

Parīkṣit's inquiry

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ King Parīkṣit was hearing the narrations of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma from Śukadeva Gosvāmī.
- ॐ These pastimes are all transcendently pleasurable to hear, and Mahārāja Parīkṣit addressed Śukadeva Gosvāmī as follows:
- ॐ “My dear lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the bestower of both liberation and love of God simultaneously.
- ॐ Anyone who becomes a devotee of the Lord automatically attains liberation without having to make a separate attempt.
- ॐ Because the Lord is unlimited, His pastimes and activities for creating, maintaining and destroying the whole cosmic manifestation are also unlimited.
- ॐ I therefore wish to hear about other pastimes of His which you may not have described as yet.
- ॐ My dear master, the conditioned souls within this material world are frustrated by searching out the pleasure of happiness derived from sense gratification.
- ॐ Such desires for material enjoyment are always piercing the hearts of conditioned souls.
- ॐ But I am actually experiencing how the transcendental topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes can relieve one from being affected by such material activities of sense gratification.
- ॐ I think that no intelligent person can reject this method of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Lord again and again;
- ॐ simply by hearing, one can remain always steeped in transcendental pleasure.
- ॐ Thus one will not be attracted by material sense gratification.”
- ॐ *In this statement, Mahārāja Parīkṣit has used two important words: viṣaṇṇa and viśeṣa-jñā. Viṣaṇṇa means “morose.” Materialistic people invent many ways and means to become fully satisfied, but actually they remain morose. The point may be raised that sometimes transcendentalists also remain morose. Parīkṣit Mahārāja, however, has used the word viśeṣa-jñā. There are two kinds of transcendentalists, namely the impersonalists and the personalists. Viśeṣa-jñā refers to the personalists, who are interested in transcendental variegatedness. The devotees become jubilant by hearing the descriptions of the personal activities of the Supreme Lord, whereas the impersonalists, who are actually more attracted by the impersonal feature of the Lord, are only superficially attracted by the Lord's personal activities. As such, in spite of coming in contact with the pastimes of the Lord, the impersonalists do not fully realize the benefit to be derived, and thus they become just as morose as the materialists do in pursuing their fruitive activities.*
- ॐ King Parīkṣit continued: “The ability to talk can be perfected only by describing the transcendental qualities of the Lord.

- ॐ The ability to work with one's hands can be successful only when one engages himself in the service of the Lord with those hands.
- ॐ Similarly, one's mind can be peaceful only when one simply thinks of Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- ॐ This does not mean that one has to have very great thinking power: one has to understand simply that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, is all-pervasive by His localized aspect of Paramātmā.
- ॐ If one can simply think that Kṛṣṇa, as Paramātmā, is everywhere, even within the atom, then one can perfect the thinking, feeling and willing functions of his mind.
- ॐ The perfect devotee does not see the material world as it appears to material eyes, for he sees everywhere the presence of his worshipable Lord in His Paramātmā feature.”
- ॐ *Mahārāja Parīkṣit continued by saying that the function of the ear can be perfected simply by engagement in hearing the transcendental activities of the Lord, and the function of the head can be fully utilized when the head is engaged in bowing down before the Lord and His representative. That the Lord is represented in everyone's heart is a fact, and therefore the highly advanced devotee offers his respects to every living entity, considering that the body is the temple of the Lord. But it is not possible for all men to come to that stage of life immediately, because that stage is for the first-class devotee. The second-class devotee can consider the Vaiṣṇavas, or the devotees of the Lord, to be representatives of Kṛṣṇa, and the devotee who is just beginning, the neophyte or third-class devotee, can bow his head before the Deity in the temple and before the spiritual master, who is the direct manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, in the neophyte stage, in the intermediate stage or in the fully advanced, perfected stage, one can make the function of the head perfect by bowing down before the Lord or His representative. Similarly, one can perfect the function of the eyes by seeing the Lord and His representative. In this way, everyone can elevate the functions of the different parts of his body to the highest perfectional stage simply by engaging them in the service of the Lord or His representative. If one is able to do nothing more, he can simply bow down before the Lord and His representative and drink the caraṇāmṛta, the water which has washed the lotus feet of the Lord or His devotee.*
- ॐ On hearing these statements of Mahārāja Parīkṣit's, Śukadeva Gosvāmī was overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy because of King Parīkṣit's advanced understanding of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy.
- ॐ Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already engaged in describing the activities of the Lord, and when asked by Mahārāja Parīkṣit to describe them further, he continued to narrate Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam with great pleasure.

