']. It moved wherever he wanted to. Fully equipped with all the necessary weapons it was inexplicable, indescribable and most wondrous. Sometimes it was invisible and sometimes it could be seen. Protected by nicely decorated umbrellas and *cāmaras* he, seated on that first-class heavenly chariot and surrounded by all the commanders, was situated in a position as brilliant as that of a rising moon. (19-24) The different vehicles of the Asura commanders of the troops surrounded him on all sides: those of Namuci, Śambara, Bāṇa, Vipracitti; Ayomukha, Dvimūrdhā, Kālanābha and Praheti; the ones of Heti, Ilvala, Śakuni, Bhūtasantāpa, Vajradamṣṭra and Virocana; of Hayagrīva, Śaṅkuśirā,

Kapila, Meghadundubhi, Tāraka, Cakradṛk, Śumbha, Niśumbha, Jambha and Utkala, as also those of Ariṣṭa, Ariṣṭanemi, Maya, Tripurādhīpa and the sons of Puloma, the Kāleyas, the Nivātakavacas and all the others who did not get a share of the nectar. Only having carried the burden [but not having received the reward] they, who had conquered hosts of enemies, now with all their prowess ready to fight against the immortals roared as lions and blew their conch shells with the greatest tumult. When [Lord Indra], Balabhit ['afraid of the strength'], saw his ferocious rivals he got very angry.

(25) **I**ndra being mounted on Airāvata, his carrier elephant that was dripping must, looked as beautiful as the sun shining over Udayagiri's cascades. (26) Around him all the gods with banner and weapon had taken positions with their carriers: all the leaders of the higher worlds and the demigods of the air, of fire and of water. (27) Having come forward, the combatants face to face chided each other as painful to the heart as they could. Then they drew near to engage one to one in battle. (28) Bali fought with Indra, Tāraka with Kārtikeya, Varuṇa with Heti and Mitra, oh King, fought with Praheti. (29) Yamarāja fought with Kālanābha,

Viśvakarmā with Maya, Tvaṣṭā with Śambara and Savitrā fought with Virocana. (30-31) Aparājita fought with Namuci, the two Aśvinī-kumāras with Vṛṣaparvā, the demigod Surya with the hundred sons of Bali who were led by Bāṇa, Soma [the moon god] fought with Rāhu, Anila [god of the air] with Puloma and the extremely powerful goddess Bhadra Kālī [Durgā] fought with Śumbha and Niśumbha. (32-34) Vṛṣākapi [Śiva] fought with Jambha and Vibhāvasu, the fire god, with Mahiṣāsura. Ivala together with his brother Vātāpi fought with the sons of Brahmā, oh suppressor of the enemies. Durmarṣa fought with Kāmadeva [Cupid], Utkala with the Mātrikā goddesses, Bṛhaspati with Śukrācārya and Śani [Saturn] fought with Narakāsura. The Maruts fought with Nivātakavaca, the Vasus with the Kālakeyas, the Viśvedevas with the Paulomas and the Rudras fought with the Krodhavaśas.

(35) **T**he Suras and Asuras this way one by one engaged in fighting each other on the battlefield. Desiring the victory they slashed one another earnestly, waging with great strength with their sharp arrows, scimitars and lances. (36) They cut off each other's heads making use of fire weapons [*bhuśundhis*], discs, clubs, spears, tridents, spikes,



fire brands, barbed missiles, axes, swords, lances, iron bludgeons, mallets and slings. (37) The elephants, horses and chariots, foot soldiers and all the types of riders with their carriers were slashed to pieces. Arms, thighs, necks and legs were severed and flags, bows, armor and ornaments were shredded. (38) Because of their violent trampling and rambling, the dust of the field rose high in the sky up to the sun in every direction, after which the particles rained down again with the blood that splattered in every direction. (39) And so the field there was strewn with severed heads, complete with helmets and earrings, angry eyes and bitten lips and legs and ornamented arms resembling elephant trunks, that, being severed, lay scattered still holding the weapons. (40) With the eyes of their own heads fallen there, the soldiers could still see the trunks and raised arms with weapons coming after them on the battlefield.

(41) **B**ali attacked the great Indra with ten arrows, Airāvata, his carrier with three arrows, his four guardians [soldiers on horseback] with four arrows and the driver of the elephant with one arrow. (42) Indra, skilled as he was, in a quick response immediately cut the arrows rushing towards him to pieces with a different type of very sharp arrows [*bhallas*] and smiled about the fact that the enemy did not reach him. (43) Observing what a martial expert he was, Bali, enraged, took the *śakti* weapon up but that torch of blazing fire was, still in his hand, shattered by Indra. (44) Whether he next tried the lance, the barbed missile, the javelin or the sword, they were all cut to pieces by the mighty one. (45) Oh master of men, the Asura then produced a demoniac illusion in which he vanished and a huge mountain appeared above the heads of the Sura warriors. (46) In order to pulverize the enemy forces, big trees ablaze in a forest fire rained down from it as also sharp pointed stones. (47) Big snakes, scorpions and other poisonous creatures came down as also lions, tigers, boars and great elephants that crushed everything. (48) Many hundreds of stark naked carnivorous demonesses and demons, oh Ruler, each holding a trident, yelled 'Pierce them, cut them to pieces!' and such. (49) Next big, deeply rumbling clouds harassed by the wind were seen in the sky that with claps of thunder released embers. (50) The

Daitya created a huge terrifying conflagration resembling *Sāmvartaka* [the fire at the end of time] that was carried by the blasting wind to burn the demigod warriors. (51) Thereafter, for everyone to see, a sea appeared agitated all over with waves blown up by the wind into a formidable whirlpool. (52) The Sura warriors thus lost their courage, daunted as they were by the creation of the illusory atmosphere as was presented in the fight by the invisible Daityas, those experts in illusion. (53) Not knowing anymore how to counteract all of this, oh King, the followers of Indra meditated on the Supreme Lord, the Creator of the Universe, who right there appeared before them.

(54) **W**ith His yellow dress and lotus petal eyes, He whose feet rest upon the shoulders of Garuḍa, then became visible with all of His eight arms and weapons, the Goddess of Fortune and His invaluable Kaustubha gem, His helmet and His earrings, brilliantly exhibited. (55) The moment He appeared, the false works of the Asura were curbed by the superior power of the greatest personality of all. Just as it happens with dreams when one wakes up, all dangers are vanquished when the remembrance of the Lord has arrived. (56) When the demon Kālanemi, who was carried by 'the enemy of the elephants' [the lion], saw Him on the battlefield who was carried by Garuḍa, he threw a whirling trident at Him. Directed at Garuḍa's head it was seized with ease by the Lord of the Three Worlds, whereupon the enemy together with his carrier was killed by Him with the same weapon. (57) The very powerful Mālī and Sumālī fell in the battle. Their heads were severed by His *cakra*. Following, when the enemy Mālyavān with a pointed club and roaring like a lion, attacked the king of the birds [Garuḍa], also his head was severed by the disc of the Original Personality.

Chapter 11

The Dānavas Annihilated and Revived

(1) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'When thereafter by the grace of the Supreme Personality the Suras had regained their spirits, Indra, Vāyu and the others without hesitation resumed the fight against the troops who

formerly had driven them back in the battle. (2) When the so very mighty Indra angry with the son of Virocana [Bali] took up his thunderbolt, all his people cried: 'Alas, alas!' (3) Bali, who attentive and well equipped moved about on the great battlefield, was by him who carries the thunderbolt opposed and rebuked as follows: (4) 'You cheater, you fool, with your magic you try to be of control and win with illusions; you try to conquer us, who have mastered the illusion, as if we were children whose possessions you can take by diverting their attention! (5) Those who desire to advance and be free by deceptive means, such enemies of the gods, I bring down, such fools I deny the positions they have taken. (6) I am the one who today will put an end to you and your jugglery by severing your head with my hundred-jagged thunderbolt. You wicked soul with your buddies... bring it on!'

(7) **B**ali retorted: 'All present here on this battlefield are subjected to the rule of time and successively acquire with what they do a reputation, achieve a victory, suffer defeat and then find their death. (8) Because the entire world is moved by time, an enlightened soul who sees this will not rejoice or complain. In that sense you all pretty much lost your way [compare B.G. 2: 11]! (9) We, who manage to control ourselves in that respect, reject these embarrassing words of yours that the saintly feel sorry for.'

(10) **Ś**rī Śuka said: 'After as a valiant hero thus having chided the mighty Indra, Bali, the subduer of the greatest, attacked him again with iron arrows on his bow that he tightened to his ear in the process. (11) The god, who thus was derided by his silver-tongued enemy, remained, just like an elephant beaten with a rod, unmoved under the lesson being taught. (12) When the master of destruction [Indra] used the infallible bolt against him [Bali] he, being struck, crashed with his heavenly vehicle to the ground like a mountain with its wings being clipped. (13) Seeing that his mate had fallen, his most intimate friend and well-wisher Jambha stepped forward in solidarity with his hurt companion. (14) He, a man of superpower riding the lion, took position with his club and hit Indra and his elephant with great force on the shoulder. (15) Struck by the great blow the elephant sank

stunned down to its knees and fell unconscious to the earth. (16) When Indra's driver Mātali thereupon brought his chariot, which was drawn by a thousand horses, he mounted the vehicle and left his elephant behind. (17) In appreciation of the chariot driver's service [Jambhāsura,] the best of the Dānavas smiled and struck him [the driver] in the fight with his fire blazing trident. (18) Mātali bracing himself, managed to tolerate the excruciating pain, but Indra most infuriated decapitated Jambha with his thunderbolt. (19) When Jambhāsura's kin heard from Nārada ṛṣi that he had been slain, Namuci, Bala and Pāka hurried over there as fast as they could. (20) With gross insults cursing Indra to hurt him in the heart, they besieged him with arrows that came down like a torrent of rain over a mountain. (21) The thousand horses of the king of heaven were assailed by as many arrows that were all quickly launched at once. (22) With the two hundred arrows that next to that by Pāka all at once were aimed and released against Mātali and the chariot with all its upkeep, thus a most remarkable feat could be witnessed in the battle. (23) Namuci contributed with fifteen gold-feathered all-powerful arrows that cutting through the air made a noise over the field like a thundercloud full of rain. (24) The Asuras covered Indra and his chariot driver from all sides with a dense shower of arrows that covered the sun just like clouds during the rainy season do [see also 4.10: 13]. (25) Like traders shipwrecked in the middle of the ocean, the entire assembly of demigods and their retinue, who could not discern him any longer, bereft of their leader began to wail under the pressure and intimidation of the superiority of the enemy. (26) Indra, he who overpowers the mightiest, thereupon to their delight managed to free himself from the hull of arrows, together with his horses, chariot, flag and driver radiating, in all directions of the sky and the earth, with an effulgence resembling the sun at the end of the night.

(27) **W**hen the godhead saw how his army in the battle was oppressed by the enemy, he, fuming with anger, took up his thunderbolt to kill his opponents. (28) Before the eyes of their family members, he then, in order to create fear in them, oh King, with the bolt severed the heads of the trunks of Bala and Pāka. (29) Namuci [another

demon] witnessing the two being slaughtered, grieved over them and enraged made a serious attempt to kill Indra, oh lord of men. (30) With in his hand an iron spear, hung with bells and decorated with gold, he strode in fury against Indra roaring like a lion: 'And now you're dead' and struck. (31) The lord [of the gods, Indra] who saw it descending from the sky with great speed, smashed it to pieces [in its flight], oh King, while the demon himself from a fuming Indra received the thunderbolt on his shoulder to cut off his head. (32) But the powerful bolt, the same weapon that in the past by the king of the gods so successfully was used to pierce Vṛtrāsura [6.12: 25], could not even scratch his skin. That defiance of Namuci's neck was an extraordinarily wondrous thing. (33) With the bolt thus rendered ineffective Indra became very afraid of the enemy and wondered: 'What is this? What superior force allows such a miraculous thing to happen on earth? (34) With this same bolt I formerly cut off the wings of mountains flying with them, for they killed the people as they with their great weight came down on earth. (35) Vṛtrāsura who was so powerful with the austerities of Tvaṣṭā [see 6.9: 11] was killed by it, just as many other powerful characters impervious to all other weapons. (36) And now that bolt, strong as a *brahmāstra*, is repelled after being released against a less important demon. Rendered as useless as a rod, I can wield it no longer.'

(37) **I**ndra, lamenting thus, then out of the blue was addressed by a voice that said: 'This Dānava has an arrangement that he cannot be annihilated by anything dry or wet. (38) He would not die by something moist or dry because of a benediction I granted him and therefore, oh Indra, you must think of some other means to deal with your enemy.'

(39) **A**fter having heard that ominous voice Lord Indra meditated most at-

tentively and arrived thereupon at the insight that foam had to be the way that was neither dry nor wet. (40) Thus he took hold of Namuci's head [and killed him] with the weapon that was wet nor dry [by forcing it down his throat]. Thereupon all the sages most pleased covered the almighty one with flower garlands. (41) The two leading singers of heaven Viśvāvasu and Parāvasu sang hymns, the godly souls sounded kettledrums and the heavenly dancers danced in bliss. (42) Vāyu, Agni, Varuṇa and others though vigorously started to eliminate the other belligerent Asuras, as if they were lions killing deer. (43) *Devaṛṣi* Nārada Muni was by Lord Brahmā sent to the demigods, oh King, to forbid the ones in power the total annihilation of the Dānavas he saw taking place. (44) Śrī Nārada said: 'Under the protection of the arms and the fortune [the goddess] of Nārāyaṇa you all pro-



cured the nectar. Since you thus found your fortune you now must stop with this fighting!"

(45) Śuka said: 'Controlling their aggravation and anger they accepted the words of the sage and returned all to their heavenly abodes, while being praised by their followers. (46) They who had survived the battle picked up the lifeless body of Bali [as also the rest of those who had fallen] and all went, with Nārada's permission, to the mountain called Asta. (47) At that place the ones who still had their limbs and head were resuscitated by Śukrācārya [4.1: 45, 6.7: 18, 7.5: 1, 7.10: 33] by means of his knowledge of the *Samjīvanī* prayer, his science of reanimation. (48) Also Bali was brought back by the touch of Uśanā, but despite being defeated he, with his experience in worldly affairs, did not complain [to have regained] his memory and senses.'

