

Dhenukāsura

I. Past life

A. Garga Samhita

Dhenuka's past life

- ॐ Previous life was the son of Bali (who was the son of Virocana)
- ॐ Name was Sāhasika
- ॐ Enjoyed pastimes with 10,000 women on Gandhamādana Mountain
- ॐ Durvāsa Muni was in a trance in a nearby cave
- ॐ Sounds of many musical minstruments and anklebells broke trance of Durvāsa Muni
- ॐ Durvāsa was very thin with a long beard
- ॐ Walking with wooden sandals
- ॐ Holding a stick
- ॐ Glowing with flames of anger
- ॐ DM to Sāhasika: Fool!
- ॐ Ass like person!
- ॐ Rise!
- ॐ Become an ass!
- ॐ After 400k years, in the circle of Mathurā, in the forest of Tālavana you will attain liberation by Balarāma's hand
- ॐ (K had given Prahlāda Mahārāja the benediction that he would not kill his descendents.)

B. Brahma Vaivarta Purana

- ॐ After having vanquished the demigods Sahasika once went on a tour to the Gandha Madan Mountains accompanied by a huge army.
- ॐ On the way he met Tilottama the most beautiful of the apsaras.
- ॐ Her bodily hue and form resembled that of a campa flower and the striking attire she wore was complemented by fine jeweled ornaments.
- ॐ Her sweet face radiated a blooming youthful luster and its sweet smile captivated the minds of all who beheld it.
- ॐ Appearing thus she approached Sahasika moving slowly like an intoxicated elephant.
- ॐ As he beheld this gorgeous vision Sahasika became stunned losing consciousness for a couple of seconds.
- ॐ As they neared each other Tilottama gazed at Sahasika's handsome countenance considering it to be like the full autumnal moon.

- ॐ As she noticed how beautiful the fully blossomed Malati flowers in the garland around his neck were her mind was stolen by his slow smile.
- ॐ Becoming jubilant to discover that a man of such winsome appearance could exist she coquettishly covered her face and glanced at him coyly.
- ॐ Although bound for Candraloka to dally with Candra the moon god Tilottama now whimsically changed her plans.
- ॐ As Tilottama and Sahasika gradually drew to a halt in front of each other Sahasika spoke out: "O beautiful woman I can see that you are on a journey to see someone; you must now be rewarding that person for their austerities of a thousand years. But please know that our meeting is arranged by ineluctable destiny; indeed it is sanctioned by Lord Brahma himself."
- ॐ Sahasika continued to speak expertly thrilling and charming the beautiful apsara with many ardent entreaties and eloquent words of praise.
- ॐ Responding at last to his sweet speech Tilottama explained that she could not spend time with him there and then.
- ॐ She was on her way to a prior engagement but offered to return at a later time. Hearing her proposition Sahasika countered her with an ultimatum.
- ॐ Because he was a religious king he would not force her to stay against her will, and because he had many duties to perform there was no question of his waiting for her to return.
- ॐ Therefore, the decision of their future must rest entirely with her. Talking as if she had no choice in the matter Tilottama replied that he would probably curse her if she did not comply with his wishes and that Parvati becomes displeased with one who neglects a woman.
- ॐ Laughing as he understood her choice Sahasika led her to a remote cave which he illumined by a radiant jewel lamp and furnished with a soft bed. As they remained there together, Tilottama felt euphorically happy considering her lover to be more expert than the demigods.
- ॐ Losing consciousness she could no longer discern night from day.
- ॐ As the time came to depart Tilottama mournfully suggested that he now intended to leave her just as a satisfied bee deserts a flower and since there was no telling when they might meet again could he not remain with her a little longer. Conquered by her pleas Sahasika allowed himself to be further detained.
- ॐ Unknown to either of them Durvasa Muni was residing in that cave.
- ॐ On account of the intense and unbroken meditation he had performed over a long period of time his motionless body had gradually become totally enveloped by a large ant hill thus rendering him invisible to the eyes of the world.
- ॐ With the penetrating sound of Tilottama's continually clinking bangles the unsuspecting Muni was jarred out of samadhi thus losing sight of his beloved Lord.