The Meeting of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

- ॐ There was a very nice brāhmaṇa friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ As a perfect brāhmaṇa, he was very elevated in transcendental knowledge,
- ॐ and because of his advanced knowledge, he was not at all attached to material enjoyment.
- ॐ Therefore he was very peaceful and had achieved supreme control over his senses.
- ॐ *This means that the brāhmaṇa was a perfect devotee, because unless one is a perfect devotee he cannot achieve the highest standard of knowledge. It is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā that a person who has come to the perfection of knowledge surrenders unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, any person who has surrendered his life for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead has come to the point of perfect knowledge. The result of perfect knowledge is that one becomes detached from the materialistic way of life. This detachment means complete control of the senses, which are always attracted by material enjoyment. The senses of the devotee become purified, and in that stage the senses are engaged in the service of the Lord. That is the complete field of devotional service.*
- ॐ Although the brāhmaṇa friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa was a householder, he was not busy accumulating wealth for very comfortable living;
- ॐ therefore he was satisfied by the income which automatically came to him according to his destiny.
- ॐ *This is the sign of perfect knowledge. A man in perfect knowledge knows that one cannot be happier than he is destined to be. In this material world, everyone is destined to suffer a certain amount of distress and enjoy a certain amount of happiness. The amount of happiness and distress is already predestined for every living entity. No one can increase or decrease the happiness of the materialistic way of life.*
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa, therefore, did not exert himself for more material happiness;
- ॐ instead, he used his time for advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- ॐ Externally he appeared very poor because he had no rich clothes and could not provide rich clothes for his wife.
- ॐ Because their material condition was not very opulent, they were not even eating sufficiently, and thus both he and his wife appeared very thin.
- ॐ The wife was not anxious for her personal comfort, but she felt concerned for her husband, who was such a pious brāhmaṇa.
- ॐ She trembled due to her weak health,
- ॐ and although she did not like to dictate to her husband, she spoke as follows.

- ॐ “My dear lord, I know that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, is your personal friend.
- ॐ You are also a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa,
ॐ and He is always ready to help His devotee.
- ॐ Even if you think that you are not rendering any devotional service to the Lord,
ॐ still you are surrendered to Him,
ॐ and the Lord is the protector of the surrendered soul.
- ॐ Moreover, I know that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ideal personality of Vedic culture.
ॐ He is always in favor of brahminical culture and is very kind to the qualified brāhmaṇas.
ॐ You are the most fortunate person because you have as your friend the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only shelter for personalities like you because you are fully surrendered unto Him.
- ॐ You are saintly, learned and fully in control of your senses.
ॐ Under the circumstances, Lord Kṛṣṇa is your only shelter.
ॐ Please, therefore, go to Him.
ॐ I am sure that He will immediately understand your impoverished position.
ॐ You are a householder;
ॐ therefore without money you are in distress.
ॐ But as soon as He understands your position, He will certainly give you sufficient riches so that you can live very comfortably.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is now the King of the Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka dynasties,
ॐ and I have heard that He never leaves His capital city, Dvārakā.
ॐ He is living there without outside engagements.
ॐ He is so kind and liberal that He immediately gives everything, even His personal self, to any person who surrenders unto Him.
- ॐ Since He is prepared to give Himself personally to His devotee, there is nothing wonderful in giving some material riches. Of course, He does not give much material wealth to His devotee if the devotee is not very much fixed, but I think that in your case He knows perfectly well how much you are fixed in devotional service. Therefore He will not hesitate to award you some material benefit for the bare necessities of life.”
- ॐ In this way, the wife of the brāhmaṇa again and again requested, in great humility and submission, that he go to Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa thought that there was no need to ask any material benefit from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but he was induced by the repeated requests of his wife.
- ॐ Moreover, he thought,

