

The six dead sons of Devaki were personifications of *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *mātsarya*. They were killed by Kamsa. This symbolizes the need to be rid of these 6 bad qualities before Kṛṣṇa can enter the heart.

"Symbolically, mother Devakī's constant fear of Kamsa was purifying her. A pure devotee should always fear material association, and in this way all the asuras of material association will be killed, as the ṣad-garbhāsuras were killed by Kamsa. It is said that from the mind, Marīci appears. In other words, Marīci is an incarnation of the mind. Marīci has six sons: Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy). The Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in pure devotional service. This is confirmed in the Vedas: bhaktir evainam darsayati. Only bhakti can bring one in contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared from the womb of Devakī, and therefore Devakī symbolically represents bhakti, and Kamsa symbolically represents material fear. When a pure devotee always fears material association, his real position of bhakti is manifested, and he naturally becomes uninterested in material enjoyment. When the six sons of Marīci are killed by such fear and one is freed from material contamination, within the womb of bhakti the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears. Thus the seventh pregnancy of Devakī signifies the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After the six sons Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya are killed, the Seṣa incarnation creates a suitable situation for the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, when one awakens his natural Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa appears. This is the explanation given by Srīla Visvanātha Cakravartī Thākura." [SB 10.2.9, purport]

## I. The history

### A. Brahmā's bewilderment

*vācam duhitaram tanvīm  
svayambhur haratīm manah  
akāmām cakame kṣattah  
sa-kāma iti nah srutam*

O Vidura, we have heard that Brahmā had a daughter named Vāk who was born from his body and who attracted his mind toward sex, although she was not sexually inclined towards him.

*Balavān indriya-grāmo vidvāmsam api karṣati* (Bhāg. 9.19.17). It is said that the senses are so mad and strong that they can bewilder even the most sensible and learned man. Therefore it is advised that one should not indulge in living alone even with one's mother, sister or daughter. *Vidvāmsam api karṣati* means that even the most learned also become victims of the sensuous urge. Maitreya hesitated to state this anomaly on the part of Brahmā, who was sexually inclined to his own daughter, but still he mentioned it because sometimes it so happens, and the living example is Brahmā himself, although he is the primeval living being and the most learned within the whole universe. If Brahmā could be a victim of the sexual urge, then what of others, who are

prone to so many mundane frailties? This extraordinary immortality on the part of Brahmā was heard to have occurred in some particular *kalpa*, but it could not have happened in the *kalpa* in which Brahmā heard directly from the Lord the four essential verses of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* because the Lord blessed Brahmā, after giving him lessons on the *Bhāgavatam*, that he would never be bewildered in any *kalpa* whatsoever. This indicates that before the hearing of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* he might have fallen a victim to such sensuality, but after hearing *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* directly from the Lord, there was no possibility of such failures.

One should, however, take serious note of this incident. The human being is a social animal, and his unrestricted mixing with the fair sex leads to downfall. Such social freedom of man and woman, especially among the younger section, is certainly a great stumbling block on the path of spiritual progress. Material bondage is due only to sexual bondage, and therefore unrestricted association of man and woman is surely a great impediment. Maitreya cited this example on the part of Brahmā just to bring to our notice this great danger.

*tam adharme kṛta-matim  
vilokya pitaram sutāh  
marīci-mukhyā munayo  
visrambhāt pratyabodhayan*

**Thus, finding their father so deluded in an act of immorality, the sages headed by Marīci, all sons of Brahmā, spoke as follows with great respect.**

The sages like Marīci were not in the wrong in submitting their protests against the acts of their great father. They knew very well that even though their father committed a mistake, there must have been some great purpose behind the show, otherwise such a great personality could not have committed such a mistake. It might be that Brahmā wanted to warn his subordinates about human frailties in their dealings with women. This is always very dangerous for persons who are on the path of self-realization. Therefore, great personalities like Brahmā, even when in the wrong, should not be neglected, nor could the great sages headed by Marīci show any disrespect because of his extraordinary behavior. [SB 3.12.28-29]