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- ॐ Shaking with fury from within the ant hill, he addressed the couple in a thunderous voice:
- ॐ "O Sahasika, get up!
- ॐ Although your father Bali Maharaja is a celebrated devotee you are an animal! And among animals only the ass is equally shameless.
- ॐ I therefore curse you to accept such a body.
- ॐ And as for you Tilottama you brazen prostitute stand up at once! Since you so much desire the association of a demon may you become a demonness."
- ॐ With these words the sage fell silent.
- ॐ Shocked into sobriety the remorseful Tilottama next addressed the stern sage with a faltering voice:
- ॐ "O Lord in all of Lord Brahma's creation women are the most foolish and among them the pumsacalis are the lowest.
- ॐ O ocean of mercy and friend of the poor I beseech you to bestow your forgiveness on this fallen person."
- ॐ Having spoken, she also fell to the floor and sobbed piteously.
- ॐ
- ॐ Becoming touched by their unreserved surrender and remorse Durvasa said to Sahasika:
- ॐ "My dear boy a curse once uttered must inevitably act.
- ॐ However everything is ultimately predestined.
- ॐ Please understand that whatever befalls us be it fame or infamy curse or benediction is simply the preordained reaction we are awarded as a result of activities we performed in the past.
- ॐ The Kaliya serpent was protected from Garuda's attack by the presence of Lord Krishna's lotus footprints on his head.
- ॐ To this day his descendants also remain fearless of this winged aggressor on account of the same transcendental markings which may be found on the heads of every one of them.
- ॐ In a similar way because you are fortunate enough to share in the divine protection afforded to your exalted forefathers I will alter the ultimate result of this malediction to work instead for your eternal benefit; you will dwell as an ass on Bharata varsa eventually receiving liberation at Talavana Vrndavan when Lord Krishna kills you by His effulgent disc."
- ॐ
- ॐ Durvasa next spoke to Tilottama:
- ॐ "Although you must become a demonness do not despair; as the daughter of Banasura at the time of Lord Krishna's manifested pastimes you will become purified by union with His grandson Annirudha."

ॐ Having spoken his last the illustrious sage became silent at which Sahasika and Tilottama offered their dandavats and departed.

II. The Pastime

Krishna and Balarama begin to herd cows

- ॐ After passing through the *kaumara*, the first years, K and B entered *pauganda-lila*.
- ॐ By the wish of the adult gopas they were placed in charge of the cows
- ॐ They were now old enough to take care of the cows
- ॐ Cows had a taste from the one year Brahma had stolen the calves
- ॐ K & B would take into the forwest
- ॐ Cows gazed at K& B's handsome faces
- ॐ Cows wore glittering golden necklaces, a network of small bells & tinkling anklets
- ॐ Tails decorate with peacock feather & bunches of pearls
- ॐ Necklaces of 9 jewels
- ॐ Crown jewel placed between their horns made them beautiful.
- ॐ Their horns were plated with gold
- ॐ Some had yellow tails and red hooves.
- ॐ They were decorated with red tilaka. They were like many Mount Kailāsas.
- ॐ They had virtues, good character, and beauty.
- ॐ They walked slowly,
- ॐ Their udders full.
- ॐ Some were like great red pāṭala flowers.
- ॐ Some were yellow, some multicolored, some black, some green, some smoke-colored, and some cloud-colored.
- ॐ All their eyes were placed on Kṛṣṇa, His form dark as a cloud.
- ॐ Some had short horns, some long horns, some high horns, some bent horns, and some horns like a deer's antlers.
- ॐ Some were with many bulls.
- ॐ Some were brown and beautiful.
- ॐ Searching for tender and delicious grasses, millions and millions of cows walked at Kṛṣṇa's side through forest after forest.
- ॐ Its Yamunā shore very pure and sacred, and its groves decorated with many dark tamāla trees and many beautiful nīpa, nimba, kadamba, pravāla, panasa, kadālī, kovidāra, mango, jambu, bilva, aśvattha, and kapittha trees, as well as many mādhavī vines, beautiful in the springtime, and its glory eclipsing the nandana,

Description is mainly from Garga Samhita, with some parts from Krishna Book

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sarvatobhadra, and caitraratha forests of heaven, transcendental Vṛndāvana forest was splendidly manifest.