- ॐ “If I go there I shall be able to see the Lord personally.
ॐ That will be a great opportunity, even if I don’t ask any material benefit from Him.”
- ॐ When he had decided to go to Kṛṣṇa, he asked his wife if she had anything in the home that he could offer to Kṛṣṇa, because he must take some presentation for his friend.
ॐ The wife immediately collected four palmfuls of chipped rice from her neighborhood friends and tied it in a small cloth, like a handkerchief, and gave it to her husband to present to Kṛṣṇa.
ॐ Without waiting any longer, the brāhmaṇa took the presentation and proceeded toward Dvārakā to see his Lord.
ॐ He was absorbed in the thought of how he would be able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa. He had no thought within his heart other than Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ It was of course very difficult to reach the palaces of the kings of the Yadu dynasty, but brāhmaṇas were allowed to visit.
ॐ When the brāhmaṇa friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa went there, he, along with other brāhmaṇas, had to pass through three military encampments.
ॐ In each camp there were very big gates, and he also had to pass through them.
ॐ After the gates and the camps, there were sixteen thousand big palaces, the residential quarters of the sixteen thousand queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
ॐ The brāhmaṇa entered one palace which was very gorgeously decorated.
ॐ When he entered this beautiful palace, he felt that he was swimming in the ocean of transcendental pleasure.
ॐ He felt himself constantly diving and surfacing in that transcendental ocean.
- ॐ At that time, Lord Kṛṣṇa was sitting on the bedstead of Queen Rukmiṇī.
ॐ Even from a considerable distance He could see the brāhmaṇa coming to His home, and He could recognize him as His friend.
ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately left His seat and came forward to receive His brāhmaṇa friend and, upon reaching him, embraced the brāhmaṇa with His two arms.
ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all transcendental pleasure, yet He Himself felt great pleasure upon embracing the poor brāhmaṇa because He was meeting His very dear friend.
ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa had him seated on His own bedstead and personally brought all kinds of fruits and drinks to offer him, as is proper in receiving a worshipable guest.
ॐ Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme pure, but because He was playing the role of an ordinary human being, He immediately washed the brāhmaṇa’s feet and, for His own purification, sprinkled the water onto His head.

- ॐ After this the Lord smeared the body of the brāhmaṇa with different kinds of scented pulp, such as sandalwood, aguru and saffron.
- ॐ He immediately burned several kinds of scented incense and, as is usual, offered him āraṭi with burning lamps.
- ॐ After thus offering him an adequate welcome and after the brāhmaṇa had taken food and drink, Lord Kṛṣṇa said,
- ॐ “My dear friend, it is a great fortune that you have come here.”
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa, being very poor, was not dressed nicely; his clothing was torn and dirty, and his body was very lean and thin.
- ॐ He appeared not very clean,
- ॐ and because of his weak body, his bones were distinctly visible.
- ॐ The goddess of fortune Rukmiṇīdevī personally began to fan him with the cāmara fan,
- ॐ but the other women in the palace were astonished at Lord Kṛṣṇa’s behavior in receiving the brāhmaṇa in that way.
- ॐ They were surprised to see how eager Lord Kṛṣṇa was to welcome this particular brāhmaṇa.
- ॐ They wondered how Lord Kṛṣṇa could personally receive a brāhmaṇa who was poor, not very neat or clean, and poorly dressed;
- ॐ but at the same time they could realize that the brāhmaṇa was not an ordinary living being.
- ॐ They knew that he must have performed great pious activities; otherwise why was Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, taking care of him so much?
- ॐ They were still more surprised to see that the brāhmaṇa was seated on the bedstead of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ They were especially surprised to see that Lord Kṛṣṇa had embraced him exactly as He embraced His elder brother, Balarāmajī, because Lord Kṛṣṇa used to embrace only Rukmiṇī or Balarāma, and no one else.
- ॐ After the brāhmaṇa had been received nicely and seated on Lord Kṛṣṇa’s own cushioned bed, he and Kṛṣṇa took each other’s hands and began to talk about their early life, when they had both lived under the protection of the gurukula (a boarding school).
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa said,
- ॐ “My dear brāhmaṇa friend, you are a most intelligent personality,
- ॐ and you know very well the principles of religious life.
- ॐ I believe that after you finished your education at the house of our teacher