Chapter 12

Lord Śiva Prays to See Mohinī Mūrti, Gets Bewildered and Restores

(1-2) **T**he son of Vyāsa said: 'When he who rides the bull [Śiva] heard how Lord Hari had assumed the form of a woman [8.9] in order to enchant the Dānavas and had caused the Suras to drink the nectar, he mounted his bull and went, together with his goddess [Umā] and surrounded by his associates, to the abode of Madhusūdana [Viṣṇu] to see Him. (3) The Supreme Personality welcomed him cordially with all due respect and after Lord Bhava and Umā were comfortably seated, Śiva offered Lord Hari his obeisances and with a smile spoke the following words.

(4) **Śrī** Mahādeva [Śiva] said: 'Oh God of Gods, oh All-pervading Lord and Master of the Universe who are the universe, for all forms of existence You are the true self, the soul, and therefore You are the Supreme Controller. (5) Of what exists in the beginning, in the middle and the end of this creation, of the 'I' and of the rest [of the world of 'mine'] outside of it, You, my Lord, are the Inexhaustible Truth of Brahman, the Absolute Spirit

free from these differences. (6) Those who are wise and free from personal objectives desire the supreme welfare, worship Your lotus feet and forsake their attachments in both respects [concerning this life and a life hereafter]. (7) You as the cosmic complete of eternal life beyond the [influence of the] basic qualities of nature, as the One free from grief who perpetually resides in bliss, are changeless and exist apart from all that exists, while You are everything that exists. You, as the cause of the rise and maintenance of this universe, are the Self and Master of all self control, the Independent Soul all others depend on [see also B.G. 9: 15]. (8) You, the One present as both a temporal and an eternal manifestation, are Yourself without that duality, because You in this world do not differ in Your substance, just as gold does not differ from the gold in the different forms it may have. Out of ignorance people have different notions about You, differences that are created by the basic qualities, whereas You do not depend on those physical inessentials [see also B.G. 7: 4-5]. (9) Some think of You as the Supreme Spirit, some consider You to be dharma, some say that you are the Original Person, the Supreme Controller beyond cause and effect, while others think of You as the Transcendence endowed with nine potencies [or *śaktis**]. Still others think of You as the independent and imperishable Supreme Personality. (10) Neither me, nor the one endlessly living in the beyond [Brahmā], nor the sages headed by Marīci really know Him [You] who has created this universe, even though we [know that we] generated from goodness. And what to say about the Daityas and the other mortal beings, oh Lord, whose hearts, constantly being bewildered by *māyā*, are moved by the lower [motives of passion and ignorance, see B.G. 2: 45]. (11) Just like the air that enters us is also present in the sky, You are involved and free at the same time, and do, from Your presence as the all-pervading one, know everything about the creation, maintenance and resolution of this world in its entirety, about the living beings and their endeavors and about everything that moves and not moves. (12) I have seen all kinds of *avatāras* of You in various pastimes displaying Your qualities. I, Śiva, would like to see the incarnation of You in which You assume the body of a woman. (13) We have come here



very eager to see with our own eyes the form of the incarnation that captivated the Daityas and fed the Suras with the nectar.'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: 'Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, thus being petitioned by the one holding the trident in his hand, smiled and gave Giriśa ['the man of the mountain'] a reply of deep significance. (15) The Supreme Lord said: 'In the interest of the Suras I deemed it necessary to bewilder the Daityas who had taken away the vessel filled with nectar and assumed thereto the form of a beautiful woman. (16) I shall now, oh best of the enlightened souls, show you who long to see it, this object of adoration so greatly appreciated by those who are led by lust.'

(17) Śrī Śuka continued: 'Having said this Lord Viṣṇu immediately disappeared from the sight of His company, leaving Śiva and Umā with their eyes spying everywhere. (18) Thereupon they saw, on a nice spot in the forest, a delightful woman who, wearing a shining sari with a belt around Her hips, in the midst of pink leafed trees and all sorts of flowers was engaged in playing with a ball. (19) As she bounced the ball Her beautiful breasts and Her garlands vibrated along waving over Her slender waist, with every step She made here and there with Her feet that were as red as coral. (20) Her eyes anxiously followed the ball that was restlessly moving in all directions. She had glittering earrings on Her ears and gleaming bluish hair that decorated the cheeks of Her radiating face. (21) Striking the ball with Her right hand Her hair slackened while She with Her left hand charmingly tried to keep Her loosening sari together. The spiritual potency [of the Lord] thus captivated everyone in the universe [compare B.G. 7: 14]. (22) Seeing Her thus playing with the ball and sending a hardly noticeable bashful smile, the god was bedazzled by the glances of the ravishing beauty. Under Her spell not being able to keep his eyes off Her, he could no longer think of himself nor of the nearby

Umā or his associates [compare 5.5: 8]. (23) One moment the ball jumped far away from Her hand and so She followed it. Directly before the eagerly following eyes of Śiva the fine dress and belt blew away that covered the woman. (24) He saw before him the complete of Her well-formed glory so pleasing to the eye. When She gave him a look, Śiva thought She would fancy him. (25) Perturbed because of Her actions and smiles he, bereft of good sense, shamelessly went after Her, despite the fact that Bhavānī witnessed what happened. (26) The completely naked woman saw him coming and most embarrassed with a smile ran here and there to hide behind the trees. (27) Lord Śiva, Bhava, distracted by his senses, fell victim to lust like he was a male elephant going for a she-elephant. (28) Speeding after Her, he caught Her by

the braid of Her hair and pulled Her close against Her will in order to embrace Her. (29-30) She, the she-elephant, with Her hair scattered being captured by him, the bull that was the Lord's devotee, squirming like a snake managed to free Herself, oh King. Having escaped from the tight grip of the Lord of the demigods, She ran quickly away, with Her heavy hips so expressively exhibiting the illusory potency of the Lord. (31) Like being haunted by the devil Rudra in the grip of lust engaged in the pursuit of Him whose acts so wondrously were taking place in front of him. (32) Chasing Her like a mad bull going for a female, the semen was discharged of him who never spills his semen in vain. (33) Each and every place where his semen fell on the earth, oh great ruler, those places became mines for silver and gold. (34) At the shores of rivers and lakes, in the mountains and in the forests, in the gardens and wherever the sages were living, Lord Śiva was present. (35) With his semen discharged he, oh best of kings, understood that he personally had been fooled by the illusory potency of the Lord and therefore he refrained from chasing the illusion any longer. (36) Thus convinced of his own greatness and the greatness of the Soul of the Universe, who is of an unlimited potency, he did not consider what had happened that surprising. (37) Seeing that he was not perturbed or ashamed about it, Madhusūdana, very pleased with it, assumed His male form again and spoke.

(38) **T**he Supreme Lord said: 'I wish you all good fortune, oh best of the demigods. With Me appearing as a woman, you were spontaneously enchanted by My external potency, yet you remain firmly fixed in your self. (39) Once being drawn by the senses, who else but you would be able to surmount My *māyā*? Those who are unable to control their senses have great difficulty to overcome the



material reactions overwhelming them. (40) The moment one, [living] with the time and all its different elements, is joined with Me in the form of Eternal Time [or the pure Time Spirit], that illusory energy of the modes of nature [the goddess Durgā in sum**] will no longer be able to bewilder you.'

(41) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus complimented by the Supreme Personality of Godhead with the *Śrīvatsa*-mark on His chest, oh King, Śiva circumambulating Him, took leave of Him and together with his associates turned back to his abode. (42) Oh descendant of Bharata, the mighty Lord Bhava then in jubilation addressed his wife Bhavānī who by the sages is accepted as an integral part of the illusory potency of the Lord: (43) 'Oh, did you see how I myself, against my will, despite being the best of all His portions, got bewildered by Her, the illusory energy of the Unborn Supreme Person of the Demigods? Do I have to speak of others then who totally depend on the material illusion? (44) When I ceased with a yoga practice that took a

thousand years, I was approached by you to inquire after Him [upon whom I was meditating]. He indeed is the One who is now personally present here as the Original Personality beyond the grasp of the Vedas and the grip of time.'

(45) Śrī Śuka concluded: 'I thus spoke to you, my best one, about the prowess of *Śārṅga-dhanvā* [Viṣṇu with His bow] who [as Kūrma] held the great mountain on His back for churning the ocean. (46) Whoever recites this or listens to this [story], will never be disappointed in his endeavor because the description of the qualities of Uttamaśloka, the One Praised in the Scriptures, puts an end to the misery of one's material existence. (47) For Him who is not understood by the godless ones, for the feet that are known by the devotees of surrender, for the One who only allowed the immortals to drink from the nectar that was produced from the ocean, for Him who, appearing in the disguise of a young girl, captivated the enemies of the gods, for Him who fulfills the desires of the devotees, I bow myself down [compare B.G. 9: 29-34].'

*: The nine *śaktis* or powers of the Lord: *vimalā*, purity; *utkarṣinī*, exalted state; *jñāna*, knowledge; *kriyā*, activity; *yogā*, yogic powers; *prahvī*, modesty; *satyā*, truthfulness; *īśānā*, sovereignty and *anugrahā*, grace (mentioned in 11.27: 25-26).

**: Svāmī Prabhupāda quotes:

'*sṛṣṭi-sthiti-pralaya-sādhana-śaktir ekā chāyeva yasya bhuvanāni bibharti durgā*' [Śrī Brahmasaṁhitā Bs. 5.44].

The entire cosmos is created by Durgā in cooperation with Lord Viṣṇu in the form of *kāla*, time. This is the version of the Vedas (Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1.1-2).

Chapter 13

Description of Future Manus

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Now hear from me about the children of the son of Vivasvān, the present Manu who is known in the world as Śrāddhadeva. He is the seventh one [we are now in the twenty-eighth *yuga* of him who is also known as Vaivasvata Manu]. (2-3) The ten sons of Manu are known as Ikṣvāku, Nabhaga, Dhṛṣṭa, Śaryāti, Nariṣyanta, Nābhāga [or Nṛga] and Diṣṭa as the seventh one. Then, oh chastiser of the enemy, there are Tarūṣa [or Karūṣaka], Pṛṣadhra and Manu's tenth son who is known as Vasumān [or Kavi, see also 9.1: 11-12]. (4) Oh King, the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Vivedevas, the Maruts, the Aśvins and the Ṛbhus are the demigods [during this period] and Purandara is their Indra. (5) Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Bharadvāja are known as the seven sages. (6) The appearance of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu that took place during this period was the one of Lord Vāmana. He was the youngest Āditya born from mother Aditi and father Kaśyapa Muni. (7) I briefly described the seven periods of the Manus, let me also tell you about the future Manus endowed with the powers of Viṣṇu [see 8.1 & 8.5].

(8) Saṁjñā and Chāyā, the two wives of Vivasvān who were the daughters of Viśvakarmā, oh King, I both described to you previously [see 6.6: 40-41]. (9) Some mention a third wife of Vivasvān: Vaḍavā. From the three of them there were of Saṁjñā three children born - a daughter Yamī and the sons Yama and Śrāddhadeva. Now hear about the children of Chāyā. (10) There was Sāvārṇi [a son], the daughter Tapatī who later became the wife of king Saṁvaraṇa and Śanaiścara [Saturn] who was the third one. The two Aśvins were the sons born from Vaḍavā. (11) When the eighth period arrives Sāvārṇi will become the Manu. The sons of Sāvārṇi, oh ruler of man, are Nirmoka, Virajaska and others. (12) The Sutapās, the Virajas and the Amṛtaprabhas will belong to the demigods and Bali, the son of Virocana, will become the Indra. (13) Having donated the entire universe to Viṣṇu who begged him for three steps of land, he [Bali] will achieve the post of Indra. Thereafter renouncing he will achieve the perfection of life. (14) He, Bali, bound by the Supreme Lord, was as a token of His appreciation again favored with the kingdom of Sutala where being

situated he today still occupies a position more opulent than the one of Indra in heaven. (15-16) Gālava, Dīptimān, Paraśurāma, Aśvatthāmā, Kṛpācārya, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and our father Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Lord [as a philosopher] will, because of their yoga practice, be the seven sages during the eighth *manvantara*. They at present are engaged in their respective hermitages, oh King. (17) Sārvabhauma, the Lord and Master [over the world] will, fathered by Devaguhya, be born from Sarasvatī and take away by force the lands of Purandara [Indra] and give them to Bali.

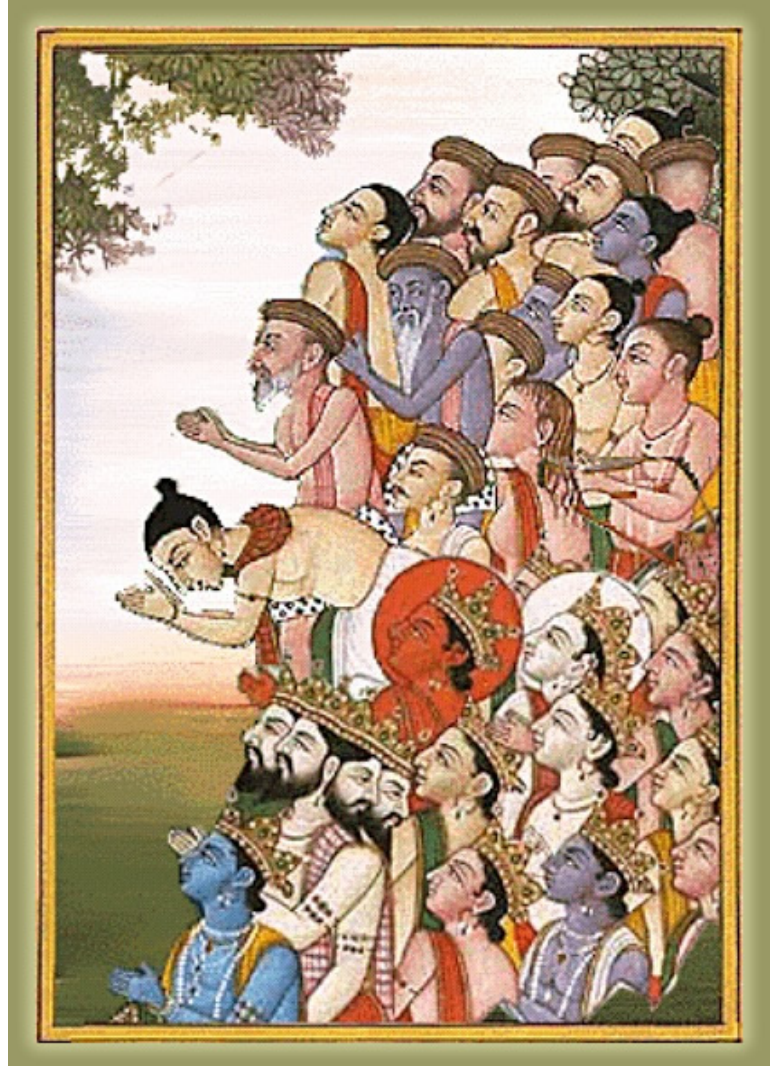
(18) **D**akṣa-sāvarṇi, the ninth Manu, born as the son of Varuṇa, will have Bhūtaketu, Dīptaketu and others as his sons, oh King. (19) The Pāras, the Marīcigarbhas and others will be the demigods, the king of heaven will be known as Adbhuta and the seven sages of that period will be headed by Dyutimān. (20) Ṛṣabhadeva, a partial incarnation of the Supreme Lord, will, with Āyusmān as His father, take birth from the womb of Ambudhārā. Adbhuta will because of Him enjoy all opulence of the three worlds.