- ॐ In Vṛndāvana forest, on the beautiful hill named Govardhana, which was made of precious gems, had many glorious caves and swiftly-moving streams, and was filled with many beautiful mandāra, śrīkhaṇḍa, badarī, rambhā, devadāru, vaṭa, palāśa, plakṣa, aśoka, ariṣṭa, arjuna, kadambaka, pārijāta, pāṭala, campaka, karañja, and śyāma-indrayava trees, and many kalakanṭhas, kokilas, pums-kokilas, and peacocks, Kṛṣṇa wandered from forest to forest as He herded the cows.
- ॐ In Vṛndāvana, Madhuvana, Tālavana, Kumudvana, Bāhulavana, Divya-kāmavana, on the summit and slopes of Nandīśvara Hill, in beautiful Kokilavana, which was filled with the singing of cuckoos, in beautiful Kuśavana, which was filled with many flowering vines, in beautiful and sacred Bhadravana, in Bhāṇḍīropavana, in Lohārgala, in shore after shore by the Yamunā, and in forest after forest, handsome Kṛṣṇa, in yellow garments, dressed as a dancer, holding a stick, decorated with peacock feathers, a crown, and many garlands, playing His flute, and delighting the gopīs, was splendidly manifest.
- ॐ K played melodies on his flute
- ॐ Returned to NM's village in the evening
- ॐ Hearing K's flute & seeing cows' dust fill the sky along Vamsivata path, gopīs put anxieties far away & went to see K

Krishna praises Balarama

- ॐ K says to B: My dear brother, You are superior to all of us, and Your lotus feet are worshiped by the demigods.
- ॐ Just see how these trees, full with fruits, have bent down to worship Your lotus feet.
- ॐ It appears that they are trying to get out of the darkness of being obliged to accept the form of trees.
- ॐ Actually, the trees born in the land of Vṛndavana are not ordinary living entities. Having held the impersonal point of view in their past lives, they are now put into this stationary condition of life, but now they have the opportunity of seeing You in Vṛndavana, and they are praying for further advancement in spiritual life through Your personal association.
- ॐ Generally the trees are living entities in the modes of darkness. The impersonalist philosophers are in that darkness, but they eradicate it by taking full advantage of Your presence.
- ॐ I think the drones that are buzzing all around You must have been Your devotees in their past lives.
- ॐ They cannot leave Your company because no one can be a better, more affectionate master than You.

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ You are the supreme and original Personality of Godhead, and the drones are just trying to spread Your glories by chanting every moment.
- ॐ I think some of them must be great sages, devotees of Your Lordship, and they are disguising themselves in the form of drones because they are unable to give up Your company even for a moment.
- ॐ My dear brother, You are the supreme worshipable Godhead.
- ॐ Just see how the peacocks in great ecstasy are dancing before You.
- ॐ The deer, whose behavior is just like the gopis, are welcoming You with the same affection.
- ॐ And the cuckoos who are residing in this forest are receiving You with great joy because they consider that Your appearance is so auspicious in their home.
- ॐ Even though they are trees and animals, these residents of Vrndavana are glorifying You.
- ॐ They are prepared to welcome You to their best capacity, as is the practice of great souls in receiving another great soul at home.
- ॐ As for the land, it is so pious and fortunate that the footprints of Your lotus feet are marking its body.
- ॐ It is quite natural for these Vrndavana inhabitants to thus receive a great personality like You.
- ॐ The herbs, creepers and plants are also so fortunate to touch Your lotus feet.
- ॐ And by Your touching the twigs with Your hands, these small plants are also made glorious.
- ॐ As for the hills and the rivers, they too are now glorious because You are glancing at them.
- ॐ Above all, the damsels of Vraja, the gopis, attracted by Your beauty, are the most glorious, because You embrace them with Your strong arms