- ॐ and after you sufficiently remunerated him, you must have gone back to your home and accepted a suitable wife.
- ॐ I know very well that from the beginning you were not at all attached to the materialistic way of life,
- ॐ nor did you desire to be very opulent materially,
- ॐ and therefore you are in need of money.
- ॐ In this material world, persons who are not attached to material opulence are very rarely found.
- ॐ Such unattached persons haven't the least desire to accumulate wealth and prosperity for sense gratification,
- ॐ but sometimes they are found to collect money just to exhibit the exemplary life of a householder.
- ॐ They show how by proper distribution of wealth one can become an ideal householder and at the same time a great devotee.
- ॐ Such ideal householders are to be considered followers of My footsteps.
- ॐ I hope, My dear brāhmaṇa friend, that you remember all those days of our school life when you and I were living together at the boarding school.
- ॐ Actually, whatever knowledge you and I received in life was accumulated in our student life.
- ॐ "If a man is sufficiently educated in student life under the guidance of a proper teacher, his life becomes successful in the future.
- ॐ He can very easily cross over the ocean of nescience, and he is not subject to the influence of the illusory energy.
- ॐ My dear friend, everyone should consider his father to be his first teacher because by the mercy of one's father one gets this body.
- ॐ The father is therefore the natural spiritual master.
- ॐ Our next spiritual master is he who initiates us into transcendental knowledge,
- ॐ and he is to be worshiped as much as I am.
- ॐ The spiritual master may be more than one.
- ॐ The spiritual master who instructs the disciple about spiritual matters is called the śikṣā-guru, and the spiritual master who initiates the disciple is called the dikṣā-guru.
- ॐ Both of them are My representatives.
- ॐ There may be many spiritual masters who instruct,
- ॐ but the initiator spiritual master is one.
- ॐ A human being who takes advantage of these spiritual masters and, receiving proper knowledge from them, crosses the ocean of material existence is to be understood as having properly utilized his human form of life.

- ॐ He has practical knowledge that the ultimate interest of life, which is to be gained only in this human form, is to achieve spiritual perfection and thus be transferred back home, back to Godhead.
- ॐ “My dear friend, I am Paramātmā, the Supersoul present in everyone’s heart,
ॐ and it is My direct order that human society follow the principles of varṇa and āśrama.
ॐ As I have stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, human society should be divided into four varṇas, according to quality and action.
ॐ Similarly, everyone should divide his life into four parts.
ॐ One should utilize the first part of life in becoming a bona fide student, receiving adequate knowledge and keeping oneself in the vow of brahmacharya, so that one may completely devote his life for the service of the spiritual master without indulging in sense gratification.
ॐ A brahmachārī is meant to lead a life of austerities and penance.
ॐ The householder is meant to live a regulated life of sense gratification,
ॐ but no one should remain a householder for the third stage of life.
ॐ In that stage, one has to return to the austerities and penances formerly practiced in brahmachārī life and thus relieve himself of the attachment to household life.
ॐ After being relieved of his attachments to the materialistic way of life, one may accept the order of sannyāsa.
ॐ “As the Supersoul of the living entities, I sit in everyone’s heart and observe everyone’s activity in every stage and order of life.
ॐ Regardless of which stage one is in, when I see that one is engaged seriously and sincerely in discharging the duties ordered by the spiritual master and is thus dedicating his life to the service of the spiritual master, that person becomes most dear to Me.
ॐ As far as the life of brahmacharya is concerned, if one can continue the life of a brahmachārī under the direction of a spiritual master, that is extremely good;
ॐ but if in brahmachārī life one feels sex impulses, he should take leave of his spiritual master, satisfying him according to the guru’s desire.
ॐ According to the Vedic system, a gift is offered to the spiritual master, which is called guru-dakṣiṇā.
ॐ Then the disciple should take to householder life and accept a wife according to religious rites.”