(21) **T**he tenth Manu will be Brahma-sāvarṇi, son of Upaśloka. His sons will be Bhūriṣeṇa and others and the twice-born souls will be headed by Haviṣmān. (22) Haviṣmān, Sukṛta, Satya, Jaya, Mūrti [and others] are the [seven] sages during that period, the Suvāsanas, the Viruddhas and others will be the demigods and Śambhu will be the controller of the Suras [the Indra]. (23) One of the Supreme Lord's plenary portions, Viśvakṣeṇa, will take birth from the womb of Viśvūcī in the home of Viśvasraṣṭā and will make friends with Śambhu.

(24) **D**harma-sāvarṇi will be the eleventh Manu to appear in the future. This self-realized soul will have Satyadharma and others as his ten sons. (25) The Vihaṅgamas, Kāmaga-

mas and Nirvāṇarucis are the demigods then and Vaidhṛta will be their Indra. The seven sages are Aruṇa and others. (26) A partial incarnation of the Lord known as Dharmasetu will be born from the womb of Vaidhṛtā as the son of Āryaka and will rule the three worlds.

(27) **R**udra-sāvarṇi, oh King, will appear as the twelfth Manu and Devavān, Upadeva and Devaśreṣṭha and others will be his sons. (28) Ṛtadhāmā will be the Indra for that period, the demigods will be headed by the Haritas and Tapomūrti, Tapasvī, Agnīdhṛaka and others will be the sages. (29) The mighty Svadhāmā, a partial incarnation of the Lord who Satyasahā will beget by Sunṛtā, will rule that period of Manu.



(30) **T**he self-realized soul Deva-sāvarṇi will be the thirteenth Manu and Citrasena, Vicitra and others will be his sons. (31) The Sukarmās and Sutrāmas will become the demigods, Divaspati will be the Indra and Nirmoka and Tattvadarśa and others will be the sages then. (32) Yogeśvara, a partial incarnation of the Lord, will appear from the womb of Bṛhatī as the son of Devahotra and will endeavor for the sake of Divaspati [the Indra].

(33) **I**ndra-sāvarṇi will be the fourteenth Manu and from his semen Uru, Gambhīra, Budha and others will be born. (34) The Pavitras and Cāk-ṣuṣas will be the demigods, Śuci will be the king of heaven and Agni, Bāhu, Śuci, Śuddha, Māgadha and others will be the ascetics. (35) For that period, oh great king, the Lord will appear in the womb of Vitānā as Bṛhadbhānu, the son of Satrāyaṇa, in order to promote all spiritual activities.

(36) **O**h King, the estimated time of the past, the present and the future of these fourteen Manus I have described to you, covers a thousand *mahāyugas* or one *kalpa* [one day of Brahmā, see also picture].'

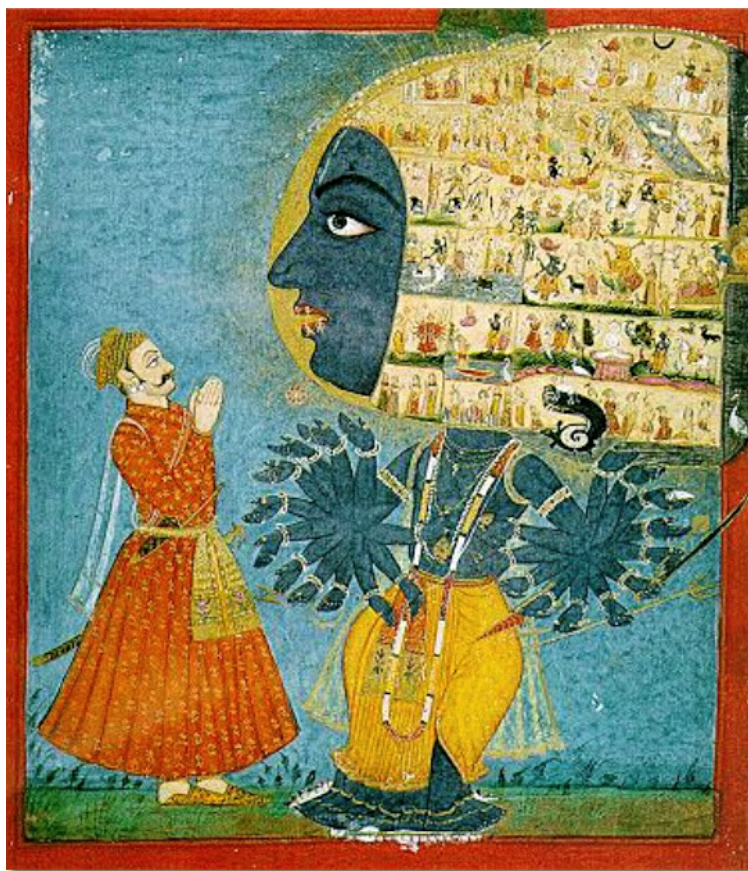
Chapter 14

The System of Universal Management

(1) **T**he king said: 'Oh great sage, can you please describe to me the activities in which all these Manus and the others are engaged during each *manvantara* and who appoints them?'

(2) **T**he ṛṣi said: 'Oh King, the Manus and all their sons, the sages, the Indras and the godly souls no doubt all resort under the rule of the Original Person. (3) The Lord of Sacrifice, Yajña, and the other incarnations of the Supreme Personality I already discussed, oh

King, constitute the lead followed by the Manus and others in charge of the universal affairs. (4) In disregard of the penance as [exemplified] by the sages, in the course of a *mahāyuga* the Vedic instruction is lost that promotes the *sanātana dharma* [the customary Vedic duties according to status and vocation, see also 3.12: 41]. (5) With that in mind the Manus are engaged, for as long as they are present in this world, in directly establishing this fourfold dharma as instructed by the Lord, oh ruler of man [see also B.G. 4: 1]. (6) Till the end of the era the rulers of the universe [the heirs of Manu] execute that order just as the demigods and the other divisions of enjoyers of the results of the sacrifices do this [see also B.G. 4: 2]. (7) Indra maintains all the places of the three worlds by providing all the rain that the world needs and [thus] enjoys the excellent opulence of the three worlds that is given by the Supreme Lord. (8) In every *yuga* the Lord assumes the forms of liberated persons [the perfected souls or the Siddhas] to explain the transcendental knowledge, He assumes the forms of great saints [ṛṣis]



to explain what karma entails [performing rituals] and He assumes the forms of great lords of yoga in order to teach the science of unifying in consciousness. (9) In the form of the founding fathers [the Prajāpatis] He creates offspring, to annihilate the miscreants He assumes the form of kings and in the form of time He is there to put an end to everything that became different in following the basic qualities of nature. (10) People who under the influence of *māyā* are bewildered by the illusion of His names and forms and [approach Him with] different views [*darśanas*], are looking for Him but cannot find Him [compare B.G. 18: 66]. (11) With all these changes [of the Manus] that I described as taking place in one day of Brahmā [one *kalpa*] I [thus] reported about the fourteen *manvantaras* the scholars speak about.'

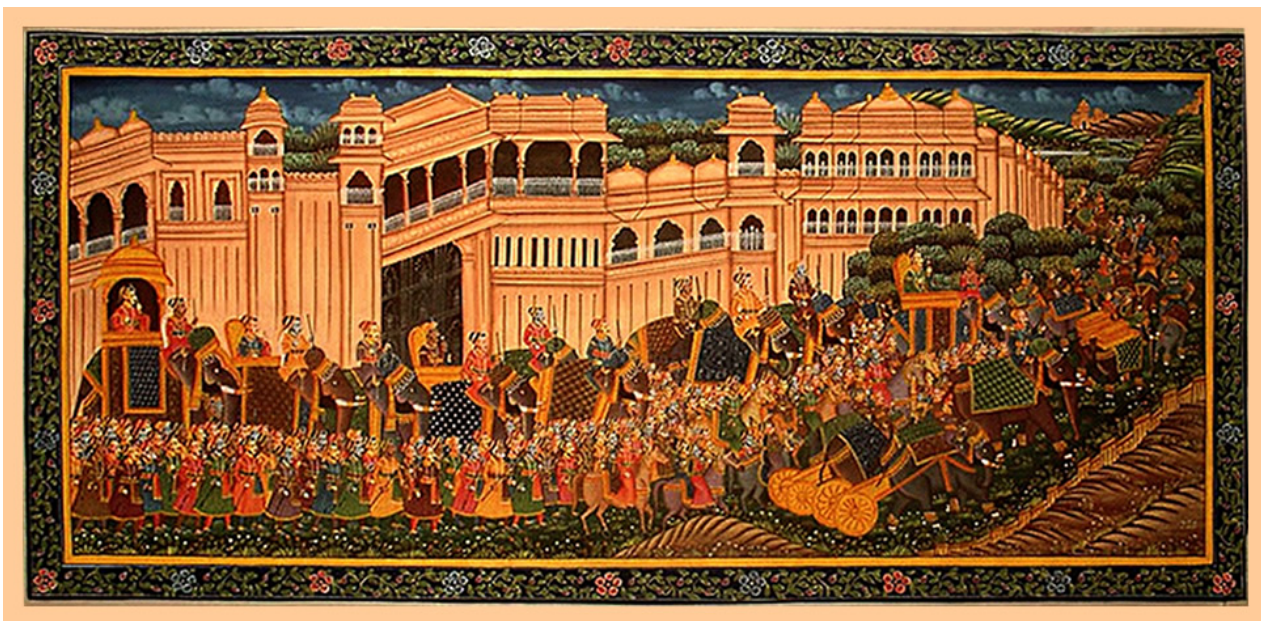
Chapter 15

Bali Mahārāja Conquers the Heavenly Places

(1-2) **T**he king said: 'Why did the Lord, the Controller of all living beings, like a poor man beg Bali for three steps of land and why did He fetter him despite his donation? We would very much

like to understand all this begging of the Controller, who is so complete in Himself, as also the arrest of Bali in spite of his innocence.'

(3) Śrī Śuka said: 'Bali, being defeated by Indra and deprived of his opulence and his life [see 8.11], was resuscitated by the followers of Bhṛgu [Śukrācārya and his pupils]. He [then] as a great soul and disciple proved his respect for them by offering in full surrender everything he had. (4) The brahmin followers of Bhṛgu, who enjoyed a great authority, were very pleased with him who wanted to conquer the heavenly places [of Indra] and engaged him in a sacrifice called Viśvajit. For that purpose they first, according to the regulations, subjected him to a great purification ritual [*abhiṣeka*]. (5) From the blazing fire, that was honored with oblations of ghee, a brilliant chariot appeared drawn by horses with the same color as those of Indra [yellow]. It was covered with gold and silk and was adorned with a banner marked with a lion. (6) There was a special gilded bow, two quivers with an inexhaustible supply of arrows and a celestial armor. His grandfather [Prahāda] donated a garland of never fading flowers and Śukrācārya gave him a conch shell. (7) After he, on the advice of the brahmins, had performed the ritual and thus by their grace had obtained the fighting gear, he circumambulated



the scholars, offered his obeisances and with due respect bade Prahlāda Mahārāja farewell. (8-9) Upon next having ascended the divine chariot that was donated by Śukrācārya, the great charioteer, decorated with his garland, covered by his armor and equipped with his bow, took up a sword and quiver of arrows. With his golden bangles on his arms and the rings in his ears that glittered with their sapphires, he from his elevated position on the chariot shone like the fire of worship on an altar. (10-11) Surrounded by his men and the other Daitya leaders equal to him in opulence, strength and beauty, they seemed to drink in the sky and burn the directions with their looks. Having gathered the greatest Asura warriors they went to the supremely wealthy capital of Indra, making the earth tremble under their feet.

(12) **T**hat place was most agreeable with orchards and gardens like the beautiful Nandana garden. It was full of pairs of chirping birds, madly humming bees and eternal trees with branches overlaid with leaves, flowers and fruits. (13) They were crowded with groups of swans, cranes, cakravāka birds, ducks, lotus flowers and beautiful, sporting women protected by the godly souls. (14) The ever worshipable river goddess surrounded the city with trenches filled with celestial Ganges water outside the parapeted ramparts with the color of fire. (15) The gates that gave access to the city made of marble, the doors [of the houses] covered by golden plates and the many, carefully laid out public roads, were all constructed by Viśvakarmā. (16) It was replete with assembly houses, courtyards, roads, and countless opulent palaces. The crossroads were constructed with natural stone and had sitting places adorned with pillars and coral. (17) In that city one found the most beautiful, ever young women glittering like the flames of a fire, who cool, warm, round breasted and well decorated, always wore impeccably clean clothes. (18) The breezes blowing in the streets carried the fragrance of the fresh aromatic flowers that had slipped down from the hair of the demigod women. (19) The divine sweethearts passed on the streets through the white fragrant smoke of the aguru incense that was burned behind the windows with golden filigree. (20) There were canopies strewn with pearls and gold, a vari-

ety of flags that adorned the domes of the palaces and peacocks, pigeons and bees that vibrated their sounds. The women in their heavenly buildings sang thereto in chorus about their happiness. (21) The city with all its brilliance so beautiful and pleasing with the singing of the Gandharvas, the solo instruments, the dancing and the sounds of flutes, vīṇās, drums, conch shells and kettledrums, all perfectly in tune, defeated the splendor of beauty personified. (22) No godless people roamed the streets there, no one was envious or of violence against other creatures, no one cheated and no one was of false prestige, lust or greed. All who moved around there were completely free from all of that. (23) And it was that city of God that from the outside on all sides was attacked by him, [Bali,] the commander of the troops provided by Śukrācārya, who loudly resounding his conch shell created fear among all the ladies protected by Indra.