A typical day

- ॐ K and B would sometimes imitate the swans and peacocks
- ॐ When K & B would call the cows by name, they came running. “Moooo”
- ॐ K & B would imitate the sounds of peacocks, cakoras, baradvajasa and cuckoos
- ॐ When animals would flee in fear of lions and tigers K & B would imitate and also run
- ॐ When tired Bal would put head in friend’s lap and K would massage or fan w/ palm leaves
- ॐ While B rest, K and others play
- ॐ When K tired, would take shelter of root or friend’s lap
- ॐ Others would massage and fan K

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Terror in Talavan forest

- ॐ Cowherd boys: There are great fruits in the Talavan forest, but they are being guarded by the demon Dhenuka & his fellowship of man-eating asses
- ॐ No animals go there
- ॐ All the birds have left
- ॐ But still, a sweet fragrance can be smelled
- ॐ
- ॐ Out of fear of the ass Dhenuka, the gopas did not enter the forest
- ॐ Even K did not enter
- ॐ Only B entered
- ॐ Tying blue sash at waist B entered the forest to get fruit
- ॐ B goes and yanks at the trees with both arms
- ॐ Made many fruits fall
- ॐ Dhen heard sound & became angry
- ॐ Woken from his midday nap
- ॐ Whole earth shook as Dh moved
- ॐ Dh kicks B in chest w/ hind legs
- ॐ Bal remains quiet and doesn't respond
- ॐ Dh tries again
- ॐ B chases, catches, whirls by hind legs, throws into trees
- ॐ Domino effect
- ॐ Dh gets up angry
- ॐ Grabs B in mouth
- ॐ B grabs Dh and whirls around
- ॐ Throws 8 miles
- ॐ Dh strikes ground
- ॐ Head was wounded
- ॐ Fell unconscious
- ॐ Stands up filled with anger
- ॐ Manifests terrifying form with 4 horns
- ॐ Scared gopas flee [but the gopas didn't enter???
- ॐ As boys flee, Dh chases
- ॐ Śrīdama hits with a stick
- ॐ Subala with fist
- ॐ Stoka Kṛṣṇa whipped with rope

Description is an amalgamation of those found in Srimad Bhagavatam (Krishna Book) and Garga

ॐ Arjuna and Amsu threw far away
ॐ Viśala & Rṣabha kicked
ॐ Tejasvī tried to strangle
ॐ Devaprastha slapped
ॐ Varūthapa hit with ball
ॐ K grabbed with both hands and whirled around
ॐ Threw to GH
ॐ Was knocked unconscious for one hour
ॐ Shaking off 4 horned form, manifests original form
ॐ Grabbed K with horns and carried into sky
ॐ 800 mi in sky they fought
ॐ K threw Dh to earth
ॐ Bones broken
ॐ Fell unconscious
ॐ Rising made terrible sound
ॐ Uproots GH with horns
ॐ Throws at K
ॐ K catches
ॐ Throws at Dh's head
ॐ Dh catches and throws at K
ॐ K catches and returns to orig place
ॐ Dh breaks ground with horns
ॐ Charges B
ॐ Kicks with hind hooves
ॐ Roars – shook earth echoed through universe
ॐ B grabs Dh with both hands and throws to ground
ॐ Breaks head
ॐ Falls unconscious
ॐ B punches with fist
ॐ Kills Dh
ॐ Dh's friends come
ॐ K & B throw into trees
ॐ Because of the dead bodies of the asses, there was a panoramic scene. It appeared as if clouds of various colors were assembled in the trees.
ॐ Demigods shower flowers
ॐ

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- ॐ Leaving his body, Dhenuka manifested a splendid and handsome dark form wearing yellow garments and decorated with a forest flower garland.
- ॐ Then a chariot, filled with a hundred thousand of the Lord's associates, decorated with a thousand flags, rumbling with a thousand wheels, pulled by ten thousand horses, glorious with a hundred thousand cāmaras, yellow, studded with many jewels, eight miles long, beautiful, traveling as fast as the mind, and decorated with many bells and tinkling ornaments, suddenly appeared.
- ॐ Dh circumambulated Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and then, filling the circle of the directions with light,
- ॐ He ascended the chariot and went to Goloka, far beyond the material realm.
- ॐ
- ॐ A few days later denizens of Vraja come to collect fruits w/o fear

