

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM
(Bhāgavata Purāṇa)

The Story of the Fortunate One



Canto 12

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CANTO 12:

The Age of Deterioration

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

covered most of the formal ISKCON translations into Dutch.

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

The purpose of the translation is first of all to make this glorious text available to a wider audience over the Internet. Since the Bible, the Koran and numerous other holy texts are readily available, the translator, the undersigned, meant that this book could not stay behind on the shelf of his own bookcase as a token of material possessiveness. When we started with this endeavor in the year 2000 there was no proper web presentation of this book. Knowledge not shared is knowledge lost, and certainly this type of knowledge, which stresses the yoga of non-possessiveness and devotion as one of its leading principles, could not be left out. The version of Swami Prabhupāda is very extensive covering some 2400 pages of plain fine printed text, including his commentaries. And these covered only the first

ten Cantos. The remaining two Cantos were post-humously 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 *vāna-praṣṭa*, 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 Ca-kravartī 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.

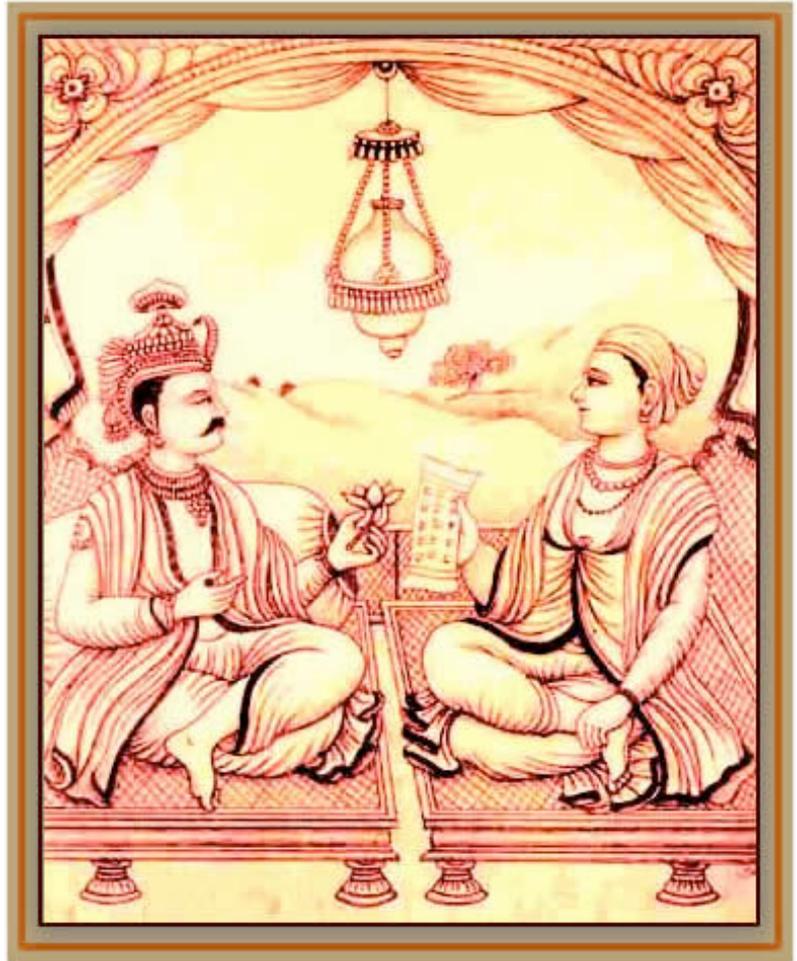
Chapter 1

The Degraded Dynasties and Corrupt Nature of the Rulers of Kali-yuga

(0) Śrī Parīkṣit said: 'Please, oh sage, can you tell me whose dynasty ruled over the earth after Kṛṣṇa, the jewel of the Yadu dynasty, had left for His heavenly abode [*]?'

(1-2) Śrī Śuka said: 'The last descendant of Bṛhadratha in the future [see 9.22: 49] was named Purañjaya [not the one mentioned in 9.6: 12]. His minister Śunaka will assassinate his master to make his own son named Pradyota [historical: Bimbisāra] king. His son Pālaka will have Viśākhayūpa as his son and Rājaka will be his successor. (3) His son will be Nandivardhana. These five Pradyotana kings will enjoy the earth for one hundred thirty-eight years. (4) Then Śīsunāga will take birth and Kākavarṇa will be his son, from whose son Kṣemadharmā, Kṣetrajña will be born. (5) The son Vidhisāra [of Kṣetrajña] will have Ajātaśatru as his son and Darbhaka, his son, will have Ajaya as his successor. (6-8) From Ajaya there will be [another] Nandivardhana whose son is Mahānandi. These ten Śīsunāga kings, oh best of the Kurus, will rule over the earth in the age of Kali for three hundred sixty years. Oh King, the son of Mahānandi, a certain Nanda, will take birth from the womb of a working class woman and will, as a powerful master over millions, be the destroyer of the royal class. The kings will become irreligious and be no better than *sūdras*. (9) He [Mahāpadmānanda], that ruler over millions, will be like a second Paraśurāma and as an unchallenged authority bring the entire earth under one rule [see 9.15 & 16]. (10) From him eight

sons headed by Sumālya will take birth and enjoy this earth as kings for a hundred years. (11) A certain brahmin [called Cāṅkya] trusted by the nine Nandas [Mahāpadmānanda and his sons] will overturn them. With them removed the Mauryas will rule the earth in Kali-yuga [**]. (12) The brahmin will put Candragupta on the throne and his son Vārisāra will next be succeeded by Aśokavardhana. (13) Suyaśā [Daśaratha Maurya] will be born to him, Saṅgata [Samprati], his son, will father Śālīśūka of whom next Somaśarmā [Devavarman] will be born who will father Śatadhānṅvā from whose loins Bṛhadratha will take his birth. (14) These ten Maurya kings, oh eminent hero of the Kuru dynasty, will rule the earth in Kali-yuga for the time of one hundred thirty-seven years. (15-17) From Agnimitra [the son of the first Śūṅga king named Puṣpamitra, a general who will murder Bṛhadratha] there will be Sujyeṣṭha [Vasujyeṣṭha] who will father Vasumitra whose



son will be Bhadraka [Andhraka] who will be succeeded by Pulinda [Pulindaka]. His son will be Ghoṣa to whom Vajramitra will be born. His son Bhāgavata [Bhagabhadra] will beget Devabhūti, oh eminent Kuru. These ten Śuṅga kings will enjoy the earth for more than hundred [109] years. Thereafter this earth will be ruled by the Kāṇva dynasty poor in qualities, oh ruler of man. (18) Vasudeva, a most intelligent minister from the Kāṇva family, [with the help of a female slave] will kill the lusty Śuṅga king Devabhūti and thereupon himself assume leadership. (19) His son Bhūmitra will have a successor called Nārāyaṇa [with a son named Suśarmā]. These Kāṇva kings will rule the earth for three-hundred-forty-five more years in Kali-yuga. (20) A low-class most degraded man of the Andhra race called Balī, will as a servant kill Suśarmā, the [last] Kāṇva king, and rule the earth for some time. (21-26) His brother named Kṛṣṇa, will be the next ruler of the earth. His son Śāntakarṇa will have Paurṇamāsa as his successor. His son Lambodara will beget king Cibilaka. Cibilaka will father Meghasvāti, who in his turn will beget Aṭamāna who will be succeeded by Anīṣṭakarmā. Hāleya, his son, will have Talaka as his son whose son Purīṣabhīru will have Sunandana as the next king. Cakora [his son] will be succeeded by the eight Bahus, among whom Śivasvāti will be a great subduer of enemies. To Gomatī, his son, Purīmān will be born, whose son will be called Medaśirā. Śivaskanda, born from his loins, will have Yajñaśrī as his son and his descendant will be Vijaya, who will father the sons Candravijña and Lomadhi. These thirty kings will rule the world for four hundred fifty-six years, oh son of the Kurus [***]. (27) From the city of Avabhṛti then seven Ābhīra kings will follow, ten Gardabhīs and sixteen Kaṅka kings, earthly rulers who will be very greedy. (28) Next there will be eight Yavanas, fourteen Turuṣkas and furthermore ten Guruṇḍas and eleven kings of the Maula dynasty. (29-31) The eleven Maulas will rule for three hundred years after these [preceding three dynasties] have ruled the earth for one thousand ninety-nine years, my dear. When they are all dead and gone, in the city of Kilakilā the kings Bhūtananda, Vaṅgiri, Śīsunandī, his brother Yaśonandī and then Pravīraka will rule for one-hundred-and-six

years. (32-33) To them [the Kilakilās] thirteen sons will be born called the Bāhlikas. Thereafter the kings Puṣpamitra, his son Durmitra as also seven Andhras, seven Kauśalas and the rulers of Vidūra and Niṣadha will reign at the same time [over different realms]. (34) In the province of Māgadha a king named Viśvasphūrji will assume power, who like another Purañjaya will turn the people of all classes into inferior Pulindas, Yadus and Madrakas [low-class, uncivilized men, see *4]. (35) This unintelligent king, who, protected in the city of Padmavatī, will rule over the earth from the source of the Ganges to Prayāga, will in respect of the citizens predominantly act against the brahminical order and ruin the mighty class of the *kṣatriyas*. (36) The twice-born souls living in the provinces Śaurāṣṭhra, Avantī, Ābhīra, Śūra, Arbuda and Mālava will [at that time] fail to fulfill their vows, while they who rank first among the people [the kings] will become no better than *śūdras*. (37) The lands at the river Sindhu, as also the districts of Candrabhāgā, Kauntī and Kāśmīra, will be ruled by uncivilized men [*mlecchas*], *śūdras* and others who, lacking spiritual strength, deviate from the standard.

(38) **Oh King**, these generally uncivilized, earthly caretakers [politicians] who, simultaneously ruling, are dedicated to irreligious and unrealistic practices will, with fierce tempers [competing for the dominion] allow their subjects hardly any freedom [economically]. (39) They will ruin the lives of women, children, cows and intellectuals, and hanker for money and the wives of other men. Lacking in strength they mostly have short, unstable careers of success and failure, and live short lives. Not initiated and devoid of regulative principles these barbarians behaving like kings, under the sway of passion and ignorance, will virtually devour the citizens. (40) The people in the cities following the example of the character, behavior and speech of these men, will, harassed by these rulers and by each other, thus be destroyed [in wars, economic collapse and natural disasters, see also *kleśa*, Kali-yuga and B.G. 16: 6-12].'

*: The *paramparā* of ISKCON left out this first line of Parīkṣit questioning, where other sources

like Śāstri C.L. Gosvāmī do begin this chapter thus.

***: The paramparā adds: 'The great historical narration Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which began with the events prior to the cosmic manifestation, now reaches into the realm of modern recorded history. Modern historians recognize both the Maurya dynasty and Candragupta, the king mentioned in the following verse [p.p. 12.1.11].'*

****: According to an academic translator of the Bhāgavatam, Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare [1989, Morilal Banarsidass], this period would be found short before the beginning of the Christian year count. Analyzing this text in reference to historical sources he, stating that there are many discrepancies with the cultural [manipulated?] records, also concludes that historically the Kaṇva dynasty would have only ruled for forty-five years from 75 to 30 B.C., and not for the three hundred forty-five as the Sanskrit text states here. According to him this part of the Bhāgavatam would have been of a later date and consist of a mish-mash of hearsay historical knowledge, which is a position contested by the paramparā of course, since it is more likely to err in the discordance of worldly interest than in the harmony of a consciousness motivated by spiritual discipline.*

4: The total span of generations covered here from the first Purañjaya to the last one in the line of the Kali-yuga decay, thus would have stretched from about 2000 B.C. to about the twelfth century A.D.*

Chapter 2 Despair and Hope in the Age of Quarrel

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'And then, oh King, under the strong influence of the time [of Kali-yuga] religiousness, truthfulness, cleanliness, tolerance and mercy, as also the quality of life, physical strength and memory, will diminish day after day [see also 1.16]. (2) Among the people of the age of Kali all one attains by good birth, behavior and qualities

will be wealth, while material power will be the only factor determining what is just and reasonable. (3) Relations between men and women will be based upon sensual pleasure, business will be ruled by deceit, masculinity and femininity are there for sexual attraction, and a sacred thread will suffice to be considered learned. (4) Spiritual status and one's progress in this respect will be determined by outer marks only, one is considered questionable when one lacks in funds, while scholarship will consist of word jugglery. (5) Poverty will simply be considered a lack of virtue, while the standard of virtue will be hypocrisy and deceit. Verbal agreement is enough to be married and a bath suffices to start the day. (6) A holy place is a reservoir of water somewhere far away, beauty depends on one's hair style, life's purpose is to fill one's belly, someone audacious is considered truthful, when one can maintain a family one is an expert, and religious principles are observed for the sake of one's reputation. (7) With the earth being crowded with a populace thus corrupted, anyone who is the strongest among the intellectuals, the rulers, the merchants and the working class, will be called the king [or president]. (8) The citizens, whose wives and property are stolen by a merciless and avaricious ruling class behaving like ordinary thieves, will flee to the mountains and the forests. (9) Plagued by draughts, famine and taxation, they will be ruined and resort to the consumption of leaves, roots, meat, honey, fruits, flowers and seeds [see also 1.16: 20, 4.20: 14, 4.21: 24, B.G. 3: 14]. (10) Heavily burdened by cold, wind, heat, rain and snow, as also by quarrels, hunger, thirst and diseases, they suffer a great deal of distress and anxiety. (11) In Kali-yuga men for no more than fifty years can enjoy a decent quality of [family] life. (12-16) When the bodies of all living entities are in decay from the contamination of Kali-yuga, when the dutifulness of the members of all status-orientations is lost, when the Vedic path for all man has changed into a predominantly atheistic sense of duty, when the kings [or governors] mainly consist of thieves, and the people in their various occupations are lying criminals of useless violence [against specially animals], when the societal classes as good as all are engaged in profit-minded labor, cows have the same value as goats, the hermitages

hardly can be distinguished from materialistic households, family bonds do not reach beyond the ties of marriage, when the plants and herbs are mostly small sized and all trees are like śamī trees, when there is always lightning in the clouds and the homes are ruled by loneliness [voidism and impersonalism, see Pranāti], when Kali-yuga is running at its end and the people behave like asses, the Supreme Lord will descend in the mode of pure goodness to defend the dharma.

(17) **T**he spiritual master of all the moving and nonmoving living beings, Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality and Controller of All, takes birth for the protection of the religion and to put an end to the karma of the saintly souls. (18) In the village of Śambhala Lord Kalki will appear in the home of the great soul, the eminent brahmin Viṣṇuyaśā ['the glory of Viṣṇu']. (19-20) Mounting His swift horse Devadatta, the Lord of the Universe endowed with His sword, transcendental qualities and eight mystic opulences [*siddhis*], will subdue the reprobates. With speed traveling the earth on His horse He, unrivaled in His splendor, will slaughter the thieves dressing as kings by the millions. (21) When all the robbers have been killed, the minds of all the residents of the towns and cities will clear up who came in touch with the breeze carrying the most sacred fragrance of the [with sandalwood paste] decorated body of Lord Vāsudeva. (22) When Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord, is situated in their hearts in the transcendental form of His goodness, the production of offspring will be abundant. (23) After the Supreme Lord Kalki, the Lord and Master of Dharma, has incarnated, Satya-yuga will begin and progeny will be created in the mode of goodness [see *yuga*]. (24) The moment the sun and the moon together with



Jupiter [Bṛhaspatī] in the same constellation [of Karkāṭa or Cancer] enter the lunar mansion of Tīṣyā [or Puṣyā, 3° 20' to 16° 40' see zodiac], Satya-yuga [Kṛta] will begin.

(25) **I** briefly described all the past, present and future kings belonging to the solar and lunar dynasties [see also *vamśa*]. (26) Beginning from the birth of your good self up to the coronation of king Nanda [see 12.1: 12] eleven hundred and fifty years will pass [*]. (27-28) On the [north-west] line between the two stars [Pulaha and Kratu] one first sees rising in the constellation of the seven sages [Ursa Major, the Great Bear], one in the nightly sky sees their [ruling] lunar mansion. The sages [the stars] in that lunar mansion remain connected with it for a hundred human years. Now, in your time, they are situated in the

nakṣatra called Maghā. (29) When Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord, the sun known as Kṛṣṇa, returned to heaven, this world entered the age of Kali in which people delight in sin. (30) For as long as He, the Husband of Ramā, touched the earth with His lotus feet, Kali could not prevail on earth. (31) Kali-yuga begins when the [constellation of the] seven divine sages enter[s] Maghā. That period covers twelve hundred [godly] years [or 432,000 human years, see also *kāla*]. (32) When the seven sages pass from Maghā to the lunar mansion of Pūrvāsādhā, this age of Kali will attain its full strength beginning with the time of king [Mahāpadma] Nanda and his descendants. (33) The historians say that the age of Kali began the very day that Śrī Kṛṣṇa departed for the spiritual world. (34) At the end of the thousand celestial years of the fourth [Kali] age, Satya-yuga will start again, the time when the minds of men will be self-enlightened.