***B. The prayers by Marīci and other sons of Brahmā***

*naitat purvaih kṛtam tvad ye  
na kariṣyanti cāpare  
yas tvam duhitaram gaccher  
anigrhyāngajam prabhuh*

**O father, this performance in which you are endeavoring to complicate yourself was never attempted by any other Brahmā, nor by anyone else, nor by you in previous kalpas, nor will anyone dare to attempt it in the future. You are the supreme being in the universe, so how is it that you want to have sex with your daughter and cannot control your desire?**

*tejīyasām api hy etan  
na suslokyam jagad-guro  
yad-ṽṛttam anuṣṭhan vai  
lokaḥ kṣemāya kalpate*

Even though you are the most powerful being, this act does not suit you because your character is followed for spiritual improvement by people in general.

*tasmai namo bhagavate  
ya idam svena rociṣā  
ātma-stham vyañjayām āsa  
sa dharmam pātum arhati*

Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, who, by His own effulgence, while situated in Himself, has manifested this cosmos. May He also protect religion for all goodness.

*sa ittham gr̥ṇataḥ putrān  
puro dṛṣtvā prajāpatīn  
prajāpati-patis tanvam  
tatyāja vr̥dītas tadā  
tām diśo jagṛhur ghorām  
nīhāram yad vidus tamah*

The father of all Prajāpatis, Brahmā, thus seeing all his Prajāpati sons speaking in that way, became very much ashamed and at once gave up the body he had accepted. Later that body appeared in all directions as the dangerous fog in darkness. [SB 3.12.30-33]

### *C. The sons of Marici cursed*

" After Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the prayers of Bali Mahārāja, He spoke as follows: 'My dear King of the demons, in the millennium of Svāyambhuva Manu, the Prajāpati known as Marīci begot six sons, all demigods, in the womb of his wife, Ur̥ṇā. Once upon a time, Lord Brahmā became captivated by the beauty of his daughter and was following her, impelled by sex desire. At that time, these six demigods looked at the action of Lord Brahmā with abhorrence. This criticism of Brahma's action by the demigods constituted a great offense on their part, and for this reason they were condemned to take birth as the sons of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. These sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu were thereafter put in the womb of mother Devakī, and as soon as they took their birth Kamsa killed them one after another. My dear King of the demons, mother Devakī is very anxious to see these six dead sons again, and she is very much aggrieved on account of their early death at the hand of Kamsa. I know that all of them are living with you. I have decided to take them with Me to pacify My mother, Devakī. After seeing My mother, all six of these conditioned souls will be liberated, and thus in great pleasure they will be transferred to their original planet. The names of these six conditioned souls are as follows: Smara, Udgītha, Pariṣvanga, Patanga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghr̥ṇī. They will be reinstated in their former position as demigods.'" [KB 85]

*srī-bhagavān uvāca  
āsan marīceḥ ṣaṭ putrā  
ur̥ṇāyām prathame 'ntare  
devāḥ kam jahasur vīkṣya  
sutam yabhitum udyatam*

The Supreme Lord said: During the age of the first Manu, the sage Marīci had six sons by his wife Urnā. They were all exalted demigods, but once they laughed at Lord Brahmā when they saw him preparing to have sex with his own daughter.

*tenāsurīm agan yonim  
adhunāvadya-karmaṇā  
hiraṇyakasipor jātā  
nītās te yoga-māyayā*

*devakyā udare jātā  
rājan kamsa-vihimsitāh  
sā tāt socaty ātmajān svāms  
ta ime 'dhyāsate 'ntike*

Because of that improper act, they immediately entered a demoniac form of life, and thus they took birth as sons of Hiraṇyakasipu. The goddess Yogamāyā then took them away from Hiraṇyakasipu, and they were born again from Devakī's womb. After this, O King, Kamsa murdered them. Devakī still laments for them, thinking of them as her sons. These same sons of Marīci are now living here with you.