III. *The Anārtha*

A. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on the demons killed by Balarāma (from Caitanya Siksamṛta)

- ॐ *Humble prayers to Krishna remove some anarthas*
If the devotee humbly prays to Kṛṣṇa to remove all the obstacles in the heart that are represented by the demons that Kṛṣṇa personally killed, Kṛṣṇa will certainly do so.
- ॐ *But devotees must endeavor to rid themselves of the anarthas that Balarama kills. It is not mercy (grace) alone; endeavor (acts) must also be there*
However, all the obstacles represented by the demons that Balarāma personally killed must be driven out by the determined efforts of the devotees themselves. This is the secret of *vraja-bhajana*.
- ॐ *Dhenuka represents tamas; Pralambha represents rajas*
Dhenukāsura represents the bad mentality, foolishness and superstition. Pralambāsura represents superficially performing *bhakti* while actually entertaining lust for women, money, worship and high position. The aspiring devotees must remove these obstacles by their own strong efforts, aided by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Dhenukāsura indicates ignorance of one's *svarūpa*, the identity of *harināma*, and the identity of Kṛṣṇa, and immersion in *avidyā* (false knowledge). With great sincere endeavor, the devotees themselves must strive to remove these obstacles. Pralambāsura represents pride, lust for women, greed for material objects and wealth, endeavor for material enjoyment, and the desire for worship and high progress, the devotees should make great disciplined efforts to remove them.
- ॐ *First humility is necessary.*
If their humility is very sincere, certainly Kṛṣṇa will be merciful. Then Baladeva will make His appearance, and all the obstacles will be destroyed in a second.

ॐ *After the guru comes, then one can systematically make progress*
Then, step by step, progress in the cultivation of *bhakti* will take place. As this process is by nature every esoteric, the devotee, being spotless in character, should learn it from a well-qualified *guru*.

B. Caitanya Śikṣamṛta

ॐ *Tana guna*
Dhenukāsura, the demon who assumed the form of an ass and was killed by Balarāma, represents gross intellect and complete ignorance of *suddha-jñāna*, *bhakti-tattva* and *svarūpa-jñāna*, originating from material intelligence, lack of spiritual intuition and idiotic foolishness. This condition, which must be destroyed, is completely contrary to spiritual knowledge.

C. Kṛṣṇa Samhita

ॐ *One must learn to properly discriminate*
Subtle discrimination is extremely important for Vaiṣṇavas. Those who invent social distinctions and preach the unbreakable principles of Vaiṣṇavism while breaking them to suit their needs are said to possess gross discrimination. This gross discrimination takes the form of the ass Dhenuka.

ॐ *Unless one can discriminate properly, one cannot enjoy the higher tastes of devotional service*
The ass cannot eat the sweet palm tree fruits, and he opposes other's attempts to eat them. The purport is that the previous *ācāryas* of the authorized *sampradāyas* have written many spiritual literatures, which allow others to see.

ॐ *Discrimination means to understand form and substance*
Ass-like devotees who are simply interested in the regulative principles and under the control of gross discrimination are unable to attain a higher platform. Vaiṣṇava principles are so unlimitedly exalted that those who simply remain entangled in the regulative process without endeavoring to understand the science of attachment are comparable to ordinary fruitive workers. Therefore, until the ass Dhenukāsura is killed, one cannot advance in the science of Vaiṣṇavism.

D. Professor Sanyal

ॐ *Ignorance prevents us from enjoying higher tastes in devotional service*
The eighth obstacle is offered by the demon *Dhenukāsura* in the form of the ass, who tries to prevent the palm fruits, which he is himself unable to taste, from being enjoyed by others.

ॐ *Vaishanva principles are subtle*
The principles of *Vaishnavism* require for their due appreciation the most penetrating judgment. Persons possessed of a blunted understanding are exposed to this grave plight.