(24) **I**ndra, facing the situation, understood Bali's fervent zeal and addressed with the following words the spiritual master [Bṛhaspati] in the company of the godly souls: (25) 'Oh my lord, who gave Bali, our enemy from the past, the great fervor and prowess I am afraid we are unable to withstand? (26) There is no one to be found who can counter this [opposition of Bali]. It is as if he, having risen like the fire at the end of time, with his mouth wants to drink in and lick up the whole world and with his vision wants to set ablaze all directions. (27) Please tell us, what is the cause of the formidable prowess of our enemy? What is the source of all this energy, strength, grip and zeal?'

(28) **Bṛhaspati** said: 'Oh Indra, I know how your enemy could rise against you. He derives his power from being a disciple of the mighty brahmins who are the followers of Bhṛgu. (29) Being that powerful this strong man cannot be defeated by someone like you or by anyone belonging to you. Except for the Supreme Controller, the Lord, no one will be able to vanquish him now that he is endowed with a superior spiritual strength. To oppose him is just as useless as to oppose the lord of death. (30) Therefore you all must give up your place in the heavenly kingdom, keep out of sight and leave for elsewhere to await the time your en-

emy is past his prime. (31) He who now is so very mighty as a consequence of the brahminical power invested in him, will together with all his friends and helpers find his demise because of insulting the very same power.'

(32) **T**hus being advised by their spiritual master on what they had to do, they, the gods who could assume any form they liked, gave up their heavenly kingdom and departed. (33) After the gods had left, Bali, the son of Virocana, took hold of the city where the residents of heaven had their stay and brought the three worlds under his control. (34) Because he was their disciple, the followers of Bhṛgu, who were very pleased with the conqueror of the universe, told him to devote himself to a hundred [*aśvamedha*] horse sacrifices. (35) From performing those sacrifices his fame spread in all directions of the three worlds so that he shone with a glory equal to that of the moon. (36) Having won the favor of the brahmins he, enjoying an opulence and prosperity like that of the demigods, deemed himself most happy with all that he had conceived and done so greatly.'

Chapter 16

Aditi Initiated into the Payo-vrata Ceremony, the Best of All Sacrifices

(1) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'As soon as her sons thus had yielded to the Daityas, their mother Aditi began to lament helplessly over the loss of the heavenly kingdom. (2) When one day the mighty sage Kaśyapa [her husband] after a long time came out of his *samādhi* [yogic trance], he went to her quarters and found them sad and joyless. (3) After he respectfully was welcomed by Aditi and had accepted a sitting place, he addressed her, thoughtful of her depression, as follows, oh best of the Kurus. (4) 'Has something unfortunate happened in relation to the brahmins, oh gentle one, or do you have difficulty with the dharma in the world of today or with the people around you who are subjected to the whims of death? (5) Or, my dearest princess, has something gone awry with the religion, the finances or the fulfillment of your de-

sires in this household life, that even joins those who fail to do yoga? (6) Or were you perhaps overly attached to your family members, because of which you could not offer unexpected guests in your home a proper welcome so that they walked out on you? (7) Not even being welcoming to uninvited guests by offering them a glass of water, a home is abandoned by them and worth nothing more than a jackal's den. (8) Or is it so that you during the time of my absence, oh finest one, because of a sad mind maybe forgot to perform your oblations of ghee in the fire, my sweet wife? (9) When an attached householder is of worship, when he performs *pūjā*, he will achieve the fulfillment of all his desires and attain heaven. It are the brahmins and the fire after all that are the mouth of Viṣṇu, of Him who is the heart and soul of all God-conscious people [compare B.G. 9: 26]. (10) Are your sons all faring well, my virtuous wife? I notice you are worried about something.'

(11) **Śrī** Aditi said: 'Oh brahmin, there is nothing wrong with the twice-born souls, the cows, the dharma and the people around me. Your household is the best place to take care of the three goals of life [*kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*], my dear husband. (12) The fire, the guests, the servants and the beggars were all treated properly. By constantly thinking of you, oh brahmin master, nothing was missed. (13) Oh my lord, what desire of mine would not be fulfilled with in my heart your good self as the founding father and the reminder of dharma? (14) Even though the Supreme Controller [in particular] takes care of the devotees, oh my lord, you in your goodness, from the Asura on, are equal-minded towards each and everyone who, originating from either your body or your mind, is gifted with one of the three qualities of goodness, passion or slowness, oh son of Marīci [compare B.G. 4: 11 and 9: 29]. (15) Therefore, oh controller, consider the welfare of me, your servitor. We are now, oh gentle one, because of our enemies bereft of our opulence and residence. Please protect us, oh master! (16) Exiled by the same powerful enemies who took away all our opulence, beauty, reputation and homes, I drowned in an ocean of trouble. (17) Oh saintly man, best of our well-wishers, be so kind to consider our good fortune so that my offspring may recover all that was lost.'

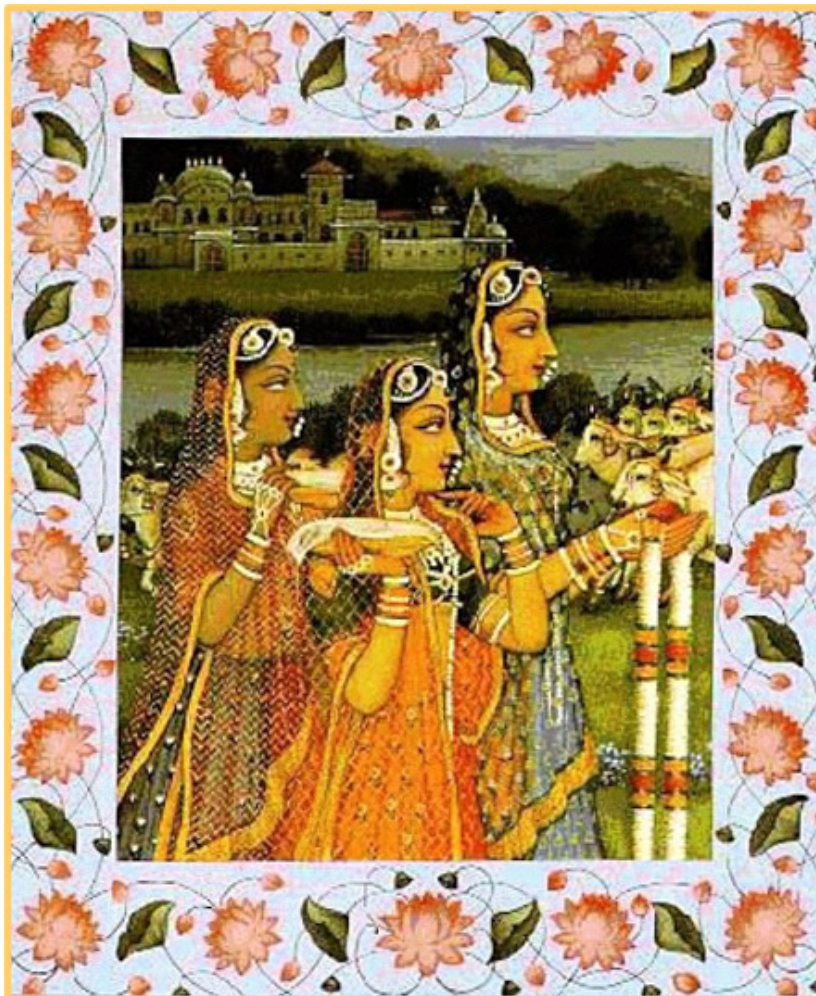
(18) Śrī Śuka said: 'This way being beseeched by Aditi he said with a smile to her: 'Oh how powerful is this *māyā* of Viṣṇu because of which the entire world is caught in emotional bondage. (19) What is this material body made of the elements? It is not the soul. And what is this soul transcendental to the material world? Who are they, the husband and the children [to whom one is tied] because of one's bewilderment [see B.G. 2: 13, 5.5: 1, 7.5: 31]? (20) Exercise respect for Vāsudeva, the spiritual master of the entire world, the Original Person Janārdana, He who, residing in the core of everyone's heart, defeats all enemies. (21) He, the Lord merciful to the poor, will fulfill your desires. I think that nothing compares to the devotional service unto the Supreme Lord, it never fails [see also 2.3: 10].'

(22) Śrī Aditi said: 'Oh brahmin what are the rules I have to follow to please the Lord of the Universe, so that what I would like, by His grace actually will be fulfilled [see also B.G. 7: 16]? (23) Oh husband, oh best of the twice-born souls, teach me the *vidhi*, the regulative principles [or the method] for making sacrifices to the Lord [see 1.17: 24 and 3.11: 21], so that the Godhead will soon be pleased with me, now lamenting with all my sons.'

(24) Śrī Kaśyapa said: 'I will explain to you the practice that satisfies Keśava and about which the almighty one born on the lotus [Brahmā] spoke when I, desiring to beget offspring, asked him this question [see B.G. 4: 2]. (25) During the bright half of the month Phālguna [February/March] one should for twelve days [till Dvādaśī] respect the vow to drink only milk [*payo-vrata*] and filled with supreme devotion, be of worship unto the Lotus-eyed One [see also 7.5: 23-24]. (26) When the moon is dark one should smear oneself with the dirt dug up by a boar - if available - and enter a stream of water chanting this mantra: (27) 'Oh divine mother [earth], you, desiring a stable place, were lifted from the bottom of the ocean on the tusk of Lord Varāha [see 3.13: 30]. Can you please wash away all my sins [and their reactions]? I offer you my obeisances.' (28) After having finished the daily observances, the godhead should be wor-

shipped in one's shrine with full attention for the deities [see also 7.14: 39-40], the altar, the sun, the water, the fire and the guru [see also 7.14: 39-40]: (29) 'I offer my respectful obeisances unto You, oh Supreme Lord, oh Original Personality and Best One of All, residing in the heart of all living beings, oh Vāsudeva, omnipresent witness. (30) My reverence unto You, the Unseen One, the Transcendental Person of the Primal Reality, the knower of the twenty-four elements [see glossary] and the original source of the analytic order of yoga. (31) My respects unto You, the Enjoyer of the three types of rituals [of karma, *jñāna* and *upāśanā* or bhakti, or fruitive work, spiritual knowledge and devotional service] with Your two heads [of *prāyaṇīya* and *udāyaṇīya*, the beginning and the end of the sacrifices], three legs [*savana-traya*, the three daily soma libations to solar time], four protruding horns [the Vedas to the bull of dharma] and seven hands [the *chandas*, ways of pleasing, mantras like the *Gāyatrī*, see also 5.21: 15], my obeisances unto the embodiment of all knowledge. (32) I honor You appearing as Śiva or Rudra, You as the reservoir of all potencies and all insight. My obeisances unto the Supreme Master of all living beings. (33) My reverence for You as Hiraṇyagarbha [Brahmā], the source of all life and the Supersoul of the Universe. I bow for You, the embodiment of the power and cause of the unification of consciousness in yoga. (34) My esteem for You, the Original Godhead and Inner Witness of all. I offer You my respects who as Nara-Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi assumed the form of a human being, that Lord I offer my obeisances. (35) You, as blackish as a marakata gem [a kind of emerald], You the Controller of Lakṣmī and the Killer of Keśī, You clad in yellow, I again and again offer my respects. (36) You are to all entities the Bestower of all Benedictions, the Most Worshipable One and the Best of All Who Give Blessings, and for that reason wise people worship the dust of Your feet as the source of all happiness. (37) He for whose sake all the gods and the Goddess of Fortune, desirous of the fragrance of His lotus feet, are engaged in devotional service, may He, the Supreme Lord, be pleased with me.'

(38) By chanting these mantras, one should with faith and devotion be engaged in calling for, in



inviting, the Master of the Senses, Hṛṣīkeśa, and honor Him in every respect with the help of the necessities of worship. (39) This way honoring Him with incense, flowers, etc., one should bathe the Almighty One with milk and dress Him and give Him a sacred thread and ornaments. After touching [or offering] the water for washing the lotus feet, one should [again], with fragrance and smoke and such, be of worship with the twelve-syllable mantra ['*oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*' see also 6.8: 3 and 4.8: 53]. (40) After offering fine rice - if available - cooked in milk with ghee and molasses to the deity, one should offer oblations in the fire chanting the same mantra. (41) Thus having worshiped the deity with also offering betel nuts with spices, the food of the sacrifice [*prasāda*] should by the offerer himself be offered to the devotee of the Lord to eat, with water for washing his hands and mouth. (42) After repeating

the mantra one-hundred-and-eight times [doing *japa*], one should offer various prayers unto the Greatest One, next circum-ambulate Him and then pay one's respect by prostrating oneself joyously. (43) When one in acceptance has taken the remnants of the sacrifice to one's [fore-]head and then has deposited them in a sacred place, minimally two men of learning and merit [brahmins] should be fed with sweet rice. (44-45) Properly having honored them one next with their permission, together with friends and relatives may eat the remnants of the *prasāda*. From the first day on one, of course, at night should observe celibacy for the duration of the *payo-vrata*, in which one early in the morning, as is described, after having bathed, closely following the *vidhi*, bathes [the *mūrti*] with milk. (46) With drinking [milk] only following this vow one should with faith and devotion continue with the worship of Viṣṇu, as stated offering obla-

tions in the fire, as also be faithful to the obligation of feeding the brahmins. (47) One should proceed this way with the 'vow of drinking only' day after day, for the full twelve days worshiping the Lord with fire sacrifices before the deity and pleasing the twice-born souls [and one's kin] with food. (48) Beginning with the day of *pratipat* ['running to meet'] until the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month, one should observe celibacy, sleep on the floor and bathe three times a day. (49) Depending on Vāsudeva as the supreme resort, one should refrain from great and small sensual pleasures, from discussing trivial subjects and from violence towards all living beings.

(50) Next on the thirteenth day proceeding in accordance with the regulations as laid down in the scriptures, the Almighty One [Viṣṇu] should be bathed with five substances [milk, yogurt, ghee,

sugar and honey]. (51-52) By reciting the many hymns [or *sūkta*] for Lord Viṣṇu who resides in the hearts of all, the miserly mentality [of not spending] must be given up to the offerings of the milk and grains in grand worship. With great attention one thus should worship the Original Personality with the offerings of the food that was so carefully prepared to please His person. (53) Try to understand that when one worships the Lord [*viṣṇu-ārādhana*], the spiritual master [the *ācārya*] who is so well versed in the spiritual knowledge and also the priests, should be satisfied with clothes, ornaments and many cows. (54) Oh pious lady, the brahmins and all people assembled there should as much as possible receive the *prasāda* of the food of goodness [B.G. 17: 8] that so meticulously was prepared with milk and ghee. (55) The guru and the priests should be financially compensated and the food should by all means even be distributed to the simpleminded souls and the poor, for also they should be rewarded for gathering for the ceremony. (56) After also having fed all the poor, the blind, the averse and so on, one should, with that kind of understanding having pleased Lord Viṣṇu, together with one's friends and relatives eat from the *prasāda* oneself. (57) One should from the first day till the last worship the Supreme Lord with dancing, beating drums and songs, reciting mantras, offering prayers and reading the stories [aloud].