(35) **T**hus this dynasty from [Vaivasvata] Manu has been enumerated as it is known on earth. The positions of the scholars, the traders and the workers in each age can therewith also be understood. (36) Of these personalities, these great souls, one only remembers their names; all that remains of their glory on this earth are their stories. (37) Devāpi, the brother of Śāntanu [9.22: 12-17] and Maru [9.12: 5-6] who took birth in the Ikṣvāku dynasty, are endowed with great mystical power and both live [even now] in Kalāpa. (38) At the end of the age of Kali they will return to human society and promulgate the *varṇāśramadharma* as it was before, deriving from the instructions they received from Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa]. (39) The four ages of Kṛta [Satya], Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali that the living beings undergo in this world, will repeat themselves continuously following this sequential order [see also *mahāyuga*]. (40) Oh King, these kings, these gods among man and the others I described, who arriving on this earth exert their possessiveness, in the end all have to forsake this world and face their demise. (41) Even if someone's body carries the name of king it is nevertheless destined to be known as stool, worms or ashes. For the sake of that body he was an enemy of other living beings and therefore ends up in hell. What does such a one know

about his self-interest [compare 6.18: 25, 7.15: 37, 10.10: 10, 10.51: 50]? (42) [A king may think:] 'How can this same undivided earth as controlled by the personalities of my predecessors and now under my control, stay in the hands of my son, grandson and other descendants?' (43) When one accepts this body that is composed of earth, water and fire, with a notion of 'I' and when one says 'mine' to this earth, one lacks in intelligence, for in the end reaching one's own absence one has to forsake both this body and this earth [see also 4.9: 34-35]. (44) Oh King, of whatever that kings may enjoy in the world with all their power, is by Time nothing more preserved than some accounts and histories [compare with 2.9: 33, 5.19: 28, 11.19: 16, 11.28: 21].'

*: From this statement can be derived, that the Candragupta that after Nanda by Cānakya was put on the throne must have been another Candragupta than the one who 1500 years later supposedly defeated Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. The *paramparā* adds to the discrepancy of three centuries further: 'Although Śukadeva Gosvāmī previously described approximately fifteen hundred years of royal dynasties, it is understood that some overlapping occurred between kings.'

Chapter 3

The Song of Mother Earth and the Remedy for Kali-yuga

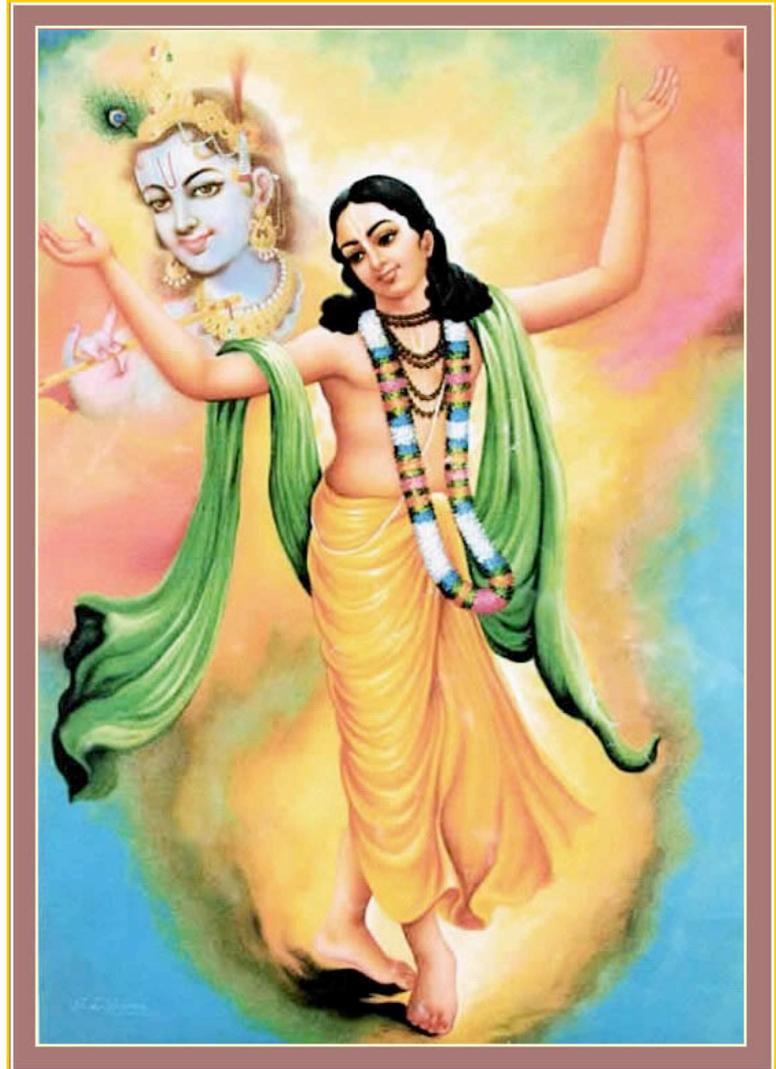
(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'When the earth saw the kings busily engaged in conquering her, she laughed and said: 'Ah, just see how these kings, these playthings of death, wish to conquer me! (2) This lust of the rulers over man and even of the sages, is doomed to fail; those kings are putting their faith in a lump of matter that compares to a water bubble.' (3-4) 'Let us first conquer the sixfold [of the senses and the mind], then subdue the leading ministers and then the advisors. Next we subdue the citizens, the friends, the elephant keepers and the thorns [the thugs]. This way we will step by step conquer the earth and her girdle of seas', but

thinking thus with their hearts caught in expectations, they do not realize the finality of their existence [compare B.G 16: 13-18]. (5) Having conquered the lands by the sea they, with all their might, next enter the seas. Of what use is such a victory over the self? Spiritual liberation is the fruit of conquering oneself!

(6) **T**he Manus and their sons, oh best of the Kurus, all gave up [ruling over me] and left [for the forest] the way they came, but those lacking in intelligence try to conquer me through warfare. (7) Because of me among materialistic persons conflict arises between fathers and sons, and between brothers, for their hearts are ruled by possessing power. (8) Saying: 'This entire land is mine and not yours, you fool', the rulers quarrel, and for my sake kill each other and get killed. [compare e.g. 2.5: 13, 2.7: 42, 4.29: 5, 5.5: 8, 6.16: 41, 7.8: 7-10, 9.4: 2-12]. (9-13) Pṛthu, Purūravā, Gādhī, Nahuṣa, Bharata, Kārtavīryārjuna, Māndhātā, Sagara, Rāma [*], Khatvāṅga, Dhundhuhā [or] Kuvalayāśva [9.6: 23-24], Raghu [9.10: 1], Tṛṇabindu [9.2: 30], Yayāti, Śaryāti [9.3: 1], Śantanu [9.22: 12-13], Gaya [5.15: 6-13], Bhagīratha [9.9: 2-17], Kakutstha [9.6: 12], Naiśadha [Nala, 9.9: 16-17, 9.23: 20-21, from the descendants of Niśadha, 9.12: 1], Nṛga [Nābhāga, 10.64: 10], Hiranyakaśipu, Vṛtra, Rāvaṇa, who made the whole world lament, Namuci [8.11: 29-49], Śambara [10.36: 36], Bhauma, Hiranyākṣa and Tāraka [8.10: 19-24], as also many other demons and kings of great control over others, were all heroes who, well informed, were unconquerable and subdued everyone. Living for me, oh mighty one, they expressed great possessiveness but, by the force of Time being subjected to death, they failed to accomplish their goals, historical accounts is all that remained of them [see also B.G. 4: 7].

(14) [Śuka continued:] These narrations I related to you about great kings who spread their fame in all the worlds and then departed, do not express the highest purpose, oh mighty one. They are but a wealth of words [a backdrop] for dilating on renunciation and wisdom. (15) It is rather the repeated discussing and singing about the qualities of the Lord Praised in the Verses, what destroys everything inauspicious. He who desires Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotional service should therefore do that regularly [seeking that association] and hear [about Him] time and again.'

(16) **T**he honorable king [Parīkṣit] said: 'By what means, my Lord, do the people living in Kali-yuga eradicate the faults accumulating because of



that age? Please explain that to me. (17) How about the *yugas*, the duties prescribed for them, the time they last and when they end, as also the Time itself that represents the movement of the Controller, of Lord Viṣṇu the Supreme Soul [see also time quotes page].'

(18) Śrī Śuka said: 'The religion of the people in Satya-yuga, oh King, is by the people of the time maintained with all its four legs: the powerful legs of truth [*satya*], compassion [*dayā*], austerity [or penance, *tapas*] and charity [*dāna*, or also *śauca*, purification [**], compare 1.17: 24, 3.11: 21 and see *niyama*]. (19) The [*hamsa*-]people [of that age] are content, merciful, friendly, peaceful, self-controlled, tolerant, satisfied within, equal-minded and mostly ascetic [see also 3.13: 35 and 11.17: 10]. (20) In Tretā-yuga one fourth of [the strength of each of] the legs of dharma is gradually lost because of the pillars of *adharma* or godlessness: untruth, violence, dissatisfaction and discord [compare 1.17: 25]. (21) During that age people are of devotion with rituals and austerities, without any excessive violence or wanton desires. Prospering in their respect for the three Vedas they follow the three paths [of regulating the religion, the economy and sense gratification], while the four classes are predominantly brahminically oriented, oh King. (22) The dharmic qualities of austerity, compassion, truth and charity are in Dvāpara-yuga reduced to one half [of their strength] because of the *adharmic* characteristics of violence, discontent, lies and hatred. (23) One is [in that age] of a high moral fiber, one loves glory and is absorbed in Vedic study. One is opulent with large families and joyful, while brahmins and nobles constitute the greatest number among the four classes. (24) Because of the constant increase of the motives of godlessness, in Kali-yuga the legs of religiousness further decrease to one fourth [of their strength, compare 1.17: 25], until they finally will be destroyed. (25) In that age the people will be greedy, ill-mannered, lacking in compassion, prone to useless quarrel, unfortunate and obsessed with material desires, while they will mainly consist of laborers and less civilized characters. (26) The qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance that thus [depending the age] are observed in a person, under-

go - being impelled by [the operation of] Time - permutations within the mind [***]. (27) The time when the mind, the intelligence and the senses flourish in the mode of goodness, should be understood as Satya-yuga, the age of taking pleasure in knowledge and austerity. (28) Oh intelligent one, when the conditioned souls devoted to their duties are of ulterior motives and strive for honor, that predominance of passion must be considered the time of Tretā. (29) When greed and dissatisfaction, false pride, envy and hypocrisy are seen everywhere and actions are dominated by selfhood, one speaks of the time of Dvāpara, the age of passion in combination with ignorance.

(30) Kali-yuga is known as the age of ignorance, where there is deceit, false testimony, sloth and lethargy, violence, depression, lamentation, delusion, fear and poverty. (31) As a consequence the mortals will be shortsighted, unfortunate, eating too much, lusty and poverty-stricken while the women will act of their own accord and be unchaste. (32) In the populated areas uncivilized people will take high positions [and act like thieves], the Vedic scriptures will be slighted by false doctrines [heretics], the political leaders will devour the people and the twice-born souls will be dedicated to their bellies and genitals. (33) The youngsters [the students] will be averse to vows and impure in their engagements, the householders will be beggars [with what they claim], the withdrawn souls [the middle-aged, with no nature left to retreat into] will be city-dwellers and the renounced order will greedily endeavor for wealth [be engaged in 'reli-business']. (34) Smaller in size, voracious and having many children, [the women will have] lost their timidity and constantly speak harshly and with great audacity be as deceitful as thieves. (35) The merchants will indulge in cheating so that their business dealings will be wicked while the people unnecessarily will consider any contemptible occupation [in the sex industry or gambling business] a good job. (36) Servants will abandon a master who lost his wealth - even if he is the best one around, masters will abandon a handicapped servant - even when he belonged to the family for generations, and cows will be abandoned [and killed] as soon as they stopped giving milk. (37) Under the control

of women, men in Kali-yuga will be wretched and forsake their fathers, brothers, friends and relatives, while regularly associating with their brothers and sisters-in-law in a conception of friendship based on sexual ties. (38) Laborers dressed up as mendicants of austerity, will accept religious charity to earn their living and mount a high seat to speak about religious matters without any knowledge of dharmic principles. (39-40) With their minds constantly full of stress, emaciated by famine and taxes in times of scarcity with droughts on the surface of the earth, oh King, the people of Kali-yuga will be troubled by countless worries and live in fear. Lacking in clothing, food, drink, rest, sexual love [*vyavāya*], bathing and personal ornaments, they will appear like ghostly creatures. (41) In the age of Kali one will even over a single coin develop enmity [5.14 and 5.14: 26], reject friendly relations, kill oneself [be suicidal] and even kill one's relatives [domestic violence]. (42) Only interested in the petty service of the stomach and the genitals, one, even being born in a respectable family, will not protect the elderly parents, the wife and the children. (43) Oh King, with their minds diverted by atheism the mortals in Kali-yuga in general will not worship the Infallible One, the Personality of Godhead who is the Supreme Spiritual Master of the three worlds at whose feet the various masters bow down. (44) In Kali-yuga the people do not worship Him, even though He is the One by whom a person, who dying in distress collapsing with a faltering voice helplessly chants His name, is freed from the chains of karma and achieves the topmost destination [see also B.G. 8: 10 and 6.2]. (45) The objects [and food], places and the individual nature of man are, as a result of Kali-yuga, all polluted [diseased, full of faults], but when one installs Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality in one's heart, He takes all this contamination away.

(46) **O**f those human beings who but even heard, glorified, meditated, worshiped or venerated the Supreme Lord, the inauspiciousness is cleansed away that from a thousand births accumulated in their hearts. (47) Just as the discoloration one finds in gold because of other metals is removed by fire, the impurities of the mind of yoga practitioners are removed when Lord Viṣṇu has entered

their heart. (48) Education, penance, breath control, friendship, bathing in holy waters, vows, charity and praying with prayer beads, do not realize as full the purification of the mind as the presence of Him, the Unlimited Personality of Godhead, in the heart. (49) Therefore, oh King, do your utmost best to establish Lord Keśava in your heart; the moment you die [here after this week] you will, with your attention focussed on Him, attain the highest destination. (50) The Supreme Lord meditated upon by those who are dying is the Supreme Controller, the Soul and Shelter of All, who leads them to their true identity, my dearest. (51) In the ocean of faults of Kali-yuga, oh King, there is luckily one great good quality: just by singing about [and meditating on] Kṛṣṇa's name, see bhajans] one can be liberated from material bondage and achieve beatitude [see also *bhāgavata dharma* and *kīrtana*]. (52) The same result one achieves in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, one in Tretā-yuga achieves by worshipping with sacrifices, one in Dvāpara-yuga achieves by serving the lotus feet [of Him in the form of a king], one in Kali-yuga achieves by singing about [and meditating on the names of] the Lord [see also 11.5: 38-40].'

*: According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, and as confirmed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the king Rāma mentioned here is not the incarnation of Godhead Rāmacandra. This is corroborated by the M.W. dictionary mentioning the demigod Varuṇa, writers, teachers and other great personalities addressed with that name. Probably Bhārgava is meant, also known as Uśanā, who most powerfully formed a dynasty descending from the sages Bhr̥gu and Mārkaṇḍeya [see 9.16: 32 and 4.1: 45].

** : In the M.W. dictionary three meanings are given for the word *dāna*: 1. donating, giving gifts 2. sharing or communicating and 3. purification. The last meaning confirms the use of the term *śauca* in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the fourth leg of the bull of religion. This alternative definition of the word *dānam* is confirmed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

***: The *paramparā* adds to this: 'The particular age represented by goodness (Satya), passion (Tretā), passion and ignorance (Dvāpara) or ignorance (Kali) exists within each of the other ages as a sub factor.'