ॐ *Those who see in a sectarian way are fools*
The *Vaishnava religion* is indivisible. There is no scope in it for sectarian

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narrowness. It is the blunt-headed fool who is liable to misconceive the true nature of the *Vaishnava community* by supposing it to be a sect distinct from other sects of this world.

ॐ *Strict adherence to form can impede realization*

As a matter of fact thick-headed persons are themselves unable to understand the teaching of the spiritual works that have been penned by the former *Acharyas* of the community and they are also apt to actively prevent others from having access to those works. This is specially the case with those devotees possessed of a stunted judgment who, being mechanically addicted to the regulations have no inclination to strive for the attainment of the real status. But the *Vaishnava* religion holds within itself the prospect of infinite progressive advance.

ॐ *Not discriminating between form and substance can lead one to developing a fruitive mentality*

Those muddy-headed persons, who choose to remain confined within the literal meaning of the narrow limits of the Scriptural regulations, being thereby led to neglect the unconventional path of spontaneous love for Godhead, soon become indistinguishable from persons who are wedded to the cult of fruitive mundane activities. It is 'therefore' never possible to make any progress in the *Vaishnava* religion till *Dhenukāsura* in the form of the ass has been killed.

IV. Notes

- ॐ Cows won't go without K; had a taste from Brahma vimohana lila
- ॐ Represents: gross, jack=ass like foolishness, materialistic intelligence, ignorance of spiritual knowledge; over-burdened, load-carrying; tama-guna
- ॐ According to the ācāryas, low-class people such as the pulindas ate the fruits of the palm trees, but Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boyfriends considered them undesirable, since they had been tainted with the blood of the asses. (SB 10.15.41)
- ॐ Pulinda: It is mentioned in the Mahābhārata (Ādi-parva 174.38), viz., the inhabitants of the province of the name Pulinda. This country was conquered by Bhīmasena and Sahadeva. The Greeks are known as Pulindas, and it is mentioned in the Vana-parva of Mahābhārata that the non-Vedic race of this part of the world would rule over the world. This Pulinda province was also one of the provinces of Bhārata, and the inhabitants were classified amongst the kṣatriya kings. But later on, due to their giving up the brahminical culture, they were mentioned as mlecchas (just as those who are not followers of the Islamic culture are called kafirs and those who are not followers of the Christian culture are called heathens)(SB 2.4.18)

V. How it fits

- ॐ Śrī Balarāma, the original guru, killed Dhenukāsura. So in the same way the spiritual master appears in our heart and kills these tendencies.

- ॐ It is interesting to note that many of these demons are henchman of Kāmsa. Kāmsa represents the empiric philosopher. On the one hand Kāmsa does not need to be killed in order to enter Vraja bhakti. But his henchmen do.
- ॐ Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comment that the demons killed by Balarāma must be over come by the dint of the devotees own endeavors. *So this means one must accept the instructions of the spiritual master and follow them. The spiritual master is killing in the form of instructions.*
- ॐ The gopas could smell the fragrance of the fruit in the Talavana forest. This odor was being carried by the wind. Yet when they went there they were obstructed from enjoying them by Dhenuka and associates. *(So these fruits can be compared to knowledge of one’s identity, chanting the holy name or worshipping that which is actually worshipable.)*
- ॐ But Dhenuka (*materialistic intelligence, tamas-guna*) would not allow them to taste it. So the cowherd boys approached Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with love. They wanted to taste these fruits but were being barred. They petitioned, “If You so desire...” *(Similarly we also catch wind of these fruits – we hear about them – and may also smell them. But because of our conditioning we are unable to taste them. So we must petition Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master with love to kill these anārthas. But it must be when and as they deem appropriate.)*
- ॐ It is interesting to note that Kṛṣṇa did not kill Dhenuka because in a previous life he was the son of Bali Mahārāja and had promised Prahlada he would not kill any of his relatives. *Similarly, Kṛṣṇa does not come in contact with rajās and tamās so He his representatives do so.*
- ॐ Balarāma shook the tree. *Similarly the spiritual master shakes things up.*
- ॐ Then Dhenukasura came running up and began to kick Baladeva with the hooves of his hind legs. He began braying loudly and kicking again. At first Baladeva did not respond but then He threw Dhenuka into the trees. *So in the same way when the spiritual master shakes things up so many materialist arguments, bad habits, etc present themselves. At first the spiritual master may appear to tolerate those things but he will eventually throw out by grabbing at their base (hoof).*
- ॐ After that Dhenuka’s friends (*which could be considered lingering habits*) were removed.
- ॐ The pile of dead asses created a very beautiful scene appearing like red and black clouds. *So in the same way it creates a wonderful person when this anārtha is overcome.*
- ॐ After the killing of Dhenuka, the cows could eat their grass, *so religious principles could grow.*