Acāryas Srīdhara Svāmī and Visvanātha Cakravartī explain that after taking Marīci's six sons from Hiraṇyakasipu, Lord Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā first made them pass through one more life as children of another great demon, Kālanemi, and then she finally transferred them to the womb of Devakī. [SB 10.85.47-49]

#### *D. Again cursed*

Formerly an asura named Kālanemi had six sons, named Hamsa, Suvikrama, Krātha, Damana, Ripurmardana and Krodhahantā. They were known as the ṣad-garbhas, or six garbhas, and they were all equally powerful and expert in military affairs. These ṣad-garbhas gave up the association of Hiraṇyakasipu, their grandfather, and underwent great austerities to satisfy Lord Brahmā, who, upon being satisfied, agreed to give them whatever benediction they might desire. When asked by Lord Brahmā to state what they wanted, the ṣad-garbhas replied, "Dear Lord Brahmā, if you want to give us a benediction, give us the blessing that we will not be killed by any demigod, mahā-roga, Yakṣa, Gandharva-pati, Siddha, Cāraṇa or human being, nor by great sages who are perfect in their penances and austerities." Brahmā understood their purpose and fulfilled their desire. But when Hiraṇyakasipu came to know of these events, he was very angry at his grandsons. "You have given up my association and have gone to worship Lord Brahmā," he said, "and therefore I no longer have any affection for you. You have tried to save yourselves from the hands of the demigods, but I curse you in this way: Your father will take birth as Kamsa and kill all of you because you will take birth as sons of Devakī." Because of this curse, the grandsons of Hiraṇyakasipu had to take birth from the womb of Devakī and be killed by Kamsa, although he was previously their father. This description is mentioned in the Hari-vamsa, Viṣṇu-parva, Second Chapter. According to the comments of the Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī, the son of Devakī known as Kīrtimān was the third incarnation. In his first incarnation he was known as Smara and was the son

of Marīci, and later he became the son of Kālanemi. This is mentioned in the histories. [SB 10.1.69, purport]

## II. Symbolism

The six dead sons of Devaki were personifications of *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *mātsarya*. They were killed by Kamsa. This symbolizes the need to be rid of these 6 bad qualities before Kṛṣṇa can enter the heart.

"Symbolically, mother Devakī's constant fear of Kamsa was purifying her. A pure devotee should always fear material association, and in this way all the asuras of material association will be killed, as the ṣad-garbhāsuras were killed by Kamsa. It is said that from the mind, Marīci appears. In other words, Marīci is an incarnation of the mind. Marīci has six sons: Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy). The Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in pure devotional service. This is confirmed in the Vedas: bhaktir evainam darsayati. Only bhakti can bring one in contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared from the womb of Devakī, and therefore Devakī symbolically represents bhakti, and Kamsa symbolically represents material fear. When a pure devotee always fears material association, his real position of bhakti is manifested, and he naturally becomes uninterested in material enjoyment. When the six sons of Marīci are killed by such fear and one is freed from material contamination, within the womb of bhakti the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears. Thus the seventh pregnancy of Devakī signifies the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After the six sons Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Mātsarya are killed, the Seṣa incarnation creates a suitable situation for the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, when one awakens his natural Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa appears. This is the explanation given by Srīla Visvanātha Cakravartī Thākura." [SB 10.2.9, purport]

## III. Summary

### A. Literally

1. Brahma becomes bewildered and chases Vak.
2. Marīci and the other sons of Brahma respectfully reproach their father and encourage him to rectify his behavior.
3. However, Marīci's six sons were disrespectful (by laughing) and were thus cursed to take birth as demons.
4. In their next lives, therefore, they took birth as grandsons of Hiranyakasipu (i.e., Kālanemi was Prāhlada sibling).
5. These six sons gave up the association of their demoniac grandfather and began to worship Lord Brahma. (Some sort of atonement for their offenses? Where they influenced by Prāhlada?)
6. Hiranyakasipu became irate and cursed them that in their next lives their father would incarnate as Kamsa and kill them.

### ***B. Figuratively***

1. Marīci represents the mind
2. Devakī represents Bhakti.
3. Kamsa represents material fear
4. Kāma, krodha... are progeny of the mind (Marīci)
5. These products of the mind need to be killed (purified) in order for the Lord to appear.
6. They are killed when fear becomes of material association