Chapter 4

Pralaya: The Four Types of Annihilation

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'Time, beginning with the smallest unit of the atom and culminating in the two halves [or *parārdhas* of the life of Brahmā], oh King, has been described [in 3.11] together with the duration of the *yugas*. Now hear about the annihilation of a *kalpa*. (2) A thousand cycles of four *yugas* is called a *kalpa*, a day of Brahmā, in which there are fourteen original progenitors of mankind [Manus], oh ruler of the citizens. (3) At their end there is a period of dissolution of the same duration that is described as the night of Brahmā. During that time the three worlds are subject to destruction. (4) This is said to be the occasional annihilation [or *naimittika pralaya*] in which [Nārāyaṇa] the creator of the universe lies down upon His bed Ananta, to absorb the universe including Lord Brahmā. (5) After the completion of two *parārdhas* [the two halves of the entire life] of the highest situated living being, Lord Brahmā, the seven elements [*mahat*, *ahankāra* and the five *tanmātras*] are subject to destruction. (6) This [occasion], oh King, at which the universal egg, this aggregate [of these seven universal aspects] reaches the time of its disruption and dissolves, constitutes the elemental [*prakṛtika*] annihilation. (7) For a hundred years, oh King, the clouds will not shower rain upon the earth. The people being confounded by the time will, in the distress of their hunger with the lack of food that follows, [even] consume each other and step by step find their destruction. (8) The sun with its terrible rays will evaporate all the juice of the earth, the ocean and the living bodies, and not give the slightest [precipitation] in return. (9) Thereupon from the mouth of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa the fire of destruction will issue, that, raised by

the force of the wind, will burn all levels of existence on earth [and the other planets, 3.11: 30, 8.5: 35]. (10) The universal egg burning on all sides with the flames of the fire from below and the sun above, will glow like a ball of cow dung. (11) Next for more than a hundred years the terrible wind of the ultimate destruction [*sāmvartaka*] will blow and turn the sky gray with dust. (12) Clusters of multicolored clouds, dear King, then will pour down rain for a hundred years with tremendous claps of thunder. (13) The shell of the universe will thereupon fill up and constitute a single [cosmic] body of water. (14) The moment the water of the flood takes away the quality of fragrance, the element earth, being deprived of its fragrance, will dissolve [see also 3.26: 49-61, 11.3: 9, 11.24: 22-27].

(15-19) Fire then takes away the taste of water, after which it, deprived of this quality, dissolves. Next follows fire that by air is deprived of its form because it takes its quality [of touch] away, after which the air enters the ether that takes away that quality. Then, oh King, the ether dissolves in the original element of nature [*ādi*, false ego in ignorance] that takes away its quality of sound. Subsequently the senses are seized by the vital power of the universe [*tejas* or false ego in passion], my best, while the gods are absorbed by the universal modification [*vikāra*, the false ego of goodness]. Cosmic intelligence [*mahat*] seizes the false ego with all its functions after which *mahat* is absorbed by the modes of nature of *sattva* and so on. These three modes, oh King, are then, under the pressure of Time, overtaken by the inexhaustible doer [the original unmanifest form of nature]. The original doer is not subject to transformation in divisions of time [*śad-ūrmi*] and such qualities; being unmanifest without a beginning and an end, it [or He] constitutes the infallible eternal cause. (20-21) Therein [in His primal state] one finds no speech, mind, or the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance. Neither the elements of the complete whole - the vital air, the intelligence, the senses and so on - are found there, nor are the gods there or the arrangement of the different planetary orders. There is no sleeping, waking or deep sleep, no water, air, ether, fire, earth or sun. That what is like a void or someone



fast asleep, is the [primal] substance that defies all logical explanation and serves as the root [the *pradhāna*], so say the authorities. (22) This [state] constitutes the [*prākṛtika pralaya*] dissolution wherein all the material elements of nature and energies of the unseen Original Person are completely dismantled by Time and helplessly merge.

(23) **I**t is spiritual knowledge [the consciousness, the Absolute Truth alone] that is the foundation which manifests in the form of these elements of intelligence, the senses and the sense objects. Whatever that is perceived as having a beginning and an end is insubstantial, for it has no existence apart from its cause [only being a reference to it, compare 11.28: 21]. (24) A lamp, an eye that perceives and the form perceived do not stand apart from the light [that is treated by them]. The same way intelligence, the senses and sense perceptions do not stand apart from the [one Supreme] reality [the Absolute Truth] that is quite different [see

also *siddhānta* and B.G. 9.15]. (25) The wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep that belong to the intelligence are therefore called a deception of the senses [relative to the fourth state of meditation called *turīya*]. This, oh King, is the duality experienced by the soul [11.13: 27-34]. (26) Just as clouds are there and are not there in the sky, this entire universe with its different parts being generated and having vanished is there and not there within the Absolute of the Truth. (27) The ingredient cause my best, of any composite entity out here, is something real [that can be perceived] so is stated [in the *Vedānta-sūtra*], just as the threads of a piece of cloth can be perceived separately from the fabric they form [see also 6.3: 12, 11.12: 21]. (28) Whatever one may experience as having a general cause and a specific effect constitutes a form of illusion, error or mistake; everything with a beginning and an end is insubstantial because of the interdependence [of cause and effect]. (29) Even though it is knowable to us, the changeable

nature of [the phenomenal world or] even a single atom, can in no way be explained without [- or as standing apart from -] the Self inside [of the Time, the Lord, the expansion of the universe, the 'fourth dimension'], for if that would be so [if there would be not such a Self] it should, being equal to the consciousness, stay the way it is. (30) There is no duality or opposition in the Absolute Truth; if an unknowing person thinks in terms of opposites, that is just like having two skies, two daylights or two life breaths. (31) Just as gold appears to men in many forms depending its use, the Supreme Lord Adhokṣaja who is inconceivable to the senses, is described in different terms by a worldly person and by a person of Vedic knowledge. (32) A cloud brought about by the sun is made visible by the sun but means darkness to the eyes that are a partial expansion of the sun. Similarly the ego, one's I-awareness, is a quality of the Absolute made visible by the Absolute, but as a partial expansion of the Absolute that ego means darkness [falsehood] to the individual soul being bound to the material self. (33) When a cloud produced by the sun is riven, the eye sees the sun's form. When the same way the false ego that covers the spirit soul is destroyed by spiritual [self-]inquiry, remembrance [of the Original Self] will be the result. (34) When one thus with this sword of discrimination has cut away the false ego originating from illusion that binds the soul and one has developed a firm realization of the Infallible Supreme Soul, one speaks of the entire annihilation [of one's materially determined existence, *ātyantika pralaya*], dear King.

(35) Oh subduer of the enemies, some expert knowers of the subtle all-pervading spirit assert that the creation and destruction of all living beings beginning with Brahmā, is an everlasting [*nitya*] process. (36) The [more or less favorable living] conditions of all living beings subject to transformation, are rapidly and continuously wiped out by the mighty force of the current of Time and constitute the causes of their birth and death. (37) These states of existence

created by the Time, the form of the Lord without a beginning or an end, one does not see [directly], just as the [movements of the] planets in the sky are not seen [directly, see also 3.10: 10-14]. (38) Annihilation in the sense of a continuous [*nitya*], periodical [*naimittika*], natural [elemental or *prākṛtika*] and complete [*ātyantika*] destruction has been described. This is how Time [*kāla*] operates.

(39) These narrations about the *līlā* of the creator of the universe, Nārāyaṇa, the reservoir of all existences, have been related briefly and clearly to you, oh best of the Kurus. Not even the Unborn One [Lord Brahmā] would be able to enumerate them completely. (40) For a person distressed by the fire of the different miseries of life and the desires to cross the hard to overcome ocean of material existence, there is no boat but the one of being devoted with a taste for the narrations of the pastimes of the Fortunate One, the Supreme Personality. (41) Long ago the infallible Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa taught this essential compendium of all the classical stories to Nārada Muni, who passed it on to Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana [Vyāsa, the author; see



5.19: 10-15]. (42) He, that powerful Lord Bādarāyaṇa, thereupon was pleased to teach me this Bhāgavatam, oh Mahārāja, this anthology equal in status to the four Vedas. (43) Sūta Gosvāmī, sitting here with us, oh best of the Kurus, will [in his turn] pass it on when he is questioned by sages headed by Śaunaka during a lengthy sacrificial ceremony in the forest of Naimiṣāranya [see 1.1].'

Chapter 5

Final Instructions to Mahārāja Parīkṣit

(1) Śrī Śuka said: 'In this [narration] I have elaborately described the Supreme Lord Hari, the Soul of the Universe, from whose grace Lord Brahmā was born [3.8] from whose anger Lord Śiva [3.12: 7] took birth. (2) Oh King, you who think 'I am going to die', have to give up this animalistic mentality; it is not so that you - just like the body

- [as a soul] have been born while you before were non-existent. You likewise neither shall die today [see also B.G. 2: 12 & 2: 20]. (3) You will not get a new life as a child of yours or in the form of a grandchild, the way a plant sprouts from its own seed; you differ from the body and that what belongs to it as much as fire [differs from the wood it is burning *]. (4) The way one in a dream can witness one's own head being cut off [while staying alive] one also witnesses the physical body composed of the five elements and so on. That is why the soul of the body is of an unborn and eternal nature [see also B.G. 2: 22]. (5) When a pot is broken the air in the pot again will be as the air before; so too the individual regains his original spiritual state when the body is dead. (6) The material bodies, qualities and actions of the spirit soul result from a materially oriented mind; and it is *māyā*, the illusory potency of the Lord, that brings about the material mind and the consequent [repeated] material existence of the indi-



vidual living being [through *ahaṅkāra*, see also 2.5: 25, 3.26: 31-32, 3.27: 2-5]. (7) The combination of oil, a vessel, a wick and fire is what one sees together with the burning of a lamp. Likewise one sees how the material existence of the physical body develops and finds destruction, because of the interaction of the modes of passion, goodness and ignorance. (8) The soul differing from the gross [*deha*] and the subtle [*liṅga*] body, is self-luminous, and constitutes, because he is as unchanging as the sky, the foundation [*ādhāra*] that is eternal and beyond comparison. (9) Oh *prabhu*, engaging your intelligence thus with logical inferences in meditation on Lord Vāsudeva, you should carefully consider your essence, your true self, that is covered by your physical frame. (10) Takṣaka [the snake-bird] sent by the words of the brahmin [1.18] will not burn you; the messengers of death cannot supersede you [your soul] who [now] have mastered the causes of death and death itself [see also 11.31: 12]. (11-12) With the consideration 'I am the Original Supreme Spirit, the Abode of the Absolute and the Supreme Destination' you should place yourself within the Supreme Self that is free from material designations. [Having done this] you will, with the entire world thus set apart from the self, not even notice Takṣaka or your own body when he, licking his lips and with his mouth full of poison, bites your foot. (13) Dear soul, is there anything more you want to know, oh King, after all that I in response to your questions told you about the activities of the Lord?'

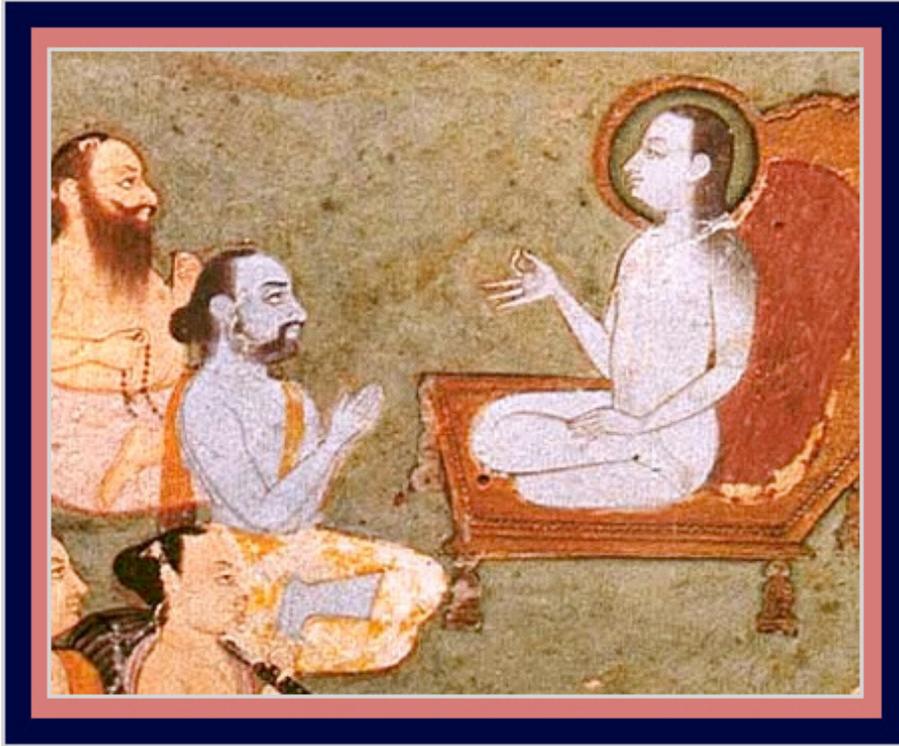
*: In the *śruti*-mantra it is said: *pitā putreṇa pitṛmān yoni-yonau*: "A father has a father in his son, because he may take birth as his own grandson."

Chapter 6 Mahārāja Parīkṣit Liberated and the Veda Handed Down in Four

(1) Śrī Sūta said: "After Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the one protected by Viṣṇu, had heard what was said

by the sage, the equal minded seer of the Supreme Soul, the son of Vyāsa, he approached his lotus feet, bowed his head down and said with his hands folded the following to him. (2) The king said: 'With the great mercy shown by your goodness full of compassion, I have attained perfection because you described directly to me the Lord Without a Beginning or End. (3) It is no surprise at all for great souls absorbed in the Infallible One to be of mercy with the ignorant conditioned souls who are tormented by distress. (4) We [thus] heard from you this collection of classical stories in which the Supreme Lord Uttamaśloka is being described [*]. (5) My lord, I do not fear Takṣaka or any other living being, nor do I fear repeated deaths; I have entered the Spirit of the Absolute revealed by you as [*nirvāṇa*, *as*] standing apart from everything material, and [am now] free from fear. (6) Please allow me, oh brahmin, to resign my speech [and other sensory functions] to Adhokṣaja, so that I, with an absorbed mind having forsaken all sensual desires, can give up my life. (7) With the help of you who showed the all-auspicious, supreme shelter of the Lord Almighty, I have become fixed in non-material knowledge and wisdom, and has my ignorance been eradicated.' "

(8) Sūta said: "Thus having been addressed the powerful saint, the son of Vyāsa, gave him the permission. After the king, that god among the people, along with the renounced sages thereupon had paid his respects, the sage left. (9-10) Parīkṣit, the saintly king, by the power of reason thereupon fixed his mind on his soul, meditated on the Supreme Truth and arrested his breath. On the bank of the Ganges sitting on darbha grass laid to the east, the great yogi, facing the north, free from all attachment in perfect realization of the Absolute Spirit broke with all doubts and became as motionless as a tree. (11) Dear scholars, when Takṣaka, being triggered by the angered son of the brahmin sage [Samika], was on his way to kill the king, he encountered Kaśyapa Muni [see 1.18]. (12) He was an expert in countering poison, but Takṣaka satisfied him with valuables and persuaded him to return home. Thereupon he, able to assume any form desired, disguised himself as a brahmin and bit the king. (13) Before the eyes of



all embodied souls the body of the fully self-realized saint among the kings was consumed by the fire of the snake's poison and turned immediately to ashes. (14) From every direction of the earth and the sky a great cry of lamentation was heard from all amazed demigods, demons, human beings and other creatures. (15) The kettledrums of the demigods resounded, the Gandharvas and Apsaras sang, and the self-realized souls spoke words of praise and rained down a shower of flowers. (16) When Janamejaya heard that his father had been bitten by Takṣaka, he most enraged accordingly together with the brahmins offered all the snakes [of the world] as oblations in a sacrificial ceremony. (17) Takṣaka, seeing the great serpents being burned in the blazing fire of the snake sacrifice, agitated by fear went to Indra for shelter. (18) King Janamejaya, not seeing Takṣaka among them, said to the brahmins: 'Why has Takṣaka, the lowest of all serpents, not been burned?'

(19) [They answered:] 'Oh best of the kings, he is hiding, having approached Indra for shelter. The snake is protected by him and therefore did not end up in the fire.'

(20) **A**fter the highly intelligent son of Parīkṣit heard these words, he said to the priests: 'Dear scholars, why not make Takṣaka fall into the fire along with Indra?'

(21) **H**earing that, the priests performed the ritual for offering Takṣaka along with Indra. [They prayed:] 'Oh Takṣaka, may you quickly fall into this fire here together with Indra and his host of demigods.' (22) Indra who together with Takṣaka and his *vimāna* was thrown from his position by the derogatory words of the brahmins, became most disturbed. (23) Bṛhaspati,

the son of Aṅgirā, who saw him in his *vimāna* together with Takṣaka fall from the sky, addressed the king: (24) 'This snake-bird does not deserve to be killed by you, oh ruler of men. He, this king of the snakes, drank from the nectar [of the gods] and is therefore beyond any doubt free from aging and immortal! (25) The life and death of a living being and his destination [in a next life], oh King, are solely the result of his karma, his own actions; no other agent is accountable for his happiness and distress. (26) A living being dying because of snakes, thieves, fire and lightening, hunger, thirst, disease or other agents, oh King, undergoes that because of his accumulated karma. (27) For that reason, oh King, this sacrifice should be stopped that is performed with the intent to harm others. People burning innocent snakes will have to suffer that fate themselves [see also the Mahābhārata 1.43].'