VI. Ignorance and Misconceptions

- ॐ O son of Prtha, that understanding by which one knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be

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feared, what is binding and what is liberating, is in the mode of goodness. (BG 18.30)

- ॐ O son of Prtha, that understanding which cannot distinguish between religion and irreligion, between action that should be done and action that should not be done, is in the mode of passion. (BG 18.31)
- ॐ That understanding which considers irreligion to be religion and religion to be irreligion, under the spell of illusion and darkness, and strives always in the wrong direction, O Partha, is in the mode of ignorance. (BG 18.32)
- ॐ Brahma first created the nescient engagements like self-deception, the sense of death, anger after frustration, the sense of false ownership, and the illusory bodily conception, or forgetfulness of one's real identity.

PURPORT: Before the factual creation of the living entities in different varieties of species, the conditions under which a living being in the material world has to live were created by Brahma. Unless a living entity forgets his real identity, it is impossible for him to live in the material conditions of life.

Therefore the first condition of material existence is forgetfulness of one's real identity. And by forgetting one's real identity, one is sure to be afraid of death, although a pure living soul is deathless and birthless. This false identification with material nature is the cause of false ownership of things which are offered by the arrangement of superior control. (SB 3.12.2)

- ॐ "When one is not attached to anything, but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness. On the other hand, one who rejects everything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is not as complete in his renunciation." (Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu 2.255-256)

A. How devotional service helps us overcome misconceptions

- ॐ The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (SB 1.2.6)
- ॐ By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Sri Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. (SB 1.2.7)
- ॐ The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead. (SB 1.2.8)
- ॐ All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, according to sages, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification. (SB 1.2.9)
- ॐ Life's desires should never be directed toward sense gratification. One should desire only a healthy life, or self-preservation, since a human being is meant

for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Nothing else should be the goal of one's works. (SB 1.2.10)

- ॐ Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān. (SB 1.2.11)
- ॐ The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service in terms of what he has heard from the Vedānta-śruti. (SB 1.2.12)
- ॐ O best among the twice-born, it is therefore concluded that the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties prescribed for one's own occupation according to caste divisions and orders of life is to please the Personality of Godhead. (SB 1.2.13)
- ॐ Therefore, with one-pointed attention, one should constantly hear about, glorify, remember and worship the Personality of Godhead, who is the protector of the devotees. (SB 1.2.14)
- ॐ With sword in hand, intelligent men cut through the binding knots of reactionary work [karma] by remembering the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, who will not pay attention to His message? (SB 1.2.15)
- ॐ O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva. (SB 1.2.16)
- ॐ Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted. (SB 1.2.17)
- ॐ By regular attendance in classes on the Bhāgavatam and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact. (SB 1.2.18)
- ॐ As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy. (SB 1.2.19)
- ॐ Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association. (SB 1.2.20)
- ॐ Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the self as master. (SB 1.2.21)

Dhenukāsura

- ॐ Certainly, therefore, since time immemorial, all transcendentalists have been rendering devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, with great delight, because such devotional service is enlivening to the self. (SB 1.2.22)