ॐ *These instructions given by Lord Kṛṣṇa while talking with His friend the learned brāhmaṇa are very good for the guidance of human society. A system of human civilization that does not promote varṇa and āśrama is nothing but a polished animal society. Indulgence in sex life by a man or woman living single is never acceptable in human society. A man should strictly follow the principles of brahmachārī life or, with the permission of the spiritual master,*

should get married. Single life with illicit sex is animal life, for the animals have no such institution as marriage.

ॐ *Modern society does not aim at fulfilling the mission of human life, which is to go back home, back to Godhead. To fulfill this mission, the system of varṇa and āśrama must be followed. When the system is followed rigidly and consciously, it fulfills this mission, but when followed indirectly, without the guidance of superior authority, it simply creates a disturbing condition in human society, and there is no peace and prosperity.*

ॐ Kṛṣṇa continued to talk with His brāhmaṇa friend:

ॐ “My dear friend, I think you remember our activities during the days when we were living as students.

ॐ You may remember that once we went to collect fuel from the forest on the order of the guru’s wife.

ॐ While collecting the dried wood, we entered the dense forest and by chance became lost.

ॐ There was an unexpected dust storm and then clouds and lightning in the sky and the explosive sound of thunder.

ॐ Then sunset came, and we were lost in the dark jungle.

ॐ After this, there was severe rainfall; the whole ground was overflowed with water, and we could not trace out the way to return to our guru’s āśrama.

ॐ You may remember that heavy rainfall—it was not actually rainfall but a sort of devastation.

ॐ On account of the dust storm and the heavy rain, we began to feel greatly pained, and in whichever direction we turned we were bewildered.

ॐ In that distressed condition, we took each other’s hand and tried to find our way out.

ॐ We passed the whole night in that way, and early in the morning, when our absence became known to our gurudeva, he sent his other disciples to search us out.

ॐ He also came with them, and when they reached us in the jungle they found us very much distressed.

ॐ “With great compassion our gurudeva said,

ॐ “My dear boys, it is very wonderful that you have suffered so much trouble for me.

ॐ Everyone likes to take care of his body as the first consideration,

ॐ but you are so good and faithful to your guru that without caring for bodily comforts you have taken so much trouble for me.

ॐ I am glad to see that bona fide students like you will undergo any kind of trouble for the satisfaction of the spiritual master.

ॐ That is the way for a bona fide disciple to become free from his debt to the spiritual master.

- ॐ It is the duty of the disciple to dedicate his life to the service of the spiritual master.
- ॐ My dear best of the twice-born, I am greatly pleased by your acts, and I bless you:
- ॐ May all your desires and ambitions be fulfilled.
- ॐ May the understanding of the Vedas which you have learned from me always continue to remain within your memory,
- ॐ so that at every moment you can remember the teachings of the Vedas and quote their instructions without difficulty.
- ॐ Thus you will never be disappointed in this life or the next.”
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa continued:
- ॐ “My dear friend, you may remember that many such incidents occurred while we were in the āśrama of our spiritual master.
- ॐ Both of us can realize that without the blessings of the spiritual master no one can be happy.
- ॐ By the mercy of the spiritual master and by his blessings, one can achieve peace and prosperity and be able to fulfill the mission of human life.”
- ॐ On hearing this, the learned brāhmaṇa replied,
- ॐ “My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Lord and the supreme spiritual master of everyone,
- ॐ and since I was fortunate enough to live with You in the house of our guru, I think I have nothing more to do in the matter of prescribed Vedic duties.
- ॐ My dear Lord, the Vedic hymns, ritualistic ceremonies, religious activities and all other necessities for the perfection of human life, including economic development, sense gratification and liberation, are all derived from one source: Your supreme personality.
- ॐ All the different processes of life are ultimately meant for understanding Your personality.
- ॐ In other words, they are the different parts of Your transcendental form.
- ॐ And yet You played the role of a student and lived with us in the house of the guru.
- ॐ This means that You adopted all these pastimes for Your pleasure only;
- ॐ otherwise there was no need for Your playing the role of a human being.”