(28) **S**ūta said: "Thus being addressed he said: 'So be it!', and with respect for the words of the great sage he ceased with the snake sacrifice and worshiped that master of speech [Bṛhaspati]. (29) It is this hard to discern great material illusion [*mahāmāyā*] belonging to Viṣṇu that causes mis-

fortune because of the interaction of the material qualities [the *guṇas*]. The souls who are part and parcel of Him get bewildered by it always causing trouble, and are consequently caught in material bodies. (30-31) The directly visible illusory energy, wherein abiding one lacking in peace thinks in terms of deceit [by blaming others], will not [prevail] when one constantly investigates what goes on in the soul. This is so because one therein, [in that state] the transcendentalists speak about, is not of the materialistic arguments that assume so many forms, nor because of it is of a mind full of decisions and doubts. In that [transcendental consciousness] the living entity is not of worldly concerns or of their causes and the benefits achieved by them, nor is he therein of the I-awareness [that is so strong] in its being bound to the basic qualities. That is all excluded then. A wise soul should take pleasure in warding off the waves of worldly conditioning as also anyone thus being entangled [see also e.g. 6.4: 31-32]. (32) The supreme refuge of Lord Viṣṇu is, by those who wish to give up everything inessential, designated as that what is 'neither this, nor that' [see also *neti neti*]. Rejecting the immorality [of materialism] and with their emotions directed at nothing else, they embrace in their hearts the 'not-that' [of the Soul, of Him] to which they hold on deeply absorbed in meditation [in *samādhi*]. (33) [Thus] not being corrupted by the 'I' and 'mine' that is based upon having a body and a home, they attain this supreme refuge of Lord Viṣṇu. (34) Insulting words one should tolerate and one should never disrespect anyone, nor should one identify with this material body or hold a grudge against whomever. (35) I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose knowledge is always new and upon whose lotus feet meditating I have assimilated this collection of wisdom [*samhitā*]."

(36) Śrī Śaunaka said: "Please tell us this, oh gentle soul [Sūta]: in what way have Paila and the other highly intelligent disciples of Vyāsa who constitute the Vedic authority, spoken about the Vedas, and how have they divided them?"

(37) Sūta said: "Oh brahmin, Lord Brahmā, the most elevated being, had his mind perfectly under

control and heard in his heart the subtle transcendental sound [of *ta-pa*, 2.9: 6] that arose from the ether. One can hear that sound when one closes one's ears [for sounds from the outside. See also *śabda*]. (38) By the worship of that sound, oh brahmin, yogis cleanse the contamination away from the heart that is known as the substance, the activity and the doer [**], and find liberation from rebirth. (39) From that [sound] the threefold *omkāra* [A-U-M] came into being that, manifesting itself unseen, constitutes the representation of the Supreme Lord [Bhagavān], the Absolute Truth [Brahman] and the Supersoul [Paramātmā, see also 1.2: 11, B.G. 7: 8]. (40-41) One perceives this [eternal, itself imperceptibly manifesting] sound, outside the physical sense of hearing and power of vision. The complete of the Vedic sound one employs, is an elaboration of this *omkāra* that from the soul manifests itself in the ether. It constitutes the direct expression of the self-generating Absolute Truth and Supersoul, it constitutes the eternal seed of the Vedas and constitutes the secret of all mantras [see also 7.15: 31, 9.14: 48, 11.14: 34-35, 11.21: 36-40]. (42) Oh eminence of Bhṛgu, the three sounds of the alphabet beginning with A that came into being [the sounds A, U and M], are fundamental to [all] the threefold forms of material existence: the modes [the *guṇas*], the names [of the three Vedas], the destinations [the three types of *lokas*] and the states of consciousness [*avasthā-traya*]. (43) The mighty unborn Lord [Brahmā] created from it [that threefold sound] the different sounds of the total collection of vowels, sibilants, semivowels and consonants, as they are known by their short and long forms. (44) For the purpose of giving instruction on the four sacrifices [see *ṛvik*], the almighty one created with all these sounds from his four faces the four Vedas, along with his *omkāra* and *vyāhṛti* invocations [of the names of the seven *lokas*]. (45) He taught them [as a complete set] to his sons who were the great *ṛṣis* among the brahmins most expert in the art of Vedic recitation, and they in their turn imparted them as instructors of dharma [*ācāryas*] to their sons. (46) Throughout the four *yugas* generation after generation, one after the other disciple fixed in his vows received them [these Vedas] by disciplic succession [*paramparā*]. They were divided among the prominent sages at the end of Dvāpara-

yuga. (47) The brahmin sages, inspired by the Infallible Lord situated in their hearts, came to that dividing among each other of the Vedas when they saw that under the influence of time the intelligence [of the people] diminished, the life span shortened and the strength weakened [see also 1.4: 16-18]. (48-49) Oh brahmin, in this period [of Manu], Brahmā and Śiva and other rulers over the worlds requested the Supreme Lord, the Maintainer of the Universe, to protect the principles of religion. Oh most fortunate soul, the Lord [in the form of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa], by Parāśara begotten in the womb of Satyavatī, then descended as a partial expansion of His plenary portion [Saṅkarṣaṇa] and divided the Veda in four. (50) Like someone sorting out gems, he separated the group of mantras in four categories of collections [*saṁhitās*]: the Ṛg, Atharva, Yajur and Sāma Veda [see Vedas]. (51) The highly intelligent and mighty sage, asked four of his disciples to approach him one by one, oh brahmin, to give each of them one of the [four] collections. (52-53) He taught Paila the first collection [the Ṛg Veda] named Bahvṛca ['many verses'], to Vaiśampāyana he spoke the collection of Yajur mantras called Nigada ['the recited'], the Sāma mantras titled Chandoga ['singer in metre'] he told Jaimini, and the [Atharva] mantras from [the sages] Atharva and Aṅgirā he entrusted to his dear disciple Sumantu [see also 4.21: 22]. (54-56) Paila told his *saṁhitā* [that he divided in two] to Indrapramiti and Bāṣkala. The latter one, oh son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka], divided his collection in four parts he handed down to his disciples

Bodhya, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and Agnimitra. The self-controlled sage Indrapramiti taught his collection to the learned seer [his son] Māṇḍūkeya, and his disciple Devamitra taught it to Saubhari and others. (57) Śākalya, his son, divided his collection in five parts he gave to Vātsya, Mudgala, Śālīya, Gokhalya and Śísira. (58) Sage Jātukarṇya, also a disciple of his, added to the collection he received a glossary when he passed it down to Balāka, Paila, Jābāla and Viraja. (59) Bāṣkali [the son of Bāṣkala] assembled from the different branches [of the Ṛg Veda] the collection called the Vāḷakhilya-saṁhitā that was received by [the Daitya sons] Vālāyani, Bhajya and Kāśāra. (60) This is how those many collections of the Ṛg Veda verses were maintained by these brahmin seers [in disciplic succession]. Anyone who hears about the distribution of these sacred verses is freed from all sins.



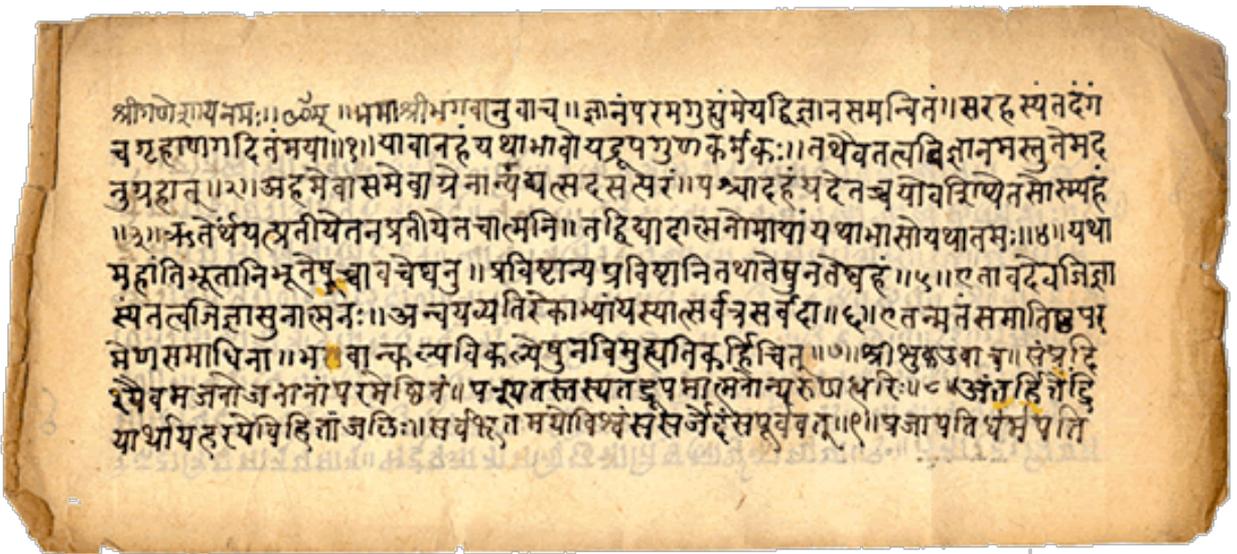
(61) [Some] disciples of Vaiśampāyana were known as the Carakas ['the ones vowed'] because they for their guru executed a vow to atone for the sin of having killed a brahmin. They became authorities on the Atharva Veda. (62) Yājñavalkya, another disciple, said: 'Oh master, what value have the endeavors of these weak fellows? I will perform a most difficult penance!'

(63) Thus being addressed his spiritual master got angry and said: 'Go away, enough of you, a disciple insulting scholars; give immediately everything up that I taught you!'

(64-65) The son of Devaratā then regurgitated the collected Yajur mantras. After he had left, the sages greedily looked at these Yajur mantras and turned into partridges picking them up. These branches of the Yajur Veda thus became known as the most beautiful Taittirīya-saṁhitā ['the partridge collection']. (66) Oh brahmin, Yājñavalkya, looking for extra mantras unknown to his spiritual master, thereupon carefully worshiped the Lord of the sun.

(67) Śrī Yājñavalkya said: 'My obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who, appearing as the sun and just like the ether, in the form of the Supersoul inside and in the form of Time outside, is present in the hearts of the four kinds of

living entities beginning from Brahmā down to the blades of grass [as born from wombs, eggs, moist and seed, see also 2.10: 37-40]. You who cannot be covered by material terms, all by Yourself, with the flow of years made up of the tiny fragments of *kṣanas*, *lavas* and *nimeṣas* [see 3.11: 7], carry out the maintenance of this universe by taking away and returning its water [in the form of rain]. (68) Oh Lord of the Sun, oh Glowing One, oh Best among the Gods, by the rules of the sacred tradition I daily meditate, at the [three] junctures of the day, with full attention on Your glowing sphere, on You, the mighty controller, who burn all the sins, the consequent suffering as also what led to them, of all souls offering prayers [see also 11.14: 35 and the Gāyatrī]. (69) You, who in this world are the Lord dwelling in the hearts of all the moving and nonmoving living beings depending on Your shelter, awaken [and inspire] their unconscious material mind, senses and different vital airs [the *vāyus*]. (70) This world was seized and swallowed by the horrible mouth of the python known as darkness, and became unconscious like being dead. You alone, most magnanimous mercifully casting Your glance, awaken [the sleeping souls] with the gift of insight. At the beginning, half way and at the end of the day You thus, day after day engage [the pious] in the ultimate benefit known as one's own nature of delivering service in a spiritual existence [*svadharma*]. (71) Like an earthly king You [in



form of the sun] travel around everywhere creating fear among the sinners, while the deities of the directions holding lotus flowers, with folded palms offer their respects. (72) Hoping for Yajur mantras not known to anyone else, I therefore with prayer approach Your two lotus feet, oh Lord, that are honored by the spiritual masters of the three worlds [*lokas*, and see 5.23: 8].'

(73) Sūta said: "He, the Supreme Lord of the Sun thus glorified being satisfied, assumed the form of a horse and presented to the sage the Yajur mantras that were never learned by any other mortal being [see also 5.18: 6]. (74) The mighty sage divided the hundreds of Yajur mantras in fifteen branches that were accepted by the disciples Kāṇva, Mādhyandina and others under the name Vājasaneyi: 'stemming from the manes of the horse'. (75) Of Jaimini Ṛṣi, the manager of the Sāma Veda, there was a son Sumantu as also a grandson Sutvān. Each of them he told one half of the collection. (76-77) Sukarmā, another disciple [of Jaimini] and great thinker, divided the tree of the Sāma Veda into a thousand collections of Sāma mantras, after which, oh brahmin, the disciples Hirāṇyanābha - the son of Kuśala - Pauṣyañji, as also another one named Āvantya who was most advanced in spiritual realization, took charge of them. (78) From Pauṣyañji and Āvantya there were five hundred disciples who are called the Sāma Veda singers of the north, or also [in later times, some of them] the singers of the south. (79) Laugākṣi, Māṅgali, Kulya, Kuśīda and Kukṣi, [five] other disciples of Pauṣyañji, each took care of a hundred collections of mantras. (80) Kṛta, a disciple of Hirāṇyanābha, communicated twenty four *samhitās* to his disciples and the remaining ones were handed down by the self-realized sage Āvantya."

*: The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is also known by the name of '*Paramahansa-samhitā*': the collection of stories about the Supreme Swanlike Lord.

** : The substance, the activity and the doer as impurities are understood as manifestations of the ego-inspiring modes of the ignorance of inert mat-

ter, the passion of movement and the goodness of knowledge, also known as the *ādhibhautika* hindrance of the body, the *ādhyātmika* hindrance of the organs of action and the *ādhidāivika* hindrance of the senses of perception [see *kleśa*].

Chapter 7

The Devotion in Saṁhitā Branches and the Ten Topics of the Purāṇas

(1) Śrī Sūta said: "Sumantu Ṛṣi, the knower of the Atharva Veda [see 12.6: 52-53], instructed his mantra collection to his disciple [named Kabandha], who [dividing it in two] spoke it to Pathya and Vedadarśa. (2) Please listen: Śauklāyani, Brahmabali, Modoṣa and Pippalāyani, the disciples of Vedadarśa and the disciples Kumuda, Śunaka and Jājali of Pathya, my dear brahmin, were also all of them authorities on the Atharva Veda. (3) Then Babhru and Saindhavāyana, two disciples of Śunaka [Āṅgirā], the same way learned two Saṁhitās, and other disciples headed by Sāvārṇa learned them [from them again] in their turn. (4) Also Nakṣatrakalpa, Śāntikalpa, Kaśyapa, Āṅgīrasa and others belong to these *ācāryas* of the Atharva Veda. Hear now, oh sage, about the authorities of the Purāṇas.

(5) Trayyārūṇi, Kaśyapa, Sāvārṇi, Akṛtavraṇa, Vaiśampāyana and Hārīta are the six masters of the Purāṇas. (6) Each of them learned one collection from the mouth of Vyāsa's pupil, my father [Romaharṣaṇa], and I, as a disciple of [all] these [masters], became well versed in all [the collections]. (7) Kaśyapa, I, Sāvārṇi and Akṛtavraṇa, who is a disciple of Rāma [Pāraśurāma, see also 10.74: 7-9], learned four basic collections from [Romaharṣaṇa,] the disciple of Vyāsa. (8) Oh brahmin, please listen attentively to what the characteristics are of a Purāṇa, as ascertained by the most intelligent brahmin seers in accordance with the Vedic scriptures. (9-10) The creation [of this universe, *sarga*], the subsequent creation [of different worlds and beings, *visarga*], the maintenance [the sustenance, the *vṛtti* or *sthāna*] and protection [the *rakṣā* or *poṣaṇa* of the living be-

ings], the reigns [of the various Manus], the dynasties [*vaṁśas*], the narrations about them [*vaṁśa-anucaritam*], the annihilation [of different kinds, *pralaya* or *saṁsthā*], the reason [the individual living entity or *hetu*] and the supreme shelter [of the Fortunate One or *apāśraya*], oh brahmin, are the ten topics characterizing a Purāṇa as understood by the authorities on the matter. Some state that relative to the greater ones, the smaller Purāṇas deal with only five of these subjects [see also Śuka on this 2.10: 1-7 and *].

(11) **C**reation [*sarga*] is what one calls the generation from the primordial state. From that state the agitation of the modes raised the cosmic intelligence [the great principle or *mahat-tattva*], from which the identification with matter rose that is divided in three aspects [or types of beings to the modes]. This further led to the manifestation of the subtle forms of perception, the senses and the objects of sense perception [formation by the conditioning of and identification with Time, compare 2.10: 3].

(12) **T**he secondary creation [*visarga*] consists of the collection of ideas [impressions, desires, ex-

pectations, the *vāsanās*] of the moving and non-moving living beings. These propensities are, by the grace of the Original Person [the *puruṣa*], produced the same way as seed that produces [even more] seed.

(13) **L**iving beings subsist on other living beings that move around or else do not move around. For human beings specifically this [*ṽṛtti*] means that one therein acts according to either one's personal nature, one's lust or to scriptural regulations.

(14) **R**akṣā [or protection] concerns the [activities of the] incarnations of the Infallible One who, age after age, are present here among the animals, the mortals, the seers and the demigods of this universe, and kill the enemies of the threefold Veda [see also B.G. 4: 7].