(58) **T**his instruction that I have now described to you in great detail concerning the supreme process called *payo-vrata* for honoring the Original Person, was related to me by my grandfather [Brahmā]. (59) Oh greatly fortunate lady, now worship with self-discipline, in a pure state of mind, the Inexhaustible Lord Keśava by properly following this process. (60) Of all religious ceremonies this one is called *sarva-yajña* ['the one covering all sacrifices']. When one, oh good lady, also being of charity pleases the Lord this way, this sacrifice is understood to be the very essence of all austerities [*]. (61) Of all possible regulations the one as mentioned is indeed the most direct and best way to control the senses effectively, for Adhokṣaja, the One beyond the Senses, is pleased with the austerity, the vows and the sacrifice [see also: 1.2: 8]. (62) The Supreme Lord being satisfied by your

faithfull observance according to the rules of this vow, will therefore soon bestow all benedictions upon you.'

*: Lord Viṣṇu is in the West worshiped in every temple of the Caitanya-Vaiṣṇavas [the Hare Kṛṣṇas] according to a schedule of twenty-four hours of engagement in performing *kīrtana*, chanting the *Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra*, offering palatable food to Lord Viṣṇu and distributing this food to Vaiṣṇavas and others.

Chapter 17

The Supreme Lord Agrees to Become Aditi's Son

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Aditi, thus being advised by her husband Kaśyapa, oh King, faithful to his words unrelentingly executed this vow for twelve days. (2-3) With undivided attention and fortitude conscientious unto the Controller, the Supreme Personality, in full control of the senses that are as strong as horses, with the mind as the charioteer of intelligence and with the intelligence one-pointed unto the Supreme Lord [see also B.G. 3: 42], the Soul of the Complete, she thus fully focussed on Vāsudeva performed [the ceremony] according to the *payo-vrata* vow of fasting. (4) My best one, the Supreme Lord, the Original Person, then appeared before her, dressed in yellow and with His four arms, carrying the conch, the *cakra*, the club [and the lotus flower]. (5) When she saw Him she got up immediately and offered, with her mind in rapture, her obeisances, prostrating herself with the greatest respect before Him. (6) Rising to her feet and prepared to be of worship with her hands folded, she, because of her blissful enrapture, could not proceed. Overwhelmed, with her hair standing on end and the entire frame of her body trembling because of the utter pleasure of enjoying His vision [*darśan*], she remained silent with the tears that filled her eyes. (7) With a voice that constantly faltered because of the love she felt, oh best of the Kurus, it was as if Aditi Devī, staring at the Lord, through her eyes was drinking the Husband of Ramā [see 8.8: 8], the En-

joyer of all Sacrifices and the Master of the Universe. (8) Śrī Aditi said: 'Oh Lord of the Sacrifices, Personality of all Offers, oh Infallible One to whose feet we are pilgrim-ing, You are known as the ultimate shelter, as the One to hear and sing about is so auspicious. You are the original One who appeared to diminish the dangers of the material existence of the souls of surrender. Oh Controller, oh Supreme Lord, be so good and grant us the [divine] happiness, You are the refuge of the downtrodden. (9) I offer You my obeisances who are the all-pervading Soul of the universe, the fully independent One, the Greatest One who by the power of the modes accepts the full responsibility for the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the universe. My respects for You, the Lord who, from His original position, eternally promotes the knowledge of the complete whole by which the darkness of the self is dispersed completely. (10) With You being satisfied, oh Complete and Unlimited One, all things become possible: a life as long as that of Brahmā, a certain body, a lover, unlimited material opulences in the higher, the lower and the intermediate worlds, all the [eight *siddhi*] yogic qualities, the three goals of *kāma*, *artha* and *dharma* [the *puruṣārthas*] and exclusive spiritual knowledge, not to mention benedictions like the defeat of human competitors and such!'

(11) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus hailed by Aditi, oh King, the Supreme Lord with the lotus eyes, the knower of the field [B.G. 13: 1-4] of all living entities, gave the following reply, oh son of Bharata. (12) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh mother of gods, I have understanding for your long standing desire in relation to your sons who were defeated by their rivals and driven out of their residence. (13) What you desire is to defeat in battle those mad Asura leaders, who are so proud of their strength, regain the victory of your opulence and reunite with your



sons in devotional service. (14) You would like to see the tears of the grieving wives of the enemies when they find them killed in battle by your sons under the lead of Indra. (15) The restoration of the full glory, reputation and opulence of your offspring, the joy of their lives and a place for them in heaven, is what you want to see. (16) All those Asura masters of war are now as good as invincible, oh Devī [goddess]. To My opinion no use of force will bring you the happiness, for they are all protected by the brahmins who enjoy My favor. (17) Nevertheless I must think of something to help you out, for I am very pleased with the vow you have observed. Someone who worships Me never deserves his belief to be fruitless, but that it leads to the desired result. (18) Because you in faithful austerity with the son of Marīci [Kaśyapa Muni] for the sake of your sons have worshiped Me with the *payo-vrata* vow and to the best of

your ability have prayed as should, I will become your son with a plenary portion of Myself and thus protect your other sons. (19) Oh sweet woman, thinking of Me as also being present within the form of your husband, lie with him, the spotless Prajāpati [see also B.G. 9: 29]. (20) Do not disclose this to others, nor even when someone asks, oh lady. All will be successful when that what is confidential with the gods is kept secret [see B.G. 18: 67-68].'

(21) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord this way having addressed her disappeared from the spot. Aditi, with the very rare accomplishment of having achieved that the Lord would be born from her, considered herself a success and went full of devotion straight to her husband. (22) Kaśyapa in the trance of his yoga with his infallible vision could understand that the Lord had entered him with a plenary portion of Himself. (23) Like the wind kindling fire in firewood, oh King, Kaśyapa then managed with his mind in trance to deposit in Aditi the semen that he in his penance had restrained for so long [see also B.G. 7: 11]. (24) Hiranyagarbha [Lord Brahmā] understanding that the Supreme Lord was now situated in the womb of Aditi, offered prayers in the form of His mystical names. (25) Lord Brahmā prayed: 'All glories unto Him, the Supreme Lord of the Glorious Deeds. I offer You, the Lord of the Transcendentalists, my obeisances. You, the Controller of the Modes of Nature, I worship again and again. (26) My allegiance to You who, previously born from Pṛṣṇi [a previous life of Aditi, compare 6.18: 1, the sons of Aditi], are always found in the Vedas, You who are full of knowledge, You From Whose Navel the Three Worlds Rose You are transcendental to and You as the All-pervading One present within the hearts of all living beings. (27) You as the original cause, the dissolution and the maintenance of the universe, are the reservoir of endless potencies whom one calls the Original Person. You are the Lordship, the Controller who is the Time that holds the entire universe in its grip, the way waves drag someone along who fell in them. (28) You indeed are of all living beings, whether they move about or not, the one who gave them that life. From You all the founding fathers originated, You are the Supreme Shelter of all who live the higher

life, oh Godhead. For all godly souls who fell down, You are the lifeboat that saves them from drowning.'

Chapter 18

Lord Vāmanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'The Eternal Being, He with the conch, the club, the lotus and the disc in His four hands, the yellow dress and the lotus petal eyes, He whose heroic acts are praised by Brahmā, consequently manifested Himself from Aditi. (2) With a pure, blackish complexion, the luster of two earrings in the form of sharks and a dazzling lotus face, the Supreme Personality with the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest wore bracelets and armlets, a shining helmet, a belt, a sacred thread and charming ankle bells. (3) As a swarm of sweetness seeking bees were humming around the Lord, who carried an extraordinarily beautiful flower garland and the Kaustubha gem around His neck, He vanquished the darkness of Kaśyapa's house with His effulgence. (4) That very moment one everywhere was filled with happiness; all living beings in the waters, in the mountains, in the higher worlds, in outer space and on earth. There was the full quality of each season, and all the cows, the tongues of the fire and the twice-born souls were at their best. (5) When the Lord took His birth, it was a most auspicious moment: all the planets and stars, the sun and moon, stood in a favorable position. It happened on Dvādaśī [the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of Bhādra] at noon [Abhijit], when the moon was in the house of Śravana. (6) Oh King, this exact moment of the appearance of the Lord, at Dvādaśī with the sun over the meridian, is the day the scholars call Vijayā. (7) The loud sounds of the different conches, drums, kettledrums, panavas, ānakas [other drums] and other instruments that were vibrated, amounted to a great tumult. (8) The heavenly dancing girls danced blissfully, the leading celestial singers sang and the sages, the demigods, the fathers of mankind, the ancestors and the fire gods all pleased the Lord with prayers. (9-10) The perfected souls, the souls of knowledge, the apelike [the warriors of Rāma],

those of superpower, the venerable souls, the treasure keepers, the benevolent, the reciters [the 'brothers of Garuḍa'], the greatest experts [the 'snakes'] and all the followers of the demigods, glorifying, dancing and praising, covered the residence of Aditi with flowers [compare 6.7: 2-8 and 5.5: 21-22]. (11) When Aditi saw that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, being conceived in happiness, by His own spiritual potency had assumed a body and had taken birth from her womb, she was struck with wonder. Also Kaśyapa, greatly amazed about it, exclaimed: 'All glory! [jaya!]



(12) **T**he Lord's body, complete with ornaments and weapons, cannot be seen materially, but for the divine purpose it was manifested by Him acting like an actor in a theater and could be seen in the form of a dwarf boy [Vāmana]. (13) To see Him as a *brahmacārī* dwarf made the great *ṛṣis* very happy and thus they performed, with the founding father Kaśyapa as their lead, all the ceremonies [like the *jāta-karma* birth-day ceremony]. (14) At His sacred thread ceremony the sun god chanted the Gāyatrī mantra [see note** at 5.7], Bṛhaspati gave the sacred thread and Kaśyapa offered Him a belt [of straw, signifying the twice-born status]. (15) Mother earth offered Him a deerskin, the moon god ruling the forest gave Him a staff, Aditi gave Him underwear to cover His body and from the ruler of heaven [Indra], the Master of the Universe received a parasol. (16) The Knower Inside [Brahmā] gave a waterpot, the seven sages donated *kuśa* grass and the goddess Sarasvatī gave the Imperishable Soul a string of *rudrākṣa* beads, oh King. (17) After He thus had received His sacred thread, the Ruler of the Yakṣas [Kuvera, the treasurer of heaven] de-

livered a pot for begging alms and Umā, the chaste mother of the universe, the wife of Śiva, personally provided the alms. (18) As a *brahmacārī* thus being welcomed by everyone, He outshone, as the best of them, with his brahmin effulgence the entire assembly that enjoyed the grace of all the great brahmin sages. (19) After having prepared and kindled a fire, He, like the best of the brahmins, strew [the *kuśa* grass] around it and fed the fire of worship with wood.

(20) **A**s soon as He heard about the glory of Bali as someone who under the guidance of Bhṛgu brahmins performs horse sacrifices, He headed for the location where they took place and with each step that He as the Complete and Fully Endowed Essence made on His way, He therewith imprinted the earth with His footsteps. (21) At the northern bank of the Narmadā river in the field of Bhṛgukaccha where all the priests of Bhṛgu were performing their rituals for the sake of the ultimate ceremony [the horse sacrifice], they saw Him in

their presence [radiating] like the risen sun. (22) The priests as also Bali, the instigator of the *yajña*, and all who had assembled there, were overshadowed by Lord Vāmana's splendor, oh King and wondered whether they saw the sun rising, the god of fire, or Sanat-kumāra who wanted to attend their ceremony. (23) While the Bhṛgu thus with their disciples were disputing in various ways, the Supreme Lord Vāmana, with in His hands His umbrella, rod and *kamandalu* filled with water, entered the arena of the Aśvamedha sacrifice. (24-25) The moment Vāmana, the learned, seemingly human child that was the Lord, with His *munja* belt of straw and the sacred thread around His waist, His deerskin upper garment and His matted locks of hair, arrived there and was seen by the priests of Bhṛgu with their disciples, they all stood up from their engagement in the fire sacrifice and appropriately welcomed the One who with His brilliance outshone them all. (26) The instigator of the sacrifice, delighted to see Him so beautiful in each of His lustrous limbs, offered Him a seat. (27) The Beauty of the Liberated Souls was there-upon with words of welcome worshiped by Bali Mahārāja who honored Him by washing His feet. (28) The water washing from His feet washes away the sins of all people. Bali knew the dharma and placed on his head the all-auspicious water that also by the god of gods, Lord Śiva who is marked with the emblem of the moon, in his supreme devotion was accepted on his head.'

(29) Śrī Bali said: 'We welcome You. My obeisances unto You, oh brahmin. What can we do for You? Oh noble soul, in my opinion You are the austerity of the brahmin seers in person. (30) The arrival of Your lordship today at our residence, satisfies all our forefathers, it purifies the entire family and completes the sacrifice we are performing now! (31) Today, oh brahmin son, my fires of sacrifice are properly served according to the injunctions. Oh, by the water that washed from Your lotus feet all my sins are destroyed and by Your small feet the earth is purified. (32) Whatever it is that You desire, oh *brahmacārī*, You may take from me, be it a cow, gold, a furnished residence, palatable food and drink or else a brahmin's daughter, prospering villages, horses, elephants or

chariots, oh best of the worshipable souls. As far as I am concerned, You may have whatever You wish.'