VII. Commentaries of the Previous ācāryas

- ॐ Once, some of the cowherd boys—Śrīdāmā, the very close friend of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Subala, Stokakṛṣṇa and others—lovingly spoke the following words. (SB 10.15.20)
SG — "lovingly" indicates they were asking because they wanted to please Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.
VCT — the cowherd boys wanted to offer the tala fruits to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, but they spoke on the pretext of wanting them for themselves.
- ॐ In that Tālavana forest many fruits are falling from the trees, and many are already lying on the ground. But all the fruits are being guarded by the evil Dhenuka. (SB 10.17.22)
SG — the fact that there were fallen fruits indicates this pastime took place in the month of Bhadra. Dhenukāsura was hoarding them because of his evil nature.
- ॐ Hearing the words of Their dear companions, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed and, desiring to please them, set off for the Tālavana surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends. (SB 10.17.27)
SG — Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were laughing because They wanted to dispel the fear of the cowherd boys.
VCT — Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed because They thought the boys were speaking falsely, as no jackass could be as powerful as they seemed to think.
- ॐ Lord Balarāma entered the Tāla forest first. Then with His two arms He began forcefully shaking the trees with the power of a maddened elephant, causing the tāla fruits to fall to the ground. (SB 10.17.28)
SG — Balarāma entered the forest first because He is older than Kṛṣṇa. "Trees" plural referred to because when Balarāma shook one it shook many others at the same time.
- ॐ Hearing the sound of the falling fruits, the ass demon Dhenuka ran forward to attack, making the earth and trees tremble. (SB 10.17.29)
SG — actually the whole planet shook with all its mountains etc., so this was a real display of the strength of Balarāma.
- ॐ The powerful demon rushed up to Lord Baladeva and sharply struck the Lord's chest with the hooves of his hind legs. Then Dhenuka began to run about, braying loudly. (SB 10.17.30)
SS — "ka-śabda" word used because the donkey was braying, making a sound like "ka."
- ॐ Moving again toward Lord Balarāma, O King, the furious ass situated himself with his back toward the Lord. Then, screaming in rage, the demon hurled his

two hind legs at Him. (SB 10.17.31)

SG — "O King" said because the King was in anxiety because of the turn of events.

ॐ Lord Balarāma seized Dhenuka by his hooves, whirled him about with one hand and threw him into the top of a palm tree. The violent wheeling motion killed the demon. (SB 10.17.32)

SG — Balarāma is giving pleasure to the gopas, showing Dhenukāsura's pettiness and His own power, playfully making the tala fruit fall.

ॐ Because of Lord Balarāma's pastime of throwing the body of the ass demon into the top of the tallest palm tree, all the trees began shaking and striking against one another as if blown about by powerful winds. (SB 10.17.34)

SS — the effects on the trees shows the extreme strength of Lord Balarāma.

ॐ My dear Parīkṣit, that Lord Balarāma killed Dhenukāsura is not such a wonderful thing, considering that He is the unlimited Personality of Godhead, the controller of the entire universe. Indeed, the entire cosmos rests upon Him just as a woven cloth rests upon its own horizontal and vertical threads. (SB 10.17.35)

SG — it's not so amazing that He could kill Dhenukāsura in this way

JG — refers to SB 10.50.29 - *na tasya citran para pakṣa nigrahaḥ* - "such subduing of His enemies is not at all amazing for Him, but nevertheless it is described in terms of the characteristics of mortals."

ॐ The other ass demons, close friends of Dhenukāsura, were enraged upon seeing his death, and thus they all immediately ran to attack Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. (SB 10.17.36)

SG — the other asses ran at Kṛṣṇa because they were afraid of Lord Balarāma, having seen what He did to Dhenukāsura. Or it may indicate that out of affection Kṛṣṇa put Himself between Balarāma and the demons.

ॐ O King, as the demons attacked, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily seized them one after another by their hind legs and threw them all into the tops of the palm trees. (SB 10.17.37)

SG — "O King" used because of King's rising joy.

ॐ Then lotus-eyed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are most pious to hear and chant, returned home to Vraja with His elder brother, Balarāma. Along the way, the cowherd boys, His faithful followers, chanted His glories. (SB 10.17.41)

SG — Because of the statements in the first verse of this chapter we can understand that this pastime may have occurred on the first day Kṛṣṇa herded the cows.

VCT — Pulindas and other aboriginal types living in the area ate the fruits as they became inedible for the gopas due to being tainted by the blood of the dead demons.