(15) **W**ith every reign of a Manu one speaks of the sixfold [manifestation of the] Lord: the Manu, the demigods, the sons of the Manu, the different controllers of the enlightened souls [the Indras], the seers [or *ṛṣis*] and the partial incarnations [of the Lord, the *aṁśa-avatāras*].



(16) **D**ynasties [*vaṁśas*] originating from Brahmā extend as series of kings through the past, present and future [*trikālika*], and their histories [*vaṁśa-anucaritam*] describe the activities of the prominent members in succession.

(17) **T**he periodical, natural, continuous and complete annihilation taking place as a consequence of His potency, constitutes the four aspects of what the scholars describe as the dissolution of this universe [as *saṁsthā* or *pralaya*, see also 12.4].

(18) **T**he reason [*hetu*] of the [existence of the] creation [*sarga*] and everything thereto [the maintenance and destruction] of this [universe] is [constituted by] the individual living soul [the spiritual and personal *jīva*], who out of ignorance is of result-minded action [accumulates karma], someone of whom others speak as the unmanifest [impersonal and conditioned] self.

(19) **T**he Absolute Truth ['God', *brahma*, *devadeva*] as the supreme shelter [*apāśraya*] is present both separate from and connected with [or inside] the waking, sleeping and dreamless state, the material forms presented by the illusory energy and the individual [moral] conduct. (20) Just as the basic substance of material objects exists both separately from as in connection with existing matters with a name and form, it [the Absolute Truth] throughout the various phases of a bodily existence, is connected with and separate from the seed in the beginning up to the five elements [one returns to] in the end [compare 8.6: 10]. (21) When the mind stops out of its own by giving up the three functions of consciousness [*vytti-traya*] or by practicing [bhakti-]yoga, one knows the Supreme Soul and ceases from material endeavoring [see also 3.25: 32-33].

(22) **T**he sages expert in the ancient stories, say that, thus being distinguished by their characteristics, there are eighteen big and [eighteen] small Purāṇas [from 9.000 up to 81.000 verses, see also Upa-Purāṇa]. (23-24) They [the big ones] are known as the three times six Purāṇas [according to each *guṇa-avatāra*] named Brahmā, Padma,

Viṣṇu, Śiva, Liṅga, Garuḍa, Nārada, Bhāgavata, Agni, Skanda, Bhaviṣya, Brahma-vaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vāmana, Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma and Brahmāṇḍa [see Purāṇas]. (25) Oh brahmin, I thus described thoroughly the branches [of Vedic knowledge] conducive to one's spiritual potency, the way they were divided by the sage [Vyāsa], his disciples and the disciples of his disciples."

*: The Vedic verse (in the *Amarkhasa*, Chapter 12, Puranic Literatures) to this secondary status of a Purāṇa says: *sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca vaṁśānucaritam ceti purāṇaṁ pañca-lakṣaṇam*; "Creation, secondary creation, the dynasties of kings, the reigns of Manus and the activities of various dynasties are the five characteristics of a Purāṇa."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has explained to this that the ten principal topics of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are found within each of the twelve cantos. One should not try to assign each of the ten topics to a particular canto. Nor should the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam be artificially interpreted to show that it deals with the topics successively. The simple fact is that all aspects of knowledge important to human beings, summarized in the ten categories mentioned above, are described with various degrees of emphasis and analysis throughout the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam [pp. 12.7: 9-10].

Chapter 8 Mārkaṇḍeya Resists All Temptation and Prays to Nara-Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi

(1) Śrī Śaunaka said: "Oh Sūta, saintly soul, may you live long. Oh best of speakers, please talk to us, for you are, for a mankind wandering in endless darkness, the seer of the opposite [of the light]. (2-5) People say that the son of Mārkaṇḍu, a seer [called Mārkaṇḍeya], was blessed with an exceptionally long life span and that he was the only soul to remain at the end of the *kalpa* when this entire universe was engulfed. He, the foremost descendant of Bhṛgu, this *kalpa* factually

took birth in my own family. We as yet have not seen any great deluge of all creation taking place in our age. When he alone wandered this great ocean [of destruction] he spotted, so the story goes, a single wonderful personality, an infant boy, lying within the fold of a banyan leaf. About this, oh Sūta, we are in great doubt. Oh yogi by everyone regarded the greatest authority on the Purāṇas, please put for us, so eager to know about it, an end to that doubt."

(6) Sūta said: "Oh great sage, the effect of your question is that it will take away the confusion of the entire world, for it leads to the discussion of the story of Nārāyaṇa that removes the dirt of Kali-yuga. (7-11) After Mārkaṇḍeya had received the second-birth initiation rituals from his father and orderly had studied the Vedic hymns and principles of religion, he was equipped with austerity and recitation. Keeping to the great vow [of lifelong celibacy, see *yama*] he was peaceful with matted hair and bark clothes, and carried a water pot, a mendicant's staff, a sacred thread and a celibate's belt. With the skin of a black deer and lotus-seed prayer beads he for the sake of his regulated practice [see *niyama*] worshiped at sunrise and sunset the Lord in the form of the fire, the sun, the guru, the scholars and the Supreme Soul. In the morning and the evening he brought what he had collected by begging to his spiritual master and, being invited by his guru, then joined in the eating in silence, or else, not being asked, he would fast [see also 7.12: 5 and 7.14: 17]. When he thus with penance and study had worshiped the Master of the Senses for countless [or millions of] years, he had conquered what is impossible to conquer: death. (12) Brahmā, Bhṛgu, Śiva, Dakṣa, the sons of Brahmā and many others among the human beings, demigods, forefathers and ghostly spirits, all stood amazed about that [achievement]. (13) This way with his austerities, recitations and restraint maintaining the great vow of celibacy, the yogi, having turned his mind inwards, meditated on the Lord in the Beyond and rid himself of all hindrances. (14) As he was thus fixing his mind with the powerful practice of yoga, the enormous lapse of time passed consisting of six *manvantaras* [of 71 *mahāyugas* each]. (15) In the seventh period of Manu, Purandara [Indra] heard

about the austerities, became afraid of them, oh brahmin, and decided to obstruct them. (16) He sent celestial singers and dancing girls to the sage, as also Cupid, the spring season, the [sandalwood scented] Malaya breeze, the child of passion [or greed] and the child of intoxication. (17) Oh mighty soul, they all went to his hermitage, on the northern side of the Himalaya mountains, where the river Puṣpabhadṛā and the peak named Citṛā are situated. (18-20) The fine site of the *āśrama* was crowded with twice-born souls, was marked with nice trees and creepers, and with reservoirs of pellucid water everywhere. Humming with maddened bees it was filled with families of birds - excitedly cooing cuckoos and busily dancing, proud peacocks. The winds blowing there transported the cooling drops of mist from the waterfalls and, being embraced by the charm of flowers, called for the god of love. (21) With the moon rising at night showing its face, springtime appeared there with series of new sprouts and blossoms from the multitude of creepers closely embracing the trees. (22) The god of love, the master of hordes of heavenly women, showed himself there holding his bow and arrows, as he was followed by groups of singing Gandharvas playing musical instruments. (23) The servants of Indra found him sitting there in meditation after having offered his sacrificial oblations, with his eyes closed as invincible as fire personified. (24) The women danced in front of him and the celestial singers sang, making charming music with drums, cymbals and *vīṇās*. (25) And while the servants of Indra, the child of greed and the child of spring tried to agitate the mind of the sage, Cupid fixed his five-pointed arrow [concerning one's sight, smell, sound, touch and taste] on his bow. (26-27) The wreath of flowers fell from the hair of Puṅjikasthālī [an Apsara] who, with her waist greatly challenged by her heavy breasts, was playing with a number of balls. Running after the balls with her eyes wandering here and there, the belt of her thin garment loosened and the wind lifted up the fine fabric [see also 3.20: 35-36, 3.22: 17, 5.2: 14, 8.12: 17-24]. (28) Cupid, thinking he had conquered him, then shot his arrow, but all these actions directed at the sage proved to be as futile as the endeavors of a disbeliever. (29) Oh sage, this way trying to compromise the sage, they felt



themselves being burned by his potency and thus desisted, just like children having aroused a snake. (30) Oh brahmin, even though the followers of Indra had violated the great *muni*, he did not yield to the sentiments of ego. For a great soul that is not so surprising at all.

(31) Seeing and hearing how, because of the strength of the brahmin seer, Kāmadeva along with his associates stood powerless, the mighty king of heaven was greatly amazed. (32) In order to show the sage His mercy who thus had fixed his mind in austerity, recitation and restraint, the Lord manifested Himself in the forms of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. (33-34) One of Them was white and the other black. Their eyes were like blooming lotuses, They had four arms, had clothes of bark and black deerskin, They carried a water pot and a straight staff of bamboo in Their most purifying hands and had three-stranded sacred threads. With

prayer beads of lotus seeds and with the Vedas that purify all living beings [in the form of bundles of darbha] They, being worshiped by the chief demigods and standing tall with an effulgent yellowish color, radiating like lightning were austerity personified. (35) Seeing the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he stood up to offer his obeisances with the greatest respect and prostrated himself. (36) Because he, when he saw Them, experienced happiness all over his body, mind and senses, and the hairs on his body stood on end, he was unable, from the tears filling his eyes, to see Them clearly before him. (37) Standing humbly with folded hands, he addressed Them eagerly as if he wanted to embrace Them, and choking said to the two Lords the syllables '*na-ma-ha, na-ma-ha*' (my obeisances, my obeisances). (38) He offered Them seats, bathed Their feet and worshiped Them with incense and flower garlands while

anointing Them with sandal wood and other fragrant substances. (39) As They sat comfortably on Their places ready to bestow Their mercy upon the sage, he again bowed down at Their feet and spoke the following words to the supremely worshipable personalities.

(40) Śrī Mārkaṇḍeya said: 'Oh Almighty One, how can I describe You who moves the vital breath of all embodied living beings including Brahmā, Śiva and myself, and who, following, stirs into action the power of speech, the mind and the senses. Nevertheless [despite this physical imposition] You become the loving friend of everyone worshipping You. (41) These personal forms of the Fortunate One, oh Supreme Lord, You manifest for the ultimate benefit of the cessation of material misery and the defeat of death. And while You, for the sake of protection, manifest various other forms, You - like a spider [with its web] - once having created this universe, again swallow it up completely. (42) Because of You being the Protector, the Supreme Controller of the moving and nonmoving living beings, the one situated at the soles of Your feet is never touched by the emotions of *karma*, *guṇa* and *kāla*; it is before You indeed that the sages, with the Veda in their heart, at every moment in praise bow down to worship and meditate to attain You. (43) We know of nothing else but the attainment of Your feet, the very form of liberation, oh Lord, that benefits the person who has to fear from all sides. Brahmā whose time takes two *parārdhas*, is most afraid on account of this because You are the Time. And how much more would that not be true for the worldly entities created by him [see 10.13: 56]? (44) Let me therefore, with forsaking the covering of my soul, worship the foundation of Your feet, of You who are the intelligence of the real and the teacher of the soul who are the Absolute Truth. The material body with everything thereto is but temporal, one remembers it for only a moment and without its essence it has no meaning. One must attain You and thus see all desired purposes fulfilled. (45) Oh Lord, oh Friend of the Soul, even though all the products of Your illusory potency carrying the names *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, exist as a form of [Your] pastime for the sake of the maintenance, destruction and creation

of this universe, it is the mode of goodness, *sattva*, that exists for our liberation and not any of the other two [basic qualities of passion and ignorance] that bring men danger, bewilderment and fear [see also *guṇa-avatāras* and 10.89: 18]. (46) Because fearlessness, the happiness of the soul and the spiritual world are attained by the mode of goodness, the Sātvatas, Your devotees, are of that consideration and never of any other [mode or] form of the Original Person. For that reason the spiritual authorities in this world worship as most dear to them the transcendental personal form of You [Viṣṇu], as also the form of those who have only eyes for You [the Vaiṣṇavas], oh Supreme Lord [see also 1.2: 26]. (47) The All-pervading, All-inclusive Manifestation and Master of the Universe, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I offer my obeisances, for He is both the supremely worshipable deity Nārāyaṇa, the sage of perfect purity, and Nara, the best of the humans and master of the Vedic scriptures in command of His speech [see *hamsa*]. (48) He who by the deceptive command of his eyes, becomes diverted in his intelligence and fails to recognize [Your presence] within his own senses, heart and even within the objects perceived, may, despite his understanding being covered by Your *māyā*, nevertheless succeed [and arrive at realization] when he directly obtains the Vedic knowledge from its source, from You, the Spiritual Master of All. (49) The vision of the Supreme Soul, the mystery revealed by the Vedic texts, is what the great scholars headed by the Unborn Lord [Brahmā] become bewildered about when they try to adjust, with all sorts of philosophies, the subject matter of Your person to their way of life. You, the Supreme Personality who escapes the understanding of the [materially conditioned] spirit soul, I offer my respects [compare 1.3: 37, 4.31: 11, 4.18: 5, 5.6: 11, 5.14: 1, 7.15: 58, 11.19: 1, 11.20: 7 and B.G. 16: 23-24]."

Chapter 9

Mārkaṇḍeya is Shown the Lord's Bewildering Potency

(1) Śrī Sūta said: "The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, Nara's Friend, who thus by Mārkaṇḍeya, the intelligent sage, was properly respected, thereupon satisfied spoke to the eminent follower of Bhṛgu. (2) The Supreme Lord said: 'Oh dear man perfectly absorbed in the soul, you are the best of all brahmin seers for by your austerities, recitations and concentration you do not deviate in your devotional service unto Me. (3) We are perfectly satisfied about your steady adherence to the great vow. We wish you all the best. Please choose a benediction to your liking. I am the Giver of All Benedictions you desire.'

(4) The honorable ṛṣi said: 'You, oh Lord of Lords, oh Infallible One, are victorious as the Remover of the Distress of the Surrendered Soul. We are perfectly satisfied with as much as the benediction of having seen Your good Self. (5) Brahmā and others with a mind matured in yoga all acquired the sight of Your omnipotent lotus feet and now You in person are visible before my eyes. (6) Nonetheless, oh Lotus-eyed Crest Jewel of Fame, I would like to witness the illusory potency because of which the entire world, along with its rulers, knows the Absolute Truth as a material differentiation [compare B.G. 11: 3-4].'

(7) Sūta said: 'Oh sage [Śaunaka], the Supreme Lord by the ṛṣi to His satisfaction being glorified and worshiped with these words, said with a smile to him 'So be it'. Thereupon the Lord departed for Badarikāśrama. (8-9) The ṛṣi remained behind in his hermitage thinking only of that purpose [of witnessing the energy of the Lord] and venerated and meditated under all circumstances the Lord to the best of his ability [as being present] in the fire, the sun, the moon, the water, the earth, the wind, the lightning as also in his heart. Thus immersed in the stream of pure love [*prema*], he sometimes forgot to prove his respects. (10) Oh best of Bhṛgu, when the sage one day was performing his evening worship on the bank of the Puṣpabhadṛā, a great wind arose, oh brahmin. (11) It created a terrible sound followed by the appearance of threatening clouds as solid as wagon wheels that resounded loudly with lightning and torrential showers of rain everywhere. (12) Then from all sides the four oceans appeared that engulfed the

surface of the earth with wind-tossed waves in which there were terrible sea monsters and fearful whirlpools accompanied by ominous sounds. (13) Perplexed the sage became afraid seeing how the earth flooded and all the four types of inhabitants of the universe [as born from moist, seed, embryos and eggs] including himself, inside and outside were plagued by the fierce winds, the bolts of lightning and the great waves of water rising higher than the sky. (14) Before his eyes the water of the great ocean was swirled around by hurricanes in frightening waves, as it swelled with the rain from the clouds and covered the entire earth, including its continents, islands and mountains. (15) With the three worlds, the earth, outer space, the celestial bodies and heavenly places flooded in all directions, the great sage, as the only soul remaining, wandered about like a dumb and blind person, with his matted locks scattered. (16) Suffering hunger and thirst, attacked by monstrous crocodiles and whale-eaters, and plagued by the winds he, tormented by the waves, moved about in the infinite darkness he had fallen into, overcome by fatigue and not knowing which direction of the sky or the earth he went. (17-18) Sometimes drowning in a great whirlpool and then beaten by the waves, he was threatened by monsters that tried to eat him the one moment and the other moment were attacking each other. In distress he sometimes felt sick and suffered pains with occasional depressions, bewilderment, misery, unhappiness and happiness, while fearing for his life at other times. (19) Countless and countless, hundreds and thousands of years passed with him in bewilderment wandering around in that *māyā*, that deluding material energy of Viṣṇu.