Chapter 19

Lord Vāmanadeva Begs Charity from Bali Mahārāja

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When He thus heard the very pleasing and faithful, dharmic words of the son of Virocana, the Supreme Lord praised him satisfied with the following words. (2) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh Lord of Man, what you have said is very true, befits the dynasty, is in accord with the dharma and adds to your repute. It proves the authority of the Bhṛgu brahmins and is of the peace of your grandfather [Prahlaḍa], your oldest ancestor in the afterlife. (3) No one in this dynasty has been as poor-minded as to break his promises unto the brahmins and not be charitable. (4) Because of the impeccable reputation of Prahlaḍa, who is like a clear moon in the sky, oh ruler, in your dynasty no kings are found who, in holy places or on the battlefield, were as low-minded not to respond to the requests of petitioners. (5) In this dynasty Hiranyākṣa was born who, alone wandering around on this earth to conquer its directions with his club, could not find a hero equal to him. (6) After Viṣṇu [as a boar] had delivered the world and with great difficulty had defeated him, He considered himself only victorious when He constantly thought of Hiranyākṣa's heroism [see 3.17-19]! (7) When his brother Hiranyakāśipu heard that he had been killed, he very angry went to the abode of the Lord to put an end to the One who had finished his brother [see 7.3]. (8) Seeing him with the trident in his hand coming towards Him like death personified, the Chief of the Mystics, the Knower of Time, Lord Viṣṇu, thought the following: (9) 'Wherever I go, this one here - like the death of each - will also go. I will therefore enter his heart, he only looks outside himself.' (10) Thus decided, oh King of the Asuras, He, invisible in His subtle body, entered the body of the persecuting enemy through the breath in his nostril. (11) Hiranyakāśipu searching His abode, found it empty. Enraged because he in spite of his power could not

see Viṣṇu in any direction of the surface of the earth, in outer space, in the sky, in the caves and in the oceans, he screamed loudly. (12) When he could not find Him anywhere he said: 'I have searched the entire universe for Him who killed my brother. He must have left for the place no one returns from, He must have died.' (13) Such an enmity to the point of death one does not find with materialistic people who only exhibit their anger out of ignorance or because of their ego. (14) Your father [Virocana], the son of Prahlāda, surrendered upon the request of the demigods his life to them, because of his affinity with the twice-born souls, even though he knew that they had dressed up as brahmins. (15) You yourself observed the dharma as followed by the brahmin householders, your forefathers, the great heroes and other highly elevated and famous souls. (16) Someone like you I ask for a bit of land. Oh King of the Daityas who can be so generous in his charity, I ask you for three paces of land to the measure of My footsteps. (17) There is nothing else I desire from you, oh munificent King, oh master of the universe. May the learned soul not suffer any want and receive by donations as much as he needs.'

(18) Śrī Bali said: 'Alas, oh brahmin scion, Your words may be welcome to the scholars and the elderly, but as a boy not bent on making demands, You are not quite aware of all the implications of Your self-interest. (19) For the person who with sweet words propitiates me, the one and only master of all the world, it is not very intelligent to ask for three steps of land when I can give an entire continent! (20) No one who once has approached me, deserves it to have to beg again and therefore, oh small *brahmacārī*, take

from me, as You desire, whatever would suit Your needs.'

(21) The Supreme Lord said: 'All sense objects capable of pleasing someone within these three worlds, together cannot satisfy the person who has no control over his senses, oh King [see also 5.5: 4]. (22) He who is not satisfied with three steps of land will neither be content with a complete continent of nine lands, for then he will desire to take possession of all the seven continents. (23) We heard that kings like Pṛthu and Gaya, who managed to rule all the seven continents, neither reached the end of their ambitions nor the end of their desire for wealth. (24) One should be satisfied with that what one accidentally happens to acquire. There is no happiness for a dissatisfied person who has no control over himself, not even when he possesses the three worlds [see also 7.6: 3-5, 5.5: 1 and B.G. 6: 20-23]. (25) When some-



one is dissatisfied with his money and sensual pleasures, there is no end to his materially determined existence [of repeatedly dying and starting all over again]. He, however, who is satisfied with that what was acquired by fate, applies for liberation. (26) The spiritual power and glory of a brahmin increases when he is satisfied with what he obtained by providence, but decreases with his dissatisfaction like a fire that is extinguished with water. (27) I therefore ask you who are so munificent as a benefactor, for three steps of land, for My purpose is met perfectly with acquiring nothing more than what is needed.'

(28) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus being addressed Bali said with a smile to Lord Vāmana: 'Now take from me what You want' and in order to give Him the land, he took up his water pot [so as to confirm his promise ritually with its water]. (29) Śukrācārya, the best of all knowers, guessed what Viṣṇu's plan was and addressed the Asura lord, his disciple, who was about to deliver the land to Lord Viṣṇu.'

(30) Śrī Śukrācārya said: 'This person, oh son of Virocana, is the immortal Supreme Lord Viṣṇu Himself. He took His birth from Kaśyapa and Aditi to serve the interest of the godly souls. (31) I think that what you promised is at odds with your intentions. You do not realize what you agreed upon, it is not right, for it entails great adversity for the Daityas! (32) He who presents Himself as a human child, is the Lord who teaches you a lesson. He will snatch away from you all material beauty and riches, power and repute, and give it to your enemy [Lord Indra, see also 7.10]. (33) With these three steps He will seize all the worlds by expanding to His universal form. How can you keep your position after you, like a fool, have given everything away to Viṣṇu! (34) One after the other He, with the first step, will take the earth and with the second step occupy outer space. In the ether expanding to His greatest size, where should He make his third step? (35) I think you will burn in hell forever, for that is what happens to people who do not keep their promises. Your Majesty cannot live up to the expectations you raised. (36) The sages do not favor any charity endangering one's livelihood, for it is because of one's capacity to maintain oneself, that sacrifice, charity, austeri-

ty and fruitful activity are possible in this world. (37) In order to be happy in this world as also in the next, one should divide one's earnings in five: one part is for the religion, one is for one's respectability, one for one's property, one for one's pleasure and one for the family. (38) Now listen to what, in this regard [concerning your promise] is stated in many Vedic verses, oh best of the Asuras. That what is true is preceded by the word *om* [AUM, 'yes', 'so be it'] and things said that were not preceded by that word are called untrue [false or deceptive, see also B.G 17: 24, 9: 17 and 8: 13]. (39) Understand the Vedic truth about flowers and fruits: one picks them from the body of a tree, but if the tree is not alive, then its causality, its root, is not fit and picking will be impossible [compare B.G. 8: 6]. (40) When a tree falls down it will, being uprooted, quickly dry out. Likewise one's material reality will also soon no longer be in order and come to naught [when its support has been uprooted*], that suffers no doubt. (41) The use of the syllable *om* entails that one separates oneself from [one's wealth], that one is freed from it; it factually entails that someone, with everything that he says with *om*, will suffer loss. When one, thus expressing oneself, donates in charity to beggars, one will see one's wealth diminished so that, because of that *om* exercise, there will not be enough for one's own sense gratification and self-realization. (42) Choose therefore now fully for yourself. It is a form of falsehood, but it is not completely untrue to say this [in favor of your own position], for speaking a complete lie [like the denial of your self-interest] would make you infamous, would make you a living corpse. (43) A lie that heals is better than a truth that wounds when one wants to charm a woman, wants to tell a joke, wants to marry, wants to make a living, in times of danger, when one must protect the cows and the brahminical culture or when one has to defend against violence.'

*: The temporal body is there for eternal things. Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī says: "One who rejects things without knowledge of their relationship to Kṛṣṇa is incomplete in his renunciation." (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.66)

Chapter 20

Lord Vāmanadeva Covers all Worlds

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Bali, the master of the house, thus being advised by the family priest, fell silent for a moment, oh King, and addressed after due consideration his guru. (2) Śrī Bali said: 'What your grace told me is true: for a householder to engage in dharmic actions may never constitute a hindrance to his economic interest, sensual pleasure, reputation and livelihood. (3) How can someone like me, an heir of Prahlāda, out of greed for possessions, as an ordinary cheater refuse to give a brahmin what he has promised him [*]? (4) There is nothing more irreligious than untruthfulness. Just as mother earth has told us: 'I can bear everything, but not a person who lies to others.' (5) I do not fear hellish conditions, nor poverty, nor an ocean of distress, nor a fall from my position, nor death as much as I fear to cheat a man of God. (6) Of what use are the riches and such that one has to give up when one leaves this world behind? Are they not meant for pleasing the man of God [the sage, the priest, the brahmin etc.]? (7) While looking after the good of all people, saints, like Dadhīci, Śibi and other great servants of God, have given up, on matters most difficult to forsake, to the point of their very lives. Then what objection would there be against donating the land? (8) Time takes away all the possessions of persons like the Daitya kings who, willing to sacrifice their lives, enjoyed this world, oh brahmin, but the reputation they achieved in this world time does not take away. (9) Oh learned sage, it is easy to find people who, not afraid to fight, are willing to give up their lives on the battlefield, but people willing to give away, with devotion, what they accumulated to a visitor of holy places when he arrives, are not that easily found [compare B.G. 17: 20]. (10) It is the glory of the munificent souls, they who are famed for their mercy, to become poor by satisfying the needs of the poor, not even mentioning what it means to them to satisfy knowers of the spiritual purpose like your good self. I will therefore give this celibate soul whatever He wants. (11) Each of you, fully aware of the Vedic way of offering, are, with the different attributes,

of the greatest respect in worshipping the Enjoyer of the Sacrifice. Whether He is Viṣṇu who came in order to bless me or else came to bring me down, I will give Him, oh sage, whatever land He desires. (12) I will not even retaliate when He, fearfully posing as a brahmin boy, deceives me as an enemy and arrests me despite my innocence. (13) If this person here is really the one glorified in the scriptures, He will never give up His reputation, whether He takes all the land after having killed me or rests in peace being killed by me.'

(14) Śrī Śuka said: '[Bali,] the highly elevated and divinely inspired character thus being fixed on truthfulness, thereupon was cursed by his guru for being such a disrespectful and obstinate disciple [see B.G. 10: 10]: (15) 'You, who so stubbornly consider yourself learned while going against my instructions, have in your impudence towards me proven to be a shameless ignoramus. Someone like you will soon lose all his opulence!' (16) [Even though] being cursed this way by his guru he, who as a great personality did not abandon his truthfulness, donated, after first offering water and duly having worshiped Vāmanadeva, [the land he had promised]. (17) Vindhyāvali, Bali's wife, that moment came forward being decorated with a pearl necklace, and brought a golden pot filled with water to wash the Lord's feet. (18) He, the worshiper of the most beautiful pair of feet, personally washed them and took, in great jubilation, the water on his head that purifies the entire universe. (19) That moment a shower of flowers was released by all the inhabitants of the higher worlds: the demigods, the singers of heaven, the scholars, the ones specially gifted and the venerable souls. They all most pleased hailed the rectitude of what the Asura king had done [compare 5.18: 12]. (20) The residents of heaven, the apeline and those of superpower, sounded thousands of drums and horns again and again and declared: 'What by Him, this great personality, has been achieved was a most difficult thing, for he delivered the three worlds to his opponent [Viṣṇu]!'

(21) Then the dwarf form of the Unlimited Lord began to expand most wondrously to the entire expanse of the threefold of matter: He stretched Himself out in every direction over all the land,



the sky, the planetary systems, outer space and the seas and oceans where the birds and the beasts, the humans, the gods and the saints were living. (22) Bali, together with all the priests, the teachers of example and the seekers of truth, could, within this body of Him as the Almighty One, of Him as the source of the qualities, see the entire threefold universe complete with its elements and the living beings with their senses, sense objects, mind, intelligence and false ego. (23) The lower world he saw under the soles of His feet, upon the feet he saw the surface of the land, the mountains he saw in the calves of the *virāt-puruṣa*, the aerial beings in the knees of the gigantic form and in His thighs he saw the different types of demigods. (24) He recognized the evening twilight in His garment, he saw the founding fathers in His private parts, he

saw himself together with his spokesmen in His hips, His navel was the complete of the sky, at His waist there were the seven seas and in the upper part of Urukrama [the 'far-stepping' Lord] he saw the stellar signs. (25-29) In His heart my best one, he saw the dharma, in the chest of Murāri he saw pleasing words and truthfulness and in His mind he saw the moon. In His bosom he found the goddess who always carries a lotus in her hands, and in His neck there was the complete of all the Vedic sound vibrations. In His arms he recognized all the gods led by Indra, in His ears all the directions were found, the luminaries formed the top of His head, the clouds were His hair, the whispers of the wind were in His nostrils, His eyes were the sun and in His mouth he saw the [sacrificial] fire. In His speech he heard the hymns of praise, he saw the god of the waters in His tongue, His eyebrows were the warnings and regulations, His eyelids were the night and the day, he saw anger in the Supreme Person's forehead and greed was situated in His lips. Lust was His touch, oh King, water was His semen, His back was irreligion, His marvels were found in the sacrifi-

cial ceremonies, in His shadows he saw death, the illusory energy was present in His smiles and in the hairs on His body he recognized the herbs and plants. With the rivers for His veins, the stones for His nails and with Lord Brahmā, the demigods and the sages for His intelligence, Bali saw all the moving and stationary living entities in the senses of His body [see also 2.1, 2.6, 3.12: 37-47 and B.G. 11].

(30-31) **W**hen the Asuras observed this entirety of all the worlds and souls, they were perturbed, oh King. Being faced with the Sudarśana disc with its unbearable heat and the bow Śārṅga resounding like thunder, the loud sound of His conch shell the Pāñcajanya and the great force of Viṣṇu's club the Kaumodakī, His sword the Vidyādhara, the shield

with the hundred moons and also His supreme quiver of arrows named Akṣayasāyaka, drove them to desperation. (32-33) His associates led by Sunanda and the other leaders and local divinities offered prayers to Him standing there with His brilliant helmet, bracelets and fish-shaped earrings, His Śrīvatsa-mark, the best of all jewels [the Kaustubha], His belt, yellow dress and His flower garland with bees about it. Oh King, manifesting Himself thus the Supreme Lord Urukrama covered with one footstep the entire surface of Bali's world, covered the sky with His body and covered the directions with His arms. (34) Making the second step He covered all the heavenly places and for the third step not a single spot of land remained, for Lord Urukrama with His stepping now had reached farther than the farthest place beyond Maharloka, Janaloka and Tapoloka [see also 5.17: 1].'

∗: Prabhupāda: 'There are two kinds of highly elevated devotees, called *sādhana-siddha* and *kṛpā-siddha*. *Sādhana-siddha* refers to one who has become a devotee by regular execution of the regulative principles mentioned in the *śāstras*, as ordered and directed by the spiritual master. If one regularly executes such devotional service, he will certainly attain perfection in due course of time. But there are other devotees, who may not have undergone all the required details of devotional service but who, by the special mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa - the spiritual master and the Supreme Personality of Godhead - have immediately attained the perfection of pure devotional service.' Bali Mahārāja became such a *kṛpā-siddha-bhakta* devotee.