(20) One day, as he was roaming about there, the twice-born soul spotted upon a raised mound of earth a beautiful young banyan tree with fruits and blossoms. (21) Upon a branch of it toward the northeast he saw an infant boy lying within the fold of a leaf swallowing the darkness with His effulgence [see also 3.33: 4]. (22-25) Amazed the king among the scholars drank with his eyes from the sight of His complexion that was as blue as a great emerald, His beautiful lotus face, His conch shell-striped throat, His broad chest, fine nose and beautiful eyebrows. His splendid hairs trembled to



His breath, His beautiful shell-shaped ears resembled pomegranate flowers, His coral lips by their effulgence slightly reddened the nectarean charming smile on his face and the corners of His eyes were reddish like the whorl of a lotus. His breathing moved the lines of His abdomen contorted by His deep leaf like navel and ... he saw how the infant with the graceful fingers of His two hands grabbed one of His lotus feet and placed it in His mouth [*]. (26) When he saw the baby, his weariness was dispelled instantly and out of pleasure the lotus of his heart and his lotus eyes spread wide open. With his hair standing on end he wondered who that wonderful appearance could be, and went straight for the child to find an answer. (27) That very moment the man of Bhrgu, with a breath of the infant, was drawn into His body like a mosquito, whereupon he utterly surprised stood perplexed to see from that position the entire universe the way it was before. (28-29) He over-

looked the entire expanse of all the stars, the mountains and oceans, the directions of the great islands and continents, the enlightened and unenlightened souls, the forests, countries, rivers, cities and mines, the peasant villages, the cow pastures and the various engagements of the *varṇāśrama* society. Of this universe being manifested as real, he saw the basic elements of nature and all their gross manifestations, as also the Time itself in the form of the different *yugas* and *kalpas*, and whatever other object of use in material life. (30) In front of the universe seeing the Himalayas, the Puṣpabhadra river and his hermitage where he had met the *ṛṣis* [Nara and Nārāyaṇa], he was by the breath of the infant thrown outside again and fell back into the ocean of dissolution. (31-32) And there, on the raised stretch of land in the water where the banyan grew, was the child again lying in the fold of its leaf, glancing at him with a nectarean smile of

love from the corner of His eyes. Placing the vision of the infant within his heart he greatly excited ran to embrace the Lord of the Beyond. (33) That very instant He, the Supreme Lord, the master of yoga in person who is hidden in the heart of all living beings, suddenly became invisible to the *ṛṣi*, the same way things that are made by an incompetent person may suddenly fail to serve. (34) Oh brahmin, following Him immediately also the banyan disappeared and the waters of the annihilation of the world and he found himself in front of his *āśrama* as before."

*: The infant putting its foot into its mouth is by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura interpreted as the Lord saying, 'see how sweet my feet are to the taste of the devotee'.

Chapter 10

Śiva, Lord and Helper Glorifies Mārkaṇḍeya Rṣi

(1) Śrī Sūta said: "He who this way experienced the might of the *yoga-māyā* as arranged by Nārāyaṇa, sought shelter with Him. (2) Śrī Mārkaṇḍeya said: 'I fall at the soles of the feet of You who takes away the fear of those who approached You, oh Lord who with Your illusory potency in the form of knowledge even bewilders the scholars.' "

(3) Sūta said: "The great Lord Rudra [Śiva] who, accompanied by Rudrāṇī [Umā] and surrounded by his entourage, traveled through the sky on his bull, saw how he was thus absorbed in meditation. (4-5) Umā observing the seer then said to Giriśa: 'Look at this man of learning who with his body, senses and mind motionless is as calm as the water and schools of fish of the ocean with the wind laid down. Please, oh you who are the bestower of it, award him the perfection of his penances.'

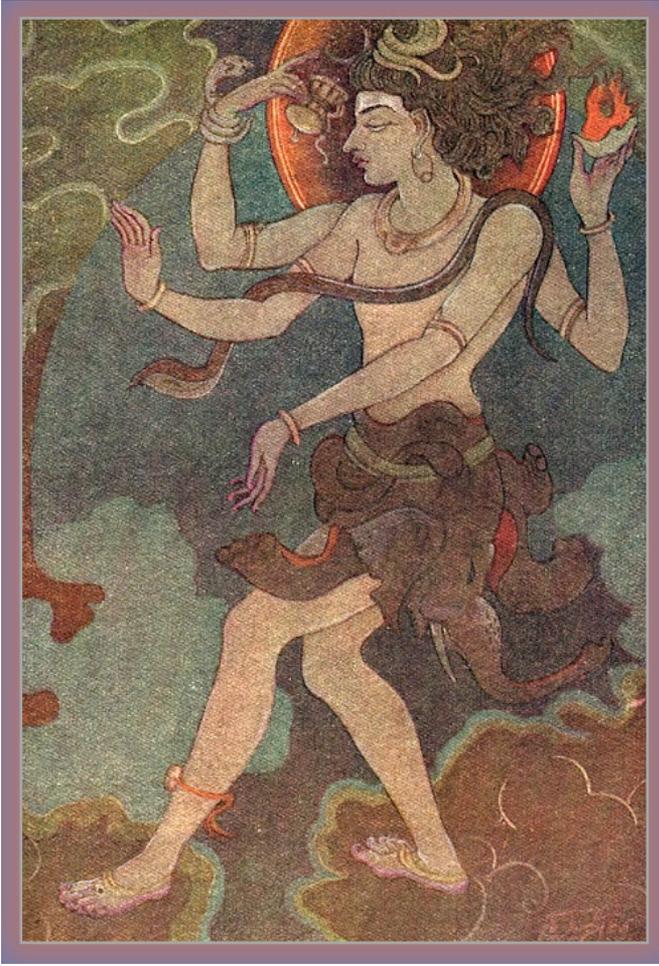
(6) The mighty Lord said: 'I am sure that the brahmin seer does not desire any benedictions in any field, not even liberation, for he has achieved

the transcendental devotional service unto the Supreme Lord, the Inexhaustible Original Person. (7) Nevertheless Bhavānī, let us talk to this pure devotee. It certainly is man's highest achievement to gain the association of saintly souls.' "

(8) Sūta said: "Thus having spoken he, the master of all knowledge, the controller of all embodied souls and the shelter of the righteous ones, approached him. (9) Having arrested the functions of his mind, he [the sage] had neither knowledge of himself or the outer world, nor of the arrival of the two powers of control over the universe in person. (10) Giriśa, the Controller, the great Lord, understanding that, entered the ethereal privacy of Mārkaṇḍeya's heart by means of his mystic potency, just like the wind passing through an opening. (11-13) Śiva appeared inside of him with hair locks blond like lightening, having three eyes and ten arms, and rising as high as the sun. Together with a tiger skin he used for his garment, he exhibited his bow and trident, arrows and sword, shield, prayer beads, damaru (a small drum), ax and skull. When he saw him in his heart manifesting suddenly, the sage desisted from his trance and wondered in surprise: 'Who is this and where did he come from?'

(14) Opening his eyes and seeing that Lord Rudra had arrived with his associates and Umā, the sage with his head offered the one guru of the three worlds his obeisances. (15) He honored him together with his company and Umā with words of welcome, sitting places, water for their feet, water to drink, perfumed oil, garlands, incense and lamps. (16) He said: 'Oh mighty one, what can I do for you, oh Lord who pacifies the universe by the full satisfaction of your ecstatic experience? (17) I offer you my obeisances who delights in the mode of ignorance, you who, devoted to passion, are horrifying and you who give pleasure in the mode of goodness.' "

(18) Sūta Gosvāmī said: "Praised by these words he, the mighty Lord, the foremost of the demigods and shelter of the truthful soul, perfectly satisfied and happy-minded addressed him with a smile. (19) The great Lord said: 'Please, choose a boon to your liking, for of all [demigod] givers of



benedictions the three of us are the [*guṇa-avatāra*] Lords by whose audience a mortal being never fails to find immortality. (20-21) The local rulers and inhabitants of all worlds, I, the great Lord Brahmā and Lord Hari, glorify, worship and assist those who saintly, peaceful and free from material attachment, care for all living beings and who, free from enmity and equal towards all, are of a single-minded devotion unto us. (22) They [these devotees] do not even acknowledge the slightest difference between me, the Infallible One and the one unborn, nor between themselves or other people, and that is why we praise you. (23) Mere bodies of water are no holy places and deities on themselves are devoid of life; they purify the soul only after a long time, but you do so by simply being seen [see also 10.48: 31]. (24) We offer the brahmins our respects who carry our forms, as represented by the three Vedas, and who, by penances, study and concentration in

yoga [*samīyama*], are absorbed in the True Self. (25) Even the greatest sinners and outcasts find purification by seeing you and hearing about you, and what would that not mean when one directly speaks with you [see also 7.14: 17, 10.64: 41-42]?" "

(26) **Sūta** Gosvāmī said: "Thus with his ears drinking from the nectar reservoir of words full of the secret of dharma of the one decorated with the moon (Śiva), the sage had not yet enough. (27) He who because of Viṣṇu's *māyā* was terribly exhausted from having wandered for such a long time, had been freed from a great load of trouble by the grace of Lord Śiva's nectarine words and spoke to him. (28) Śrī Mārkaṇḍeya said: 'Ah, how inconceivable for embodied souls this pastime is of the great controllers: they offer their obeisances to souls they control who praise them as the lords of the universe! (29) In general the authorized speakers act [by precept and example] for the embodied souls to accept the dharma, and [for that purpose] encourage and praise those who do so. (30) Such an attitude of the Fortunate One [and His associates] does not compromise the power of His activities formed by His illusory energy [*māyā*], any more than the ability of a magician is

compromised by his tricks. (31-32) He who as the Supersoul from His mind [by Himself in the form of Time] created this universe and subsequently entered it [in the form of the *avatāras*], manifests Himself like being the doer through the operating modes of nature, just like a person witnessing a dream. Let me offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality who, endowed with the three *guṇas*, is the true Self on top of them. He is the pure, unequalled spiritual master who is the original form of the Absolute Truth [see B.G. 4: 13, 13: 30, 14: 19]. (33) From seeing You a person can achieve whatever he desires, irrespective what. But what other benediction should I desire from you, oh all-pervading Lord whose presence itself is the highest [one may attain]? (34) Nevertheless I would like to ask from you who stand for the Complete that entails the fulfillment of all wishes, one benediction: the unflinching devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead

and unto the both of you, as also unto the souls devoted to Him.' "

(35) Sūta Gosvāmī said: "Thus being worshiped and glorified by the well-spoken words of the sage, the great Lord, Śarva, thereto encouraged by his consort, said: (36) 'Oh great sage full of devotion for Adhokṣaja, may all your wishes be fulfilled. And may you also till the end of the *kalpa* enjoy fame, piety and freedom from old age and death. (37) May you have knowledge of the three-fold nature of time [*tri-kālika*], oh brahmin, as also wisdom in combination with a free heart. May there for you being blessed with brahminical potency, be the status of teacher of the Purāṇa.' "

(38) Sūta Gosvāmī said: "After having granted the sage these blessings he, the Lord with the three eyes, went away, on his way telling the goddess what he [Mārkaṇḍeya] in the past had accomplished and experienced. (39) He, that best soul of Bhr̥gu, who had achieved the greatest of the great in yoga, even today travels about, on his path of serving the Lord with single-minded devotion. (40) This is what I could describe to you of the amazing potency of the illusory energy of the Supreme Personality, as experienced by the intelligent Mārkaṇḍeya. (41) Some declare that this unprecedented life [of the sage] stands for the repeatedly being born of the human being in the illusory creation of the Supreme Soul, but they have no idea what they are talking about. (42) Oh best one of Bhr̥gu [Śaunaka], the story I described is infused with the potency of the Lord with the Chariot wheel in His hand [Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of Time]; for anyone who hears it himself or makes someone else listen to it, there will never be a repetition of births based on karma, a worldly conditioned existence."

Chapter 11 Viṣṇu's Attributes and the Order of the Month of Him as the Sun god

(1) Śrī Saunaka said: "Oh great devotee of the Supreme Personality known with the essence. You, oh best knower who knows so much, we

now ask about this matter of the definitive conclusion of all the supplementary literatures [the *tantras*]. (2-3) We wish you all fortune! Please describe to us eager to learn, the *kriyā-yoga* method of proceeding with His form by which, expertly performed, a mortal being may attain immortality. How do the followers of the tantric prescriptions [the *tāntrikas*] in their regular worship conceive of the limbs, associates, weapons and ornaments of the Master of the Goddess of Fortune who is pure consciousness in person?"

(4) Sūta said: "My obeisances to the gurus! I shall speak about the opulences of Lord Viṣṇu that by the standard authorities, beginning with Padmaja [Lord Brahmā as the one born on the lotus], are described in the Vedas and *tantras*. (5) He, the universal form [the complete of the universe, the *virāt-rūpa*], consists of the nine elements of creation [the *tattvas*] beginning with *māyā* [or *prakṛti*] and their [sixteen] transformations [*vikāras*]. In that conscious existence the three worlds [the *lokas*] produced are discerned [see also 11.22: 4-25]. (6-8) This form of the Puruṣa, has the earth for His feet, heaven for His head, cosmic space for His navel, the sun for His eyes, the air for His nostrils and the directions for His ears. The Master, the Lord, has the Prajāpati for His genital and death for His anus. The Absolute Controller has the local rulers [the demigods] for His many arms, the moon for His mind, *yama* [or Yama] for His eyebrows, shame for His upper lip and greed for His lower lip. The moonlight stands for the teeth, delusion for the smile, the trees for the hairs on the body of the Almighty Lord and the clouds are the hair on the head of the Puruṣa [see also e.g. 2.6: 1-11, 2.10: 24-32, 10.40: 13-14, 11.12: 18-20]. (9) Just as one can determine the dimensions of a normal individual by measuring the spread of his limbs, one can determine the dimensions of Him, the Gigantic Person, by the spread of planetary systems [see also 5.20-24]. (10) The Kaustubha gem carried by the Unborn One represents the spiritual light of the individual soul. The Śrīvatsa mark on the chest of the Almighty represents its expansive effulgence [of the gem/the soul]. (11-12) His material energy, consisting of different combinations of the natural modes, is represented by His flower garland. The



yellow garment He wears stands for the Vedic meters and His sacred thread represents the three syllable AUM. The processes of *sāṅkhya* and yoga are carried by the Godhead in the form of His *makara* ['sea-monster'] earrings, and His crown, freeing all the worlds from fear, represents the superior [transcendental] position. (13) The seat He sits on is called Ananta [the snake bed] - it is unevolved matter [*pradhāna*, the primal ether]. The lotus [the Lord's throne] thereupon is the goodness associated with dharma, spiritual knowledge and so on. (14-15) The club He carries constitutes the principle element [of *prāṇa* or the vital air] relating to the sensory power, physical power and the power of mind. His excellent conch shell is the element water and His Sudarśana disc

is the principle of *tejas* [the vital power, the dignity, the fire in opposition]. His sword is, [pure] as the atmosphere, the ether element, His shield consists of the mode of ignorance, His bow Śārṅga is the specific order [or spirit, the *rūpa*] of time, and His quiver of arrows consists of the karma [the action or the *kar-mendriyas*]. (16) His arrows, they say, are the senses, His chariot is the incitement to action [the mind], His external appearance constitutes the objects of perception [*tānmatras*], and His gestures [*mudrās*] represent the essence of purposeful action. (17) The cyclic order [of time, viz. the sun and the moon] constitutes the exercise of respect for the Godhead, spiritual initiation [*dīkṣā*] is the purification process for the spiritual soul, and devotional service to the Fortunate One is how one puts an end to a bad course [sin]. (18) The supreme lotus of Bhagavān refers to the meaning of the word *bhaga* [His opulences], and the fan and whisk the Supreme Lord has accepted for His worship, are religion and fame. (19) Dear brahmins, His umbrella is Vaikuṅṭha, the place free from foolishness, and the one called Suparṇa [Garuḍa], who is the

carrier of the Personality of Sacrifice [Viṣṇu or Yajña], represents the threefold Veda [see footnote]. (20) The goddess Śrī inseparable from the Lord constitutes His visible inner nature [*], Viṣvakṣena is known as the personification of the *tantra* scriptures and the eight doorkeepers headed by Nanda [**] stand for the Lord's qualities of *animā* and such [the *siddhis*]. (21) Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are, as you know, the names of the manifested forms [the *vyūha* expansions] of the Original Person Himself, oh brahmin [Śaunaka]. (22) Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord, can be discussed in terms of [the states of consciousness concerning] the entire universe [*viśva*], the passionate ego [*taijasa*], the individual learning [*prājnā*] and the transcen-

dence [*turīya*], that stand for [respectively His] functions of the [omnipresent perception of] external objects [as embodied by the expansion of His mind Prayumna], of sense itself [of the force, by the expansion of His ego Saṅkarṣaṇa], of the one who senses [of the expansion of His personal intelligence Aniruddha] and of spiritual self-realization [the transcendental beatitude of Him, Vāsudeva]. (23) In His four personal forms [His expansions], Bhaga-vān [the possessor of the fullness], the Lord and Controller, maintains these four states with the help of His major [arms; as in verse 14-15] and minor limbs [His extra limbs, His guardians], His weapons and His ornaments. (24) Oh best of the brahmins, He alone is the self-illuminating source of the Absolute Truth [the Vedas] who, perfect in His own greatness and completeness, by His own material energy creates, withdraws and maintains this universe. As such [a performer of various material functions] He, while not being covered in His transcendental awareness, is [sometimes] described as being materially unfolded [as divided]. But by those who are devoted to Him He can be realized as their one true self, their very Soul. (25) Śrī Kṛṣṇa, friend of Arjuna, chief of the Vṛṣṇis, Annihilator of the Rebellious Royal Dynasties whose prowess never deteriorates, oh Govinda, place of pilgrimage whose glories, which bring about auspiciousness by just hearing about them, are sung by Vraja's cowherd men and women and their dependents, please protect Your servants! (26) Anyone who rises at dawn and with his mind absorbed in Him [in *tat*] in meditation murmurs these characteristics of the Supreme Original Person, arrives at the realization of the Absolute Truth present in his heart."