Chapter 21

Bali Mahārāja Arrested by the Lord

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'He who appeared on the lotus [Brahmā] observed from the place of truth [from Satyaloka] how the light of his abode had been covered and had faded because of the effulgence of the Lord's toenails. Therefore, oh god of man, he approached Him together with vowed *brahmacārīs*, like the sages headed by Marīci and powerful mystics like Sanandana and the other

Kumāras. (2-3) Fully expert in the Vedas and their supplements, the regulations and the abstinence, being well versed in logic, history, didactics, the classical stories, the Vedic corollaries and such, they thereupon offered their obeisances at Lord Viṣṇu's lotus feet. They did this together with other visitors who, ignited by the winds of yoga and the fire of spiritual knowledge, free from fruitive activities had attained his abode by simply meditating on the self-born one. Lord Brahmā, the most celebrated Vedic authority, he who as a person had appeared on the lotus that had sprouted from His navel, then pleased Him by devoutly paying homage after first having worshiped Him with oblations of water [see also 3.8]. (4) The water from Lord Brahmā's *kamandalu*, purified from washing the feet of Lord Urukrama, oh king of the humans, became the [celestial] Svardhunī [the Ganges]. Its water flowing down from heaven purifies the three worlds, the same way the fame of the Supreme Lord purifies. (5) Lord Brahmā and the others, they who were the predominating deities of the different worlds, were of the greatest respect for their master [Vāmanadeva] and collected with all their followers the necessities for worshipping the All-powerful Soul who now had appeared in a reduced size. (6-7) With water for the feet and for the guests, flower garlands, all sorts of pulp to smear, fragrant incense and lamps, fried rice, whole grains, fruits, roots and sprouts, they offered their respects exclaiming 'Jaya, jaya' to the glory of His actions, thereby dancing, singing and playing instruments, like vibrating conch shells and beating kettledrums. (8) Jāmbavān, the king of the bears, blissfully sounded the bugle in every direction and called for a great festival for [celebrating] His victory. (9) The Asuras were very angry when they saw that all the land of their master, who had been so determined to be of sacrifice, was lost on the simple plea of three steps of land: (10) 'Is this brahmin friend not actually Viṣṇu Himself, the greatest of all cheaters, who assuming the form of a brahmin willfully tries to deceive us in the interest of the gods? (11) He, the enemy, in the form of a boy begging for a donation, stole everything away from our master who for the sacrifice gave up his exercise of power. (12) Favorable to the brahmins and always sworn to the truth, he, [Bali,] being initiated for



performing a *yajña*, is not able to speak a lie. (13) In service of our master it is therefore our duty to kill Him!' The Asura followers of Bali thus took up their different weapons. (14) Oh King, having taken up their tridents and lances to kill Vāmana, they with their angry minds all together rushed forward against the will of Bali. (15) But the associates of Viṣṇu who saw the Daitya soldiers coming, oh ruler, smiled, took up their weapons and threw them back. (16-17) Nanda and Sunanda came forward, as also Jaya, Vijaya, Prabala, Bala, Kumuda, Kumudākṣa, Viśvakṣena, Patattrirāt [Garuḍa], Jayanta, Śrutadeva, Puṣpadanta and Sāt-vata. They all together, as strong as a thousand elephants, killed the Asura soldiers.

(18) **W**hen Bali saw that his men were killed by the followers of the Original Personality, he remembered the curse of Śukrācārya [8.20: 15] and

commanded his angry men to retreat: (19) 'Oh Vipracitti, Rāhu and Nemi, please listen, do not fight, stop with this. It is not the right time to settle this. (20) The Master of All Living Beings, that Person of Control who decides about happiness and distress, can by human effort not be superseded, oh Daityas. (21) Formerly time worked in our favor and brought us the victory over the gods, but today time, which indeed is the Greatest Power [the Supreme Authority] in our existence, works against us. (22) No man is able to surpass the time factor by any power, counsel, cleverness, fortifications, spells, herbs, diplomacy or by whatever other means. (23) In the past you, favored by providence, managed to defeat many followers of Viṣṇu, but today they, who managed to prosper, are roaring that they defeated us in battle [see B.G. 18: 13-15]. (24) We will defeat them when fate works again in our favor, we therefore have to await the time of our luck.'

(25) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'After the Daitya and Dānava leaders had heard what their master said, they entered the lower regions, oh King, being driven there by the associates of Viṣṇu. (26) Thereafter, on the day when for the sacrifice the *soma* is extracted [*soma-pāna*], Bali was arrested by the son of Tārṁśya [Garuḍa] on the request of the Master of the King of the Birds [Lord Viṣṇu] and bound with the ropes of Varuṇa. (27) Because of the apprehension of the Asura leader by Viṣṇu, the mightiest one around, from every direction in the upper and lower worlds a great roar of disappointment rose. (28) Bereft of his luster he, the one so magnanimous and celebrated, oh King, remained determined as ever. Unto him thus being bound with Varuṇa's ropes the Supreme Lord Vāmana said: (29) 'You have given Me three steps of land, oh Asura. With two I occupied all the earth and now I have to make a third one. (30) As far as the sun, the moon and the

stars can shed their light and as far as the clouds are pouring rain, you own all the land. (31) In one step with My body occupying the sky in all directions I have covered the entire sphere of the earth [Bhūrloka] and with the second step I before your eyes occupied the higher worlds you own. (32) Unable to provide what you have promised, hell is your destination. Because also your guru is of this opinion, now go to that place where there is no happiness [see also 6.17: 28]. (33) Anyone who disappoints a petitioner by failing to give what he has promised, falls down. Far removed from a higher life, his desires will lead nowhere. (34) Proud of your possessions you have deceived Me with your promise. As a consequence of that falsehood you will have to reside in hell for a couple of years.'

You, the worshipable Lord, I consider the most favorable form for a human being, something one's mother, father, brother or friends cannot offer [see 10.14: 8]. (5) You are of us, Asuras, the unseen supreme guru who gave us the vision that many of us were deprived of in our blind materialistic arrogance. (6-7) Many of those who, of a different learning, were fixed on You in a constant enmity, achieved the state of perfection, a position which, as is known, equals that of the yogis. Despite being punished by Your Lordship who are so full of wonders, I am therefore not ashamed - nor do I suffer that much - from thus being bound with Varuṇa's ropes. (8) My grandfather [Prahlaḍa] who is appreciated by Your devotees, is famed all around for being a saint, as someone having You, the Supreme One, [as his shelter] when he had to

Chapter 22

Bali Mahārāja Surrenders His Life

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Thus having run into trouble with the Supreme Lord, oh King, Bali, the Asura king, despite his awkward position, was an unperturbed soul who replied positively with the following words. (2) Śrī Bali said: 'If, oh Lord Praised in the Verses, Your Goodness thinks that what I have promised proved to be false, oh Greatest of the Gods, then let me, in order to be just in this matter and not to have turned to cheating, offer You my head to put the third step of Your lotus feet. (3) I am not as afraid of residing in hell or of being bound in fetters, of facing hard to endure distress, a lack of funds or to be punished by You, as I am of defamation [compare B.G. 2: 34 and 6.17: 28]. (4) To be punished by



suffer all the nasty matters plotted by his father who was Your enemy [see 7.5]. (9) Of what use is this body that leaves you in the end? What is the service of all those profiteers who passing as relatives snatch away the inheritance? What is the need of a wife who only drags one more into the material world? And what is for a person certain of death the use of wasting his life with domestic attachments [see also 5.5: 8 and B.G. 18: 66]? (10) My grandfather, the great devotee who so deep in his wisdom was afraid of worldly association, was free from fear in his surrender to the immovable refuge of Your lotus feet, oh my Lord, oh Best of the Best Ones, even though You put an end to his own kind. (11) I, who by providence was arrested and with force was bereft of all my wealth, [to my luck] have now also been brought under the shelter of You, the enemy of our family. The fact that wealth is a temporary thing and that life may end any moment is something a narrow-minded person does not think about [see 7.5: 30].'

(12) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'When Bali thus discussed his position, Prahlāda, the favorite of the Lord [see 7.9], manifested himself right there, oh best of the Kurus, like the moon rising in the sky. (13) Indrasena [Bali], saw his grandfather, the most beloved one, present there in all his glory: with eyes as wide as lotus petals, beautifully built, dressed in saffron and with a body as dark as collyrium and with long arms. (14) Bound with the ropes of Varuṇa he could not as before offer the respect he owed him and thus he offered his obeisances, timidly bending his face downwards with eyes full of tears. (15) The moment the great devotee saw the Supreme Master, the Lord, sitting there being worshiped by followers like Sunanda, he approached Him with his head bent low and then, moved to tears in his jubilation, paid his respects by falling flat to the ground. (16) **Śrī Prahlāda** said: 'Your Lordship who granted Bali this so very great position of Indra, today has taken it all back and that is something I consider most beautiful. By denying him his opulence You have done him a great favor, because that was what stood in the way of his self-realization. (17) Who can properly recognize the purpose of his soul when even an educated, self-controlled person is bewildered by his opulence? I offer You Nārāyaṇa,

the Lord of the Universe, the omnipresent silent witness, my respectful obeisances.'

(18) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Oh King, then the mighty Hiraṇyagarbha [Brahmā] proceeded to speak to Madhusūdana [the Lord] in such a way that Prahlāda who stood there with folded hands could hear it. (19) But [that very moment] Bali's chaste wife, who saw that her husband was arrested, oh King, being caught by fear offered with folded hands her obeisances to Upendra [Lord Vāmana] and addressed Him with her face turned downwards. (20) **Śrī Vindhya**vali [his wife] said: 'You have created this threefold universe for the sake of Your pastimes. You are its proprietor, but now foolish people and others, oh Controller, ignorantly imposing themselves pose as proprietors. What do these shameless people have to offer You, the Supreme Creator, Master and Annihilator [compare B.G. 16: 13-15 and 18: 61]?'

(21) **Lord Brahmā** said: 'Oh Goodness of all Living Beings, oh Controller of Each, oh God of Gods, oh All-pervading One, please release this man now who has lost everything. Someone like him does not deserve it to be punished. (22) He gave to You all the lands and all the worlds. With a firm resolve everything he has achieved in his piety has been offered to You with an intelligence free from hesitation; all that he possessed, even his body. (23) At Your feet he honestly offered water, grasses and flower buds. How can such a worshiper, despite his most exalted offerings, despite his worship, after generously offering You the three worlds, deserve the pain given to him? Not being duplicitous, he deserves the highest destination [B.G. 9: 26]!'

(24) **The Supreme Lord** said: 'Oh Brahmā, it is My mercy to take away the riches from him who is led by it, for someone under the influence of material opulence takes pride in it and looks down on the entire world! (25) When the living entity, dependent because of its karma, from birth to birth moves through different species of life, it longs to attain the human life form [see also B.G. 13: 22]. (26) It is [also] to be regarded My grace when a person, because of his [human] birth, activities, age, physique, education, achievement, wealth and



other opulences, not has hardened in this pride. (27) Matters as a high birth and such, that are the cause of arrogance and bewilderment, [for a normal person] together constitute impediments for [attaining] full beatitude, but no, My devotee is not disturbed by them [see also 4.8-12]. (28) Bali, this best and most famous devotee among the Dānavas and Daityas, already surpassed the insurmountable deluding material energy. Despite losing his wealth, he was not taken aback. (29-30) Having lost all his riches, having fallen from his superior position, being reviled and arrested by his enemies, being deserted by his family and relatives, having suffered all kinds of uncommon hardship, being rebuked and cursed by his guru, he, fixed in his vow, did not forsake his truthfulness, the dharma that I so deceitfully for the sake of the gift spoke about. True to his word this man

never gave it up. (31) Through Me he has achieved a position that even for the immortal souls is most difficult to obtain; during the time of Sāvarṇi Manu [see 8.13: 10-11] he will become the Indra enjoying My full protection. (32) Till then he may go and live in Sutala [see 5.24: 18], the place created by [the heavenly architect] Viśvakarmā, where it because of My supervision has been made impossible for the inhabitants to suffer psychically or physically any weariness, exhaustion or defeat. (33) Oh Indrasena, oh Mahārāja, please go now, oh ruler. May there in Sutala, the place so desirable for even the denizens of heaven, for you, surrounded by your people, be all auspiciousness. (34) None of the controllers of the worlds will be able to overrule your command there, not to speak of the common man, for I, with my *cakra*, will personally take care of all the Daityas who defy your rule. (35) I will protect you, your associates and your property. In every respect I will always stand by your side, oh great hero. You will be able to see Me there! (36) In respect of My excellence, in that place the foolishness, from being associated with the Asura mentality of the Daityas and Dānavas, will disappear instantly.'

Chapter 23

The Demigods Regain the Heavenly Places

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'After [Bali] the great and exalted soul who carried the approval of all the saints, thus was addressed by the Original, Oldest Person, he spoke full of devotion with folded hands, with tears in his eyes and a faltering voice. (2) Śrī Bali said: 'Oh, just the attempt to offer my obeisances suffices for a result like that of surrendered devotees. What You out of Your causeless mercy have

granted a fallen Asura like me, nobody among the demigods and the leaders of the world has achieved before.'

(3) Śrī Śuka said: 'After having said this to the Lord, Bali offered Him and also Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva his obeisances. Thereupon he, being released and satisfied entered Sutala together with his associates. (4) By fulfilling Aditi's desire and by giving back to king Indra his supremacy over the heavenly worlds, the Lord thus exercised His authority over the entire universe [see 8.16: 11-17]. (5) Prahlāda, who had heard how his descendant, his grandson Bali, had achieved His mercy and was released from his fetters, then full of devotion addressed [the Supreme Personality] as follows. (6) Śrī Prahlāda said: 'With this benediction, which could not be achieved by Lord Brahmā, by the Goddess of Fortune or by Lord Śiva - not even mentioning others -, You for us Asuras have become the Protector Against All Misery, the One whose feet are worshiped by the most respected personalities of the universe! (7) Oh Shelter of All, Lord Brahmā and others enjoy Your grace by tasting the honey of serving Your lotus feet. How could we, people of a bad conduct and a bad birth, achieve the position that is granted when one follows the path of Your merciful glance? (8) Oh how wonderful all the activities of Your unlimited spiritual potency are! In Your pastimes, oh Lord who created all the worlds, oh Soul of all souls expert in every field, You are equal towards everyone. Not to discriminate characterizes Your love, a love in which You for Your devotees are like a desire tree [since You are unto the people what they are unto You, see B.G. 9: 29].'

(9) The Supreme Lord said: 'My son Prahlāda, I wish you all the

best, please go to the place Sutala and bring, with a spirit of joy, happiness to your grandson, relatives and friends! (10) Situated there you will always have the vision of Me holding the club [the conch, the lotus and the discus]. The great delight of seeing Me in that form, will cut the bonds of karma.'