(27-28) Śrī Śaunaka said: "The great sage Śuka described to the listening king Parīkṣit [the grace of Viṣṇu] the seven [pairs of] attendants of the sun god occupying a different position in

each month. Please speak to us so faithful, about the names and actions of these expansions of the Lord's manifestation as Sūrya, and the deities involved [see also 5.21: 18]."

(29) Sūta said: "This regulator of all the planets [the sun] revolving in their midst [around mount Meru, see 5.22: 2] was [by the Lord in the form of Time] created from the [proto]material primal energy [*pradhāna*] of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul of all embodied beings. (30) The sun being the one and only Lord, the original creator and self indeed of all the [planetary] worlds, constitutes the basis of all ritualistic activities of the Vedas that are differently described by the sages. (31) Oh brahmin, the material energy of the Lord is thus de-



scribed in nine: the time, the place, the endeavor, the performer, the instrument, the specific ritual, the scripture, the paraphernalia and the result [compare B.G. 18: 13-15].

(32) **T**he Supreme Lord assuming the form of Time, is there for the [regulation of the] planetary motion to the rule of twelve [months or *māsas*, see also B.G. 10: 21], beginning with Madhu. In each of the twelve He [accompanying the sun god] moves differently with His [six] associates [He as a certain Deva together with a different Apsara, Rākṣasa, Nāga, Yakṣa, sage and Gandharva]. (33) Dhātā [as the Sūrya Deva], Kṛtasthalī [as the Apsara], Heti [as the Rākṣasa], Vāsuki [as the Nāga], Rathakṛt [as the Yakṣa], Pulastya [as the sage] and Tumburu [as the Gandharva] are the ones ruling the month of Madhu [or Caitra at the vernal equinox, March/April]. (34) [Likewise respectively] Aryamā, Puñjikasthalī, Praheti, Kacchanīra, Athaujā, Pulaha and Nārada rule the month of Mādhava [Vaiśākha, April/May]. (35) Mitra, Menakā, Pauruṣeya, Takṣaka, Rathasvana, Atri and Hāhā are the ones ruling the month of Śukra [Jyaiṣṭha or Jeṣṭha, May/June]. (36) Varuṇa, Rambhā, Citrasvana, Śukra, Sahajanya, Vasiṣṭha and Hūhū are the ones ruling the month of Śuci [Āṣādhā, June/July]. (37) Indra, Pramlocā, Varya, Elāpatra, Śrotā, Aṅgirā and Viśvāvasu are the ones ruling the month of Nabhas [Śrāvaṇa, July/August]. (38) Vivasvān, Anumlocā, Vyāghra, Śaṅkhaṇḍa, Āsāraṇa, Bhṛgu and Ugrasena are the ones ruling the month of Nabhasya [Bhādrapada, August/September ***]. (39) Pūṣā, Ghṛtācī, Vāta, Dhanañjaya, Suruci, Gautama and Suṣeṇa are the ones ruling the month of Tapas [Māgha, January/February]. (40) Parjanya, Senajit, Varcā, Airāvata, Ṛtu, Bharadvāja and Viśva are the ones ruling the month of Tapasya [Phālguna, February/March]. (41) Amśu, Urvaśī, Vidyucchatru, Mahāśaṅkha, Tārṣya, Kaśyapa and Ṛtasena are the ones ruling the month of Sahas [Mārgaśīrṣa, November/December]. (42) Bhaga, Pūrvacitti, Sphūrja, Karkoṭaka, Ūrna, Āyu and Ariṣṭanemi are the ones ruling the month of Puṣya [Pauṣa, December/January]. (43) Tvaṣṭā, Tilottamā, Brahmāpeta, Kambalāśva, Śatajit, Jamadagni the son of Ṛcika and Dhṛtarāṣṭra as the Gandharva are the ones ruling the month of Iṣa [Āśvina, September/Octo-

ber]. (44) And Viṣṇu, Rambhā, Makhāpeta, Aśvatara, Satyajit, Viśvāmitra and Sūryavarcā are the ones ruling the month of Ūrja [Kārttika, October/November].

(45) **A**ll these [personalities] constitute the glories of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of the sun god; they take away the sinful reactions of everyone who in the morning and the evening, day after day remembers them. (46) The Lord who [as the Deva] with His six types of associates thus moves in all directions through this universe, therewith disseminates in each of the twelve months a pure consciousness for its inhabitants in this and a next life. (47-48) While the sages glorify Him with the Sāma, Ṛg and Yajur hymns that reveal His identity, the Gandharvas sing loudly about Him, the Apsaras dance in front of Him, the Nāgas prepare the chariot, the Yakṣas harness the horses and the strong Rākṣasas push it from behind. (49) In front of the chariot the sixty thousand pure Vālakhilya brahmin sages go, being of worship with prayers to the Almighty [see also 4.1: 39]. (50) The Unborn Lord Hari, the Supreme Controller, the Possessor of All Opulences without a beginning or an end, protects the worlds, by expanding Himself thus in each *kalpa* into [all these] various forms."

- Threefold Veda: The Ṛg- Yajur- and Sāma Veda are the three Vedas of the principal original division of the Vedic verses also called *trayī vidyā*. They are about the reciting of hymns (Ṛg), the performance of sacrifices (Yajur) and the chanting of songs (Sāma). The Atharva Veda is a later addition dealing with the so-called *ātharvanas*, the procedures for everyday life.

*: According to the Skanda Purāṇa in the verses beginning with '*aparam tv akṣaram yā sā*' there are thus three infallible energies: the external material energy of *māyā*, the internal potency of Śrī and the Supreme Energy of the Puruṣa, the Lord Himself.

**: The Padma Purāṇa (256.9-21) lists eighteen guardians or attendants of the Lord: Nanda, Sunanda, Jaya, Vijaya, Caṇḍa, Pracāṇḍa, Bhadra,

Subhadra, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Kumuda, Kumudākṣa, Pundarikṣa, Vāmana, Śaṅkukarna, Sarvanetra, Sumukha and Supraṭiṣṭhita.

***: From this point is broken with the regular order of the months. The different translators do not agree about the cause of this break of order and some have suggested to correct the order of the verses given to correct this.

Chapter 12

The Topics of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Summarized

(1) **S**ūta said: "Offering my obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa, to the creator, to the brahmins and to the supreme of dharma, I shall now discuss the eternal principles of dharma [the *sanātana-dharma*, in terms of the topics discussed in the Bhāgavatam]. (2) Oh sages, upon your request I related to you these wondrous pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, that are especially suitable for people of respect for the person. (3) The direct interest of this [narration] is the glorification of the Lord, the Remover of All Sins, Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the Senses, the Supreme Personality and Master of the Sātvatas. (4) Herein the creation and annihilation of this universe is discussed, as also the confidential knowledge of the One Self-existent Supreme Spirit, including the purity of perception and the means of cultivating that [self-]realization.

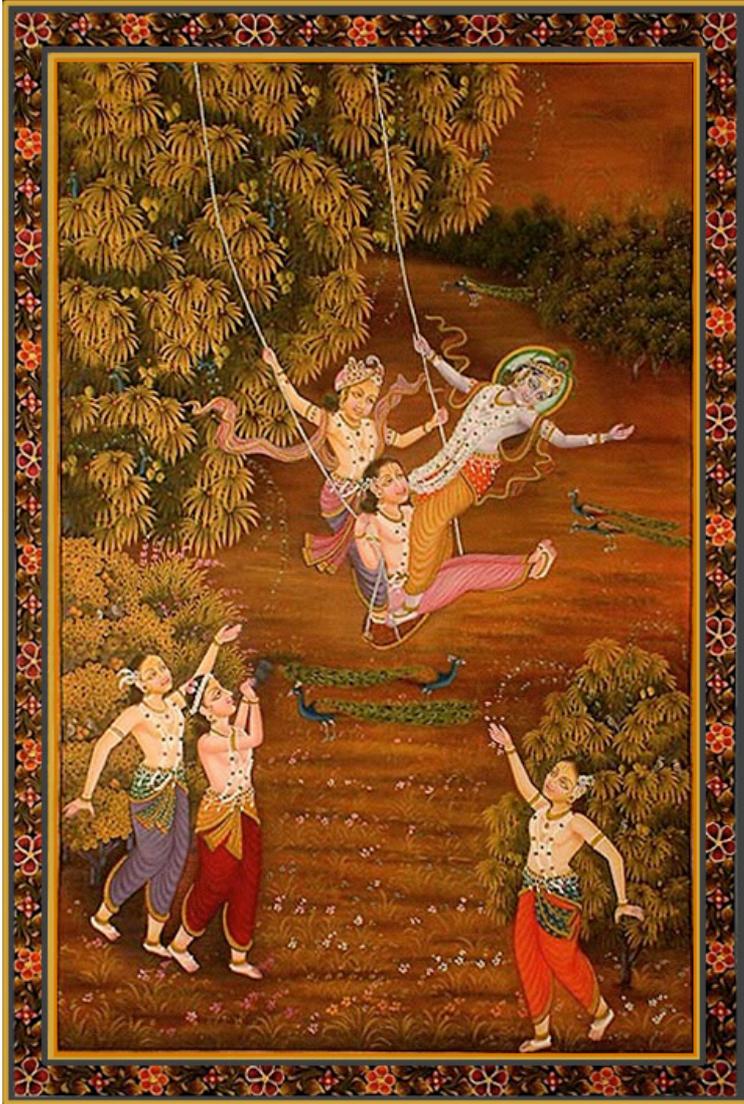
(5-6) **B**hakti-yoga and the renunciation belonging to it are discussed at length [in 1.2, 7.5-10 and 11.29], just as the history of Nārada [1.4-6] and the story of Parīkṣit that describes how the sage among the kings fasted until death because of a curse of [the son of] a sage, to the occasion of which he had a conversation with Śuka, the best of the brahmins [see 1.8-18]. (7) What follows is a discussion of how one may attain liberation by concentrating in yoga in case one has to die [2.2: 15-21], a conversation between Nārada and Brahmā [2.5], the row of *avatāras* [1.3 en 2.7] and how the process of evolution takes place from primary nature [or *pradhāna*, 3.26: 10-72]. (8) Next there is the discussion Vidura had with Ud-

dhava [3.1: 25 - 3.4] and the one Vidura had with Maitreya [3.5 - 4.31], [preceded by] what a Purāṇa entails [in general, see 2.10: 1 and 12.7: 9-10], following which the subject is discussed of the winding up of creation within the Mahāpuruṣa [2.10: 6, 3.11: 30, 8.5: 35, 11.3: 8-15, 12.4]. (9) It then continues about the creation as happening from [the modes of] material nature, the generation of the seven derivatives [of *mahat*, *ahañkāra* and the *tanmātras*, see 3.20: 12-17] and the evolution of the egg of the universe from which the universal form of the Lord arises [3.6]. (10) The gross and subtle movements of time [3.11 are also discussed, including] the generation of the lotus [3.8] and the killing of Hiraṇyākṣa for the sake of delivering the earth from the ocean [3.17-19]. (11) [Then there is a discussion about] the creation of the higher beings, the animals [the mammals] and the lower species [3.12: 37-48], the birth of Rudra [3.12] and the appearance of Svāyambhuva Manu from the male/female division of the Lord [see 3.12: 49-53, 4.1]. (12-13) [Discussed are] the progeny of the first woman, Śatarūpā, the excellent consort [of Manu], the offspring of [the nine daughters of] the pious wife [Devahūti] of the founding father Kardama [see 3.24: 20-25 and 4.1], the descent of the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Personality of Lord Kapila and the conversation the scholarly Kapila had with Devahūti [His mother, 3.25-33]. (14-15) The stories about the descendants of the nine brahmins [who married Kardama's daughters, 4.1], the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice [4.2-7] and the history of Dhruva [4.8-13] are then followed by those about Pṛthu [4.15-23] and Prācīnabarhi [4.24-29], his conversation with Nārada [4.29] and the stories about Priyavrata [5.1], Nābhi [5.3] and the lives of Ṛṣabha [5.3-6] and Bharata Mahārāja, oh brahmins [5.7-13]. (16) The continents, subcontinents and oceans, the mountains and rivers are described in detail [5.19-20], as also the complete of the celestial sphere [5.21-23] and the situation of the subterranean regions and hell [5.24-26]. (17) [Next there are the descriptions of] Dakṣa's [re]birth as the son of the Pracetas [6.4] and the progeny of his daughters constituting the demigods, demons and human beings, the animals [the mammals], serpents, birds and other species [6.6]. (18) [There is also an account of] the birth



and death of [Vṛtra, 6.9-12,] the son of Tvaṣṭā, and the two sons of Diti, Hiraṇyākṣa [3.14-19] and Hiraṇyakaśipu, oh brahmins, and the history of the great soul Prahlāda, the lord of the Daityas [7.2-8]. (19-20) The reigns of the Manus [8.1] are described in detail as also the liberation of the king of the elephants [Gajendra, 8.2-4] and the *avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu for each period of Manu [8.5 and 13], like Hayaśīrṣā [8.24: 8 and 57; 5.18: 1], Nṛsiṃha [7.9-10], Vāmana [8.18-22], Mātsya [8.24] and the descent of Kūrma for the purpose of [supporting the] churning by the inhabitants of heaven of the nectar from the milk ocean [8.7-8]. (21) [Next there is an account of] the great war between the demons and the gods [8.10], as also of the succession of the dynasties of kings [9.2, 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 20-24], of the dynasty of the great soul Sudyumna [9.1] and of the birth of Ikṣvāku and his dynasty [9.6]. (22) In this book the stories about Ilā [9.1: 16-27] and Tārā [9.14: 4-13] are discussed, including a description of the descendants of the Sūrya-vaṃśa, like Śaśāda [Vikuṣi, 9.6: 6-11] and Nṛga [9.1: 11-12, 9.2: 17 and 10:

64]. (23) Then there are the stories about Sukanyā [9.3], [the daughter of] Śaryāti, the intelligent Kakutstha [Purañjaya, 9.6: 12-19], Mādhātā [9.6: 33-37 and 9.7], Saubhari [9.6], Sagara [9.8] and Khatvāṅga [9.9: 41-47]. (24) The actions of Lord Rāmacandra, the king of Kośala [are presented] that dispel all sin [9.10 and 11], of Nimi who gave up his material body [9.13], and also the appearance of the descendants of king Janaka [or Śīradhva-ja] are discussed [9.13: 18-27]. (25-26) The elimination of the ruling class by Lord Paraśurāma, the greatest descendant of Bṛṅgu [is discussed 9.15 and 16], as also Aila [Purūravā, 9.14 and 15], Nahuṣa [9.18: 1], Yayāti [9.18 and 19], Duṣmanta's son Bharata [9.20], Śāntanu [9.22: 12-13] and Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma [9.22: 18-19] of the Candra-vaṃśa, and the celebrated dynasty of Yadu, the eldest son of Yayāti [9.23: 18-29]. (27) [It is] the dynasty in which the Supreme Lord known as Kṛṣṇa, the Master of the Universe, descended in the house of Vasudeva. Subsequently His birth [10.3] and how He grew up in Gokula are described [10.4-10]. (28-30) His countless exploits are [next] glorified: how He sucked the milk along with the life air out of Pūtana [10.6], how He as a child broke the cart and trampled Tṛṇāvarta [10.7], killed Baka, Vatsa [10.11] and Agha, [10.12 and how He dealt with] Brahmā who hid the calves and boys [10.13 and 14], how He with His companions destroyed Dhenuka [10.15] and Pralamba [10.18], and how He saved them [the *gopas*] from a forest fire that entrapped them [10.17 and 19]. (31-33) There is the [story about the] taming of the snake Kāliya [10.16-17], the contentment of the Infallible Lord about the vows observed by the young *gopīs* [10.21 and 22], the mercy for the sorry wives of the brahmins performing a sacrifice [10.23]; the



lifting of Govardhana hill [10.25] and the worship and ritual bathing next performed by Indra and Surabhi [10.27], Kṛṣṇa's sporting with the *gopīs* during the nights [10.29-33], the rescue of Nanda Mahārāja from a great serpent [10.34], and the killing of the foolish Śaṅkhacūḍa [10.34], Ariṣṭa [10.36] and Keśī [10.37]. (34) [There is the description of] the arrival of Akrūra [10.38] and the departure thereafter of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the lamentation of the women of Vraja [10.39] and the tour [of the Lords] in Mathurā [10.41]. (35) The killing of the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa [10.43], of the wrestlers Muṣṭika and Cāṅūra, and of Kamsa and others [10.44] is discussed as also the retrieval of the deceased son of Sāṅdīpani, the guru [10.45]. (36) Residing in Mathurā in the

company of Uddhava and Balarāma, oh brahmins, the Lord performed pastimes for the satisfaction of the circle of the Yadus [10.48]. (37) [Next there are the stories about] the repeated annihilation of the troops assembled by Jarasāndha [10.50], about the founding of Dvārakā and about the killing of the king of the barbarians [Kālayavana, 10.51]. (38) [These are followed by descriptions of] the kidnapping of Rukmiṇī, to the occasion of which the Lord defeated His rivals in battle [10.53], and how the pārijāta tree together with the Sudharmā hall were obtained from the abode of the demigods [from Indra, 10.50: 54]. (39) The killing of the master of Prāgjyotiṣapura [Bhauma or Naraka] and the taking away of the young maidens [is discussed in 10.59], with next following the forced yawning of Śiva in the battle with Bāṇa and the severing of Bāṇa's arms [10.63]. (40-41) The [Bhāgavatam also discusses the] prowess and death of Pañcajana [10.45: 40-41], Śambara [10.55], Pṛiṭha [10.59], Mura [10.59], Dvividā [10.67], the king of Cedi [10.74], Śālva [10.76-77], the foolish Dantavakra [10.78] and others, how the Pāṇḍavas became the direct cause [for Kṛṣṇa] to relieve the earth's burden [10.49] and how the burning of Vārānasī came about [10.66]. (42-43) [There

is the story of] the withdrawal of His family [11.30] on the pretext of a curse from the brahmins [11.1] and [an account of] the wonderful discussion between Vāsudeva and Uddhava in which the science of the true self came to its full expression in ascertaining the dharma [of how to live with Kṛṣṇa not physically being present anymore, see 11.6-29]. Thereafter His forsaking the mortal world by the strength of His own mystical power [is related, 11.31]. (44) [Also discussed are] the characteristics of the different *yugas* and their corresponding behaviors [11.17 and 12.3], the disturbance of man in Kali-yuga [12.1-3], the four types of annihilation and the three [*guṇa*] kinds of creation [12.4]. (45) [Finally there is an account about] Viṣṇurata [Parīkṣit], the intelligent

saintly king who had to relinquish his body [12.5-6], the story of how the seer [Vyāsa and others] conveyed the branches of the Veda [12.6-7], the pious narration about Mārkaṇḍeya [12.8-10], the composition of the [universal form of the] Mahāpuruṣa and the arrangement [of time] in relation to the sun, the self of the universe [12.11].

(46) **T**hus, oh best of the brahmins, I have discussed here everything that you asked about. Therewith I have praised the complete of the activities of the Lord's *līlā-avatāras*. (47) When one falls, trips, hurts oneself or sneezes and then spontaneously loudly cries '*haraye namah*' [obeisances to Hari], one is freed from all [reactions to one's] sin. (48) Of persons glorifying the Supreme Lord and hearing about the potency of the Unlimited One, all vice that enters the heart is cleansed away entirely, the same way the sun removes the darkness or a strong wind removes the clouds. (49) False, meaningless, empty words are all those discussions wherein the Supreme Lord in the Beyond is not mentioned. Only those stories are true, auspicious and meritorious that have the qualities of the Fortunate One as their conclusion. (50)

Those words are pleasing, attractive and always new that praise the glories of Uttamaśloka, the One Celebrated in the Verses; to the mind they mean a constant great celebration that for everyone dries up the ocean of misery. (51) A use of colorful words never describing the glories of the Lord that sanctify the entire universe, compares to a place of pilgrimage for crows and is never served by the swanlike, pure saintly devotees who think of Acyuta only [alike 1.5: 10]. (52) That creation of words which revolutionizes the sins of the people and in which, although imperfectly composed, each verse depicts the names and glories of the unlimited Lord, is heard, sung and accepted by the ones who are purified and honest [identical to 1.5: 11]. (53) Even endeavoring free from material motives, spiritual knowledge devoid of the love of the Infallible One actually does not look very good. What is the use of fruitive labor always giving pain - even when done perfectly - when it is not offered to the Lord [alike 1.5: 11]? (54) The great effort of faithful to the scriptures and with penance fulfilling one's duties within the *varṇāśrama* system, leads to nothing but a good name and wealth. But when one listens



and exercises respect and so on with glorifying His qualities, one obtains the remembrance of the lotus feet of the Maintainer of the Goddess of Fortune. (55) The remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys everything inauspicious and leads to good fortune. Connected in knowledge, wisdom and detachment one with devotion unto the Supreme Soul arrives at purification of the heart. (56) You, oh most eminent brahmins, are all extremely fortunate with in your heart a fixed position for Nārāyaṇa, the Original Soul and Godhead of all. With that love for the Heavenly Lord Beyond Whom No Other is Found, be perpetually of worship! (57) I also was reminded of this science of the Soul, hearing it in the attentively listening assembly of great sages from the mouth of Śuka, the supreme sage, when king Parīkṣit was fasting until death. (58) Oh brahmins, this what I told you about the glories of Vāsudeva whose great actions are so worthy to be described, completely puts an end to all inauspiciousness. (59) Someone who with unswerving attention every *yāma* [three hour period] and every *kṣaṇa* [a moment or 1.6 second] with faith makes others listen or faithfully listens himself to but one verse or even half a verse, but one line or even half a line, [therewith] certainly purifies his soul. (60) If one, refraining from eating, with careful attention recites from or listens to [the Bhāgavatam] on the eleventh or either twelfth day [Ekādaśī or Dvādaśī of a 15-day lunar fortnight, see 3.11: 10], one will be blessed with a long life and be freed from all that causes a fall. (61) When one self-controlled and fasting studies this collection of verses at [the holy places of] Puṣkara, Mathurā or Dvārakā, one will be freed from the fear [of time, or of a material life, see also 1.13: 19]. (62) The demigods and sages, the perfected souls and the forefathers, the progenitors and the kings will bestow all that one desires, when one glorifies these verses by proclaiming them or listening to them. (63) A twice-born soul who studies them will as a result obtain the same rivers of honey, ghee and milk that one acquires by studying the Ṛg, Yajur and Sāma verses. (64) Diligently studying this essential compilation of classical stories, someone twice-born will attain that supreme position the Supreme Personality of Godhead spoke about. (65) An educated man studying them acquires knowledge of matters, a

king acquires the domain encircled by the oceans, a businessman acquires the control over treasures and a worker will rid himself of all that leads to a fall down. (66) While the Fortunate One in His countless forms is extensively described in the form of stories in each of these verses, by contrast Hari, the Lord of all beings who annihilates all the impurities of Kali-yuga, is elsewhere [in other scriptures] not constantly glorified. (67) I am bowed down to Him, the Unborn, Unlimited, Real Self, by whose energies there is the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, to Him, the Infallible Lord, whose glory is hard to understand for [even] the masters of heaven being headed by the unseen one [Aja or Brahmā], the mighty one [Śakra or Indra], and the beneficent one [Śaṅkara or Śiva]. (68) My obeisances to the Eternal Lord, the Best of All the Gods, to the Fortunate One whose Manifestation is Pure Consciousness and who by the collection of His nine powers [*śaktis* or potencies] settled for His own Self as the refuge for the moving and nonmoving living beings.

(69) **I** bow down to him, the son of Vyāsa who defeats everything inauspicious, he who, attracted in his heart by the pleasing pastimes of the Unconquerable Lord, in denial though of any other type of consciousness, was as merciful to give up his solitary happiness and disclose the [Bhāgavata] Purāṇa about His activities, the light of reality."

Chapter 13 The Glories of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam

(1) **Sūta** said: "I offer Him my obeisances, the Godhead who in arrangements of mantras from the Vedas, their limbs [the *aṅgas*] and the Upaniṣads with transcendental prayers is praised by Brahmā, Indra, Rudra and the children of heaven [the Maruts], the Godhead about whom the Sāma Veda chanters are singing, the Godhead upon whom the yogis who see Him in their minds concentrate in meditation, He whose end is not known to anyone among the enlightened and un-

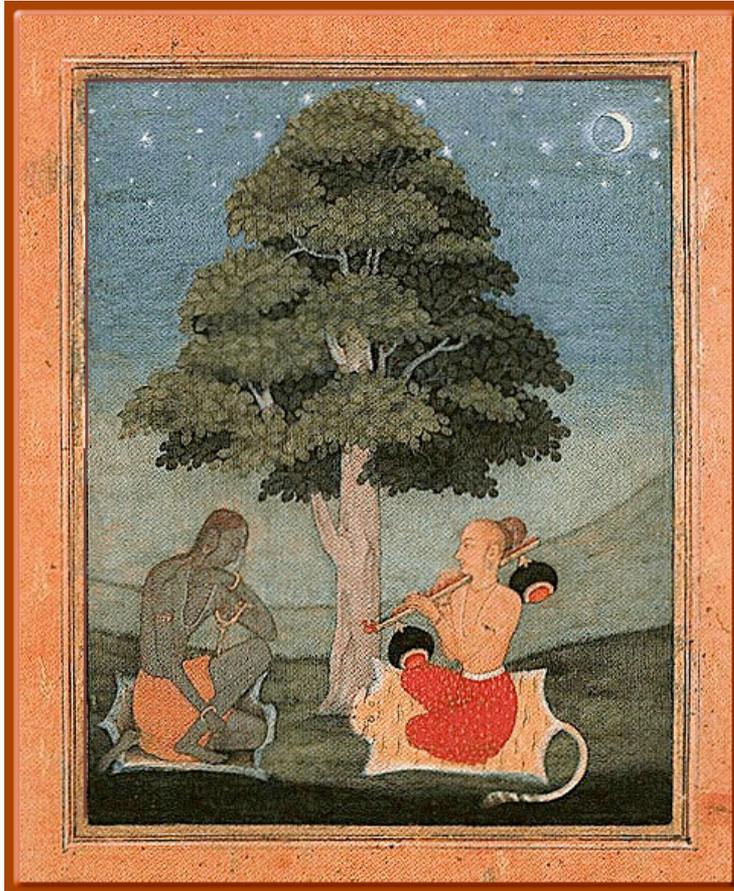
enlightened souls. (2) The Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a tortoise [Kūrma] became sleepy from the scratching edges of the stones of Mandara mountain that most heavily rotated upon His back. May all of you be protected by the winds that are the traces left behind by the flow of His breathing and by the ceaseless tides of the ebb and flow of the water that up to the present day follows the example of His in- and outgoing breath. (3) Please listen now to a summation of the number [of verses] of the Purāṇas, what the purpose is of its subject matter, how the book should be given as a gift, what the glory of that gift-giving is and what the blessing is of the reading and such of this text.

(4-9) **T**he Brahmā Purāṇa has ten thousand verses, the Padma Purāṇa counts fifty-five thousand, the Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa twenty-three thousand and the Śiva Purāṇa twenty-four thousand. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam counts eighteen thousand verses, the Nārada Purāṇa has twenty-five thousand, the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa nine thousand and the Agni Purāṇa fifteen thousand four hundred verses. The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa has fourteen thousand five hundred verses, the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa counts eighteen thousand and the Liṅga Purāṇa eleven thousand verses. The Varāha Purāṇa offers twenty-four thousand verses, the Skanda Purāṇa eighty-one thousand one hundred and the Vāmaṇa Purāṇa is described in ten thousand verses. The Kūrma Purāṇa is described in seventeen thousand verses, the Matsya Purāṇa has fourteen thousand of them, the Garuḍa Purāṇa next has nineteen thousand verses and the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa counts twelve thousand verses. In sum the Purāṇas are thus expressed in four hundred thousand verses [*]. Eighteen thousand of them constitute, as said, the Bhāgavatam [see further under Purāṇa].

(10) **T**his [tale of wisdom] was by the Supreme Personality of Godhead [Narāyaṇa, see 3.8-10] out of mercy for the first time in its entirety revealed to Brahmā who, fearful of a material existence, sat upon the lotus that grew from His navel [see also 1.1: 1]. (11-12) From the beginning to the end filled with accounts about renunciation, it delights the saintly and godly souls with the nec-

tar of its many narrations about the Lord's pastimes. With beatitude [or eternal happiness by emancipation in devotional service] as its one ultimate goal, it has as its prime subject the One Reality Without a Second - the essence of all Vedānta philosophy - that is characterized by the non-difference of the Absolute [impersonal] Truth [*brahman*] and the One [personal] Soul [*ātma* **]. (13) He who gives the Bhāgavatam as a gift on the day of the full moon in the month Bhādra [August/September, in its full glory as the king of all literature] seated on 'a golden throne' [in the constellation of Leo], reaches the supreme destination. (14) Other classical collections of stories [other bibles, other Purāṇas or holy scriptures] are prominent in the assembly of the saintly only for as long as the great ocean of nectar that is the Bhāgavatam is not heard. (15) The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam constitutes the essence of all Vedānta philosophy, someone who found satisfaction from the taste of that nectar, will never feel attracted to anything else [to other sacred scriptures]. (16) Of all Purāṇas this one is like what the Ganges means in relation to all rivers flowing towards the sea, what Acyuta, the Infallible One, means in relation to all deities and what Śambhu [Śiva] means in relation to all Vaiṣṇavas. (17) Just as unsurpassed Kāśī [Benares] is among all holy places, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is matchless among all the Purāṇas, oh brahmins. (18) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the spotless Purāṇa most dear to the Vaiṣṇavas in which the perfectly pure and supreme spiritual knowledge is celebrated of none but the best devotees. Therein the freedom from all fruitive labor is revealed together with the [therewith associated] knowledge, detachment and devotion that will deliver the person who, in consideration of the transcendence, with his devotional service manages to listen and exercise the mantras the way it should.

(19) **I** meditate on the incomparable torch light of the Immortal Supreme Immaculate Pure Truth Free from Sorrow, who long ago revealed this transcendental knowledge to the deity ['Ka' or Brahmā], who transferred it to Nārada the great sage, who delivered it by means of his personal form to Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, who next handed it down to the king of the yogis [Śukadeva],



who in his turn was as merciful to reveal it to [Parīkṣit] the grace of the Fortunate One. (20) I offer Him my obeisances, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Witness who mercifully explained this [story, this science] to [Brahmā] the deity who desired liberation. (21) I offer him my obeisances, the king of the yogis, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the personal manifestation of the Absolute Truth who freed [Parīkṣit] the grace of Viṣṇu who was bitten by the snake of material existence. (22) Oh Lord of Lords, You are our Master, therefore please make it so that we life after life may rise up in bhakti at Your feet. (23) I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Lord, whose congregational chanting of the holy name destroys all sins and to whom bowing down all misery finds its end."

Thus the twelfth Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam ends named: The Age of Deterioration.

With this last Canto the Story of the Fortunate One ends, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also known as the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and the Paramahaṁsa Saṁhitā. All glories to the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gaudiya Sampradāya paramparā of the foregoing Vaiṣṇava ācāryas headed by Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who by their commentaries, translations, bhajans and lectures made this presentation possible and brought the full of the Vaiṣṇava culture to the humble western servant of Kṛṣṇa, Anand Aadhar Prabhu, who in truth is never finished with his work.

*: Next, so affirms the Matsya Purāṇa, there are besides the Purāṇa also a hundred thousand verses found in the Itihāsa (the single history) of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata and a twenty-five thousand in the Itihāsa of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa. Thus the complete number of verses for the complete collection of classical stories amounts to five-hundred twenty-five thousand [the smaller Upa-Purāṇas not counted].

** : This reminds one of the theme of Kṛṣṇa as being the Time or Kāla, and Kṛṣṇa as being the person, the Supreme Soul, the Original Person manifest before our eyes and present in the beyond. The world seems to be divided in impersonalist science, philosophy and governance on the one hand and personalistic religion of detachment and personal sentiment in civil attachment on the other. But when one with respecting the Time [of nature] as it should finds the person and with respecting the person as it should [in Kṛṣṇa consciousness] finds the original Time, the problem is solved knowing the oneness of the personal/impersonal opposition to be our equal minded friend and guiding father in the beyond Lord Kṛṣṇa. As the last word to this dual matter of respect for His reality He states: (in B.G. 18: 6) 'But with all these activities must without doubt, performing them out of duty, the association with their results be given up; that, oh son of Pṛthā, is

My last and best word on it.' Therefore we are of emancipation in devotional service, free from ulterior motives.

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