(11-12) Śrī Śuka said: 'Prahāda accepted, with his clear mind consenting, with folded hands the order of the Supreme Lord, oh King. After he, the Master of all the leading Asuras, next had circumambulated the Original Person and offered his obeisances, he together with Bali with His permission entered the lower world Sutala. (13) Lord Nārāyaṇa then said to Śukrācārya, who in the assembly of transcendentalists sat close to Him in a



group of priests [*brahma*, *hotā*, *udgātā* and *adhvaryu*]: (14) 'Oh brahmin, please describe the karmic imperfections of your disciple Bali who performed the sacrifices, for these karmic faults [see 8.20: 15] will be neutralized under the supervision of the brahmins.'

(15) Śrī Śuka said: 'What would be wrong with him who in all respects was of worship for You who are the Master of all fruitive action, You the Controller and Enjoyer of all sacrifices [see also 4.31: 14, 1.2: 13 and B.G. 5: 25]? (16) As for the time and place, the person, the paraphernalia, [the practice of] the mantras and following the principles, faults can be made, but these are all nullified by regularly chanting Your glories in congregation [*]. (17) Still I have to do what You have told me, oh Supreme One, for it is the most auspicious and supreme thing for each person to fold his hands in obedience to Your command.'

(18) Śrī Śuka said: 'Uśanā [Śukrācārya, see 4.1: 45] the mightiest [sage] thus offering his obeisances to the authority of the Lord, set himself together with the best brahmins the task of compensating for the imperfect sacrifice that Bali made for the Lord. (19) Oh King, the Lord who as Vāmana this way from Bali had begged the land, delivered the places of the gods that had been seized by the others to His godbrother, the great Indra. (20-21) For the pleasure of Kaśyapa and Aditi [the parents of Vāmana] and for the well-being of all living beings and worlds, the master of the founding fathers Lord Brahmā, together with the gods, the saints, the forefathers, the Manus, Dakṣa, Bhṛgu, Aṅgirā, all the great leaders, Lord Śiva and his son [Kārttikeya], made Lord Vāmana the supreme leader of all the authorities in the world. (22-23) When they made Upendra the master for all purposes, [the protector] of the Veda, the master of all gods, of all religion, of all fame, of all opulence, of all auspiciousness and of all vows, regarding Him the greatest expert in elevating to a higher life, that, oh ruler of man, made all living beings extremely happy. (24) Indra together with the leaders of the world thereafter, with the permission of Lord Brahmā, then kept Lord Vāmana in front on the divine path leading to the kingdom of heaven. (25) Under the protec-

tion of Vāmanadeva Indra regained his rule over the three worlds and the pleasure of being blessed by its supreme wealth and had nothing to fear anymore [from the Asuras]. (26-27) Oh King, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and his son, the sages headed by Bhṛgu, the *munis*, the forefathers and all the living beings, the perfected souls and the space travelers [the *vimāna* people] and such, glorified all the supremely wonderful, praiseworthy deeds of Lord Viṣṇu, also praised Aditi, and then left for each their own world.

(28) Oh pleasure of the dynasty, to hear about all these activities of Lord Urukrama [the Lord 'of the great steps'] I have described to you, wipes away all consequences of sin. (29) The great saint [Vasiṣṭha Muni] stated in his mantras that no mortal human being, subject to death or destined to be reborn, can measure the glories of Lord Urukrama, just as no one is capable of counting the number of atoms of the earth [see also B.G. 10: 42 and **]. (30) Anyone who hears about and keeps listening to the stories about this God of gods, Lord Hari, all of whose works performed in His incarnations are equally wonderful, will attain the supreme destination. (31) When one engages in this [telling and listening] during the performance of whatever ritual, whether one is engaged for the gods, the ancestors or one's fellow man [at a marriage ceremony for instance], that ceremony will with these [descriptions] be well-performed.'

*: Often quoted in this context is what Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has recommended:

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

"In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." (Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa 38.126) Also often quoted is here a part of verse 11.5: 32: 'In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship

the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa.'

****:** Vasiṣṭha Muni has given a mantra about Lord Viṣṇu: '*na te viṣṇor jāyamāno na jāto mahimnaḥ pāram anantam āpa*': 'No one can estimate the extent of the uncommonly glorious activities of Lord Viṣṇu'.

Chapter 24

Matsya, the Lord's Fish Incarnation

(1) **T**he honorable king said: 'Oh powerful one, I would like to hear the story about that first incarnation of the Lord whose deeds are so wonderful, in which He poses as a fish [or Matsya, see also 2.7: 12, 5.18: 24-28 and 6.9: 23]. (2-3)

For what purpose did the Controller accept the form of a fish? It is a form that is certainly not the most favorable one in the world. To operate in that slow mode must be as hard as the life of someone tormented by the laws of karma! Oh mighty sage, please tell us, as good as you can, everything about the activities of Lord Uttamaśloka ['the One glorified'], for to hear about Him makes the entire world happy [B.G. 4: 7].'

(4) **Śrī** Sūta Gosvāmī said: "The mighty son of Vyāsadeva thus, upon the request of Viṣṇurāta ['Viṣṇu-sent'], told him everything there was to know about the deeds of Lord Viṣṇu in the form of a fish. (5) Śrī Śuka said: 'For the sake of the cows, the brahmins, the enlightened souls, the devotees as also the Vedic literatures, the Supreme Controller assumes in His incarnations [all kinds of] forms for the purpose of protecting the dharma. (6) Even though the Lord assumes forms among higher or lower living beings, He [Himself], just like moving air, is therewith not of a higher or lower nature, for being intent on the basic qualities, He is tran-

scendental to those modes. (7) During the previous day of Brahmā [the previous *kalpa*] there was at its end an inundation because of which all the existing worlds were submerged in the ocean, oh King. (8) At the moment Brahmā felt sleepy and wanted to lie down to rest, the Vedic knowledge most powerfully emanated from his mouth. Hayagrīva, who happened to be nearby, then took it away [see 2.7: 11 and 5.18: 6]. (9) Understanding Hayagrīva's Dānava course of action, the Supreme Lord Hari, the Controller, [thereupon] assumed the form of a fish. (10) When that happened there was some saintly king called Satyavrata, a great personality and devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who in his penances had developed the austerity of subsisting on water only. (11) During this day of Brahmā he as a son of the sun god became known as Śrāddhadeva. Lord Hari entrusted to him the position of Manu [see 6.6: 40



and 8.13: 1]. (12) When he one day was sitting at the Kṛtamālā river, performing oblations of water, some sort of a small fish manifested itself in his palm full of water. (13) Satyavrata, the master of Dravidadeśa, oh son of Bharata, threw the little fish together with the handful of water into the river. (14) It appealed to the most compassionate king and said: 'The river water is very frightening, oh protector of the poor, why do you throw Me, so small, before the voracious aquatics, oh King?'

(15) **M**ost pleased to show it his personal favor he, not knowing that he held the form of Matsya, decided to offer the fish protection. (16) The great leader hearing its pitiable words, mercifully put it in a jug full of water and took it home. (17) But in a single night it expanded in the water of that pot so that it, not feeling comfortably anymore, said to the great leader: (18) 'I do not like it here, this water pot is a difficult place for Me, please consider a more spacious refuge, where I can live with pleasure.'

(19) **H**e then took it out and placed it in a bucket full of water, but thrown in there it grew within a second to the length of three cubits [2.10 meters]. (20) [It said:] 'This bucket is unsuitable for Me to live happily, please give Me, who sought your shelter, a much bigger place!'

(21) **T**he king removed it from there and threw it in a lake that was immediately filled by its body when He instantly grew into a gigantic fish. (22) 'This water you have put Me in does not accommodate Me, oh King, I am a large aquatic, you better put Me in an expanse of water that suits Me more permanently.'

(23) **T**hus requested he brought Matsya to bigger and bigger reservoirs, until he finally threw the giant into the ocean. (24) Thrown there it said to the king: 'In this place there are dangerous, powerful aquatics that will eat Me, oh hero, please do not put Me in here!'

(25) **T**hus perplexed by the fish that addressed him in agreeable terms he said: 'Who are You who in this fish form is bewildering us? (26) I never before saw or heard about a powerful aquatic like

You. Your Lordship has expanded to hundreds of miles in a single day! (27) You must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, the imperishable Lord Nārāyaṇa who has assumed the form of a marine animal to show all living beings Your mercy. (28) I offer You, the Most Excellent Personality of Maintenance, Creation and Destruction, my obeisances. Oh Almighty One, unto surrendered devotees like us You are the Supreme Lord and the Highest Destination. (29) Everything You do in Your incarnations is the cause of the welfare of all living beings. I would like to know for what purpose Your Lordship has assumed this form. (30) As opposed to [the worship of] others who are differently embodied [the demigods], one never worships Your lotus feet in vain, oh Lotus petal-eyed One. For You are the friend, the dearest and original Soul of everyone, You who now have manifested that so very wonderful body for us, Your devotees.'

(31) **Śrī Śuka** said: 'Having spoken thus, that master of man, Satyavrata, was addressed by the Master of the Universe, the Lord, who, as the one love of the devotees desiring to benefit them, at the end of the *yuga* for the sake of enjoying His pastimes had assumed the form of a fish in the water of the great flood. (32) The Supreme Lord said: 'On the seventh day from today, oh subduer of the enemy this threefold creation of earth, ether and heaven will be flooded by the all-devouring ocean. (33) When the three worlds are submerged in the waters of annihilation, a very big boat will appear that I have sent you. (34-35) Collect all higher and lower kinds of herbs and seeds before you get on that huge boat together with the seven sages and all kinds of living beings. Then travel undaunted the ocean of the flood with no other illumination but the light of the *ṛṣis*. (36) When that boat is being tossed about by the very powerful wind, you can attach it to My horn with the great serpent [Vāsuki], for I will stand by your side. (37) I will drag you and the sages on the boat, with Me over the waters throughout the night of Brahmā, oh My best one. (38) With My support, upon your inquiries, in your heart the full knowledge will be revealed of My glory that is known as the Supreme Brahman [see also B.G. 5: 16, 10: 11].'

(39) After thus having instructed the king the Lord disappeared from there. The king then awaited the time about which the Master of the Senses had spoken. (40) The saintly king spread *kuśa* grass with its tips pointed to the east and then sat down, facing northwards, to meditate on the feet of the Lord who had assumed the form of a fish. (41) Thereafter he saw huge clouds in the sky incessantly showering rain. The ocean swell and began to flood on all sides so that the earth was inundated. (42) Meditating on what the Lord had said he saw a boat coming near. He got up, took the herbs and creepers and got on board together with the leading brahmins. (43) The sages were very pleased and said to him: 'Oh King meditate on Keśava ['the Lord with the black curls'], for He will save us from this impending danger and set things right.'

(44) After the king had meditated, the Lord appeared in the great ocean as a golden fish measuring a million *yojanas* that had a single horn. (45) Glad that he, like the Lord had told him before, could fasten the boat to the horn using the serpent for a rope, he praised the Killer of Madhu. (46) The king said: 'Since time immemorial ignorance about the knowledge of the soul has been the root cause of the material bondage that is accompanied by so much suffering and hardship. By the grace of the process of devotional service, with the help of those near to You, You can be attained, oh Lord who are our supreme spiritual master [see 7.5: 23-24]. (47) He who is born accepts in his desire to be happy unwisely different bodies as a result of his karma [see 4.29 and B.G. 4: 5, 6: 45 and 16: 20], but his profit minded plans bring him only grief. That karmic matter is cleared up by rendering service to Him, our guru in the core of the heart, by whom the hard knot of the impure mind is cut. (48) Just like a piece of ore in touch with fire gets purified, a person by that service can get rid of all impurity resulting from his ignorance, so that he can revive his original identi-



ty [his mode of service or *varṇa*]. May He who is Inexhaustible in this respect be our Supreme Controller, the Guru of the Gurus. (49) Neither the demigods, nor the gurus, nor other people individually or else groupwise, are able to offer but one ten-thousandth of Your grace. I therefore surrender to Him, the Lord, to You who are the shelter. (50) Like blind being led by the blind, ignorant people accept an unenlightened person, a fool, as their guru. We, desirous to know our destination, have accepted Your Lordship, whose knowledge is like the [rising] sun, as our spiritual master, as the seer of all that can be seen. (51) An ordinary person following the directions of an ordinary man is of surrender to impermanent matters as the goal of life. He is [thus] of an ignorance that cannot be overcome but with the help of Your eternal, pure knowledge, by which a person very soon achieves

his original position [of service]. (52) You are the dearest well-wisher, the controller, the original soul and spiritual master of all worlds. You are the spiritual knowledge, the fulfillment of all desires and the One situated in the heart who cannot be known by people who, in the grip of lust, have a foggy intelligence. (53) May by my surrender to You, the Greatest of All who is worshiped by the gods, the Supreme Controller for understanding the real purpose of life, may by my surrender to the light of Your meaningful words of instruction, the knots [by illusion] fixed in the heart be severed, oh Supreme Lord. Please tell me about Your refuge [see also B.G. 4: 34].'

(54) **Śrī** Śuka said: 'The Supreme Lord, the Original Person who had assumed the form of a fish, thus being addressed, explained the Absolute Truth to the king while they were moving through the great ocean. (55) By the analytical [*sāṅkhya*, matter versus spirit] perspective of [bhakti] yoga, practically applied in a collection of divine old stories, the holy king Satyavrata thus got acquainted with the mysteries of self-realization in all its forms. (56) Sitting in the boat, he, together with the sages, free from doubt listened to the knowledge of self-realization [*ātma-tattva*] and the eternal absolute spirit [*brahma*] as explained by the Supreme Lord. (57) When the inundation had ended the Lord, after [thus] having put an end to the darkness that was caused by an unenlightened Hayagrīva, handed over all the Vedic records to Brahmā the moment Brahmā woke up. (58) King Satyavrata, enlightened in the spiritual knowledge and its practical wisdom, by the mercy of Lord Viṣṇu became in this period the Manu called Vaivasvata.

(59) **W**hen someone hears this great story describing Satyavrata, the saintly king, and the Matsya incarnation with the one horn, he will be delivered from all reactions to sin. (60) Anyone who daily chants and discusses the personal appearance of the Lord, will have success in all his endeavors and will return home, back to Godhead. (61) I offer my obeisances to Him, the Cause of All Causes, He who, posing as a great fish, explained to Satyavrata the Vedic knowledge and put an end to the darkness of the Daitya, He who returned the

Vedic records that were stolen from the mouths of Lord Brahmā who lay deep asleep in the waters of the flood.'

Thus the eighth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam ends named: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations.

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