

Arjuna plots to marry Subhadrā

- ॐ After hearing of the incidents described in the last chapter, King Parīkṣit became more inquisitive to hear about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, and thus he inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī how his grandmother Subhadrā was kidnapped by his grandfather Arjuna at the instigation of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ King Parīkṣit was very eager to learn how his grandfather kidnapped and married his grandmother.
- ॐ Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī began to narrate the story as follows: Once upon a time, King Parīkṣit’s grandfather Arjuna, the great hero, was visiting several holy places of pilgrimage, and while thus traveling all over he happened to come to Prabhāsa-kṣetra.
- ॐ In Prabhāsa-kṣetra he heard the news that Lord Balarāma was negotiating the marriage of Subhadrā, the daughter of Arjuna’s maternal uncle, Vasudeva.
- ॐ Although her father, Vasudeva, and her brother Kṛṣṇa were not in agreement with Him, Balarāma was in favor of marrying Subhadrā to Duryodhana.
- ॐ Arjuna, however, desired to gain Subhadrā’s hand himself.
- ॐ As he thought of Subhadrā and her beauty, Arjuna became more and more captivated with the idea of marrying her, and with a plan in mind he dressed himself like a Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī, carrying a tridaṇḍa in his hand.
- ॐ *The Māyāvādī sannyāsīs take one daṇḍa, or one rod, whereas the Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs take three daṇḍas, or three rods. The three rods, or tridaṇḍa, indicate that a Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī vows to render service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead by his body, mind and words. The system of tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa has been in existence for a long time, and the Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs are called tridaṇḍīs, or sometimes tridaṇḍī-svāmīs or tridaṇḍī-gosvāmīs.*
- ॐ *Sannyāsīs are generally meant to travel all over the country for preaching work, but during the four months of the rainy season in India, from July through October, they do not travel but take shelter in one place and remain there without moving. This nonmovement of the sannyāsī is called Cāturmāsya-vrata. When a sannyāsī stays in one place for these four months, the local inhabitants of that place take advantage of his presence to become spiritually advanced.*
- ॐ Arjuna, in the dress of a tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī, remained in the city of Dvārakā for the four months of the rainy season, devising a plan whereby he could get Subhadrā as his wife.
- ॐ None of the inhabitants of Dvārakā, including Lord Balarāma, could recognize the sannyāsī to be Arjuna;
- ॐ therefore all of them offered their respects and obeisances to the sannyāsī without knowing the actual situation.
- ॐ One day Lord Balarāma invited this particular sannyāsī to lunch at His home.
- ॐ Balarāmajī very respectfully offered him all kinds of palatable dishes,

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- ॐ and the so-called sannyāsī was eating sumptuously.
- ॐ While eating at the home of Balarāmajī, Arjuna was simply looking at beautiful Subhadṛā, who was very enchanting to great heroes and kings.
- ॐ Out of love for her, Arjuna's eyes brightened, and he looked at her with glittering eyes.
- ॐ Arjuna decided that somehow or other he would achieve Subhadṛā as his wife, and his mind became agitated on account of this strong desire.
- ॐ Arjuna, the grandfather of Mahārāja Parikṣit, was himself extraordinarily beautiful, and his bodily structure was very attractive to Subhadṛā, who decided within her mind that she would accept only Arjuna as her husband.
- ॐ As a simple girl, she was smiling with great pleasure, looking at Arjuna.
- ॐ Thus Arjuna also became more and more attracted by her.
- ॐ In this way, Subhadṛā dedicated herself to Arjuna, and he resolved to marry her by any means.
- ॐ He then became absorbed twenty-four hours a day in thought of how he could get Subhadṛā as his wife.
- ॐ He was afflicted with the thought of getting Subhadṛā and had not a moment's peace of mind.
- ॐ Once upon a time, Subhadṛā, seated on a chariot, came out of the palace fort to see the gods in the temple.
- ॐ Arjuna took this opportunity, and with the permission of Vasudeva and Devakī he kidnapped her.
- ॐ After getting on Subhadṛā's chariot, he prepared himself for a fight.
- ॐ Taking up his bow and holding off with his arrows the soldiers ordered to check him, Arjuna took Subhadṛā away.
- ॐ While Subhadṛā was thus being kidnapped by Arjuna, her relatives and family members began to cry, but still he took her, just as a lion takes his prey and departs.
- ॐ When it was disclosed to Lord Balarāma that the so-called sannyāsī was Arjuna, who had planned such a device simply to take away Subhadṛā, and that he had actually taken her, He became very angry.
- ॐ Just as the waves of the ocean become agitated on a full-moon day, Lord Balarāma became greatly disturbed.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa was in favor of Arjuna; therefore, along with other members of the family, He tried to pacify Balarāma by falling at His feet and begging Him to pardon Arjuna.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa convinced Lord Balarāma that Subhadṛā was attached to Arjuna, and thus Balarāma became pleased to know that she wanted Arjuna as her husband.
- ॐ The matter was settled, and to please the newly married couple Lord Balarāma arranged to send a dowry consisting of an abundance of riches, including elephants, chariots, horses, menservants and maidservants.

Śrutadeva & Bahulāśva

- ॐ There was a householder brāhmaṇa in the city of Mithilā, the capital of the kingdom of Videha.
- ॐ This brāhmaṇa, whose name was Śrutadeva, was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ Because he was fully Kṛṣṇa conscious and always engaged in the service of the Lord, he was completely peaceful in mind and detached from all material attraction.
- ॐ He was very learned and had no desire other than to be fully situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- ॐ Although in the order of householder life, he never took great pains to earn anything for his livelihood;
- ॐ he was satisfied with whatever he could achieve without much endeavor, and somehow or other he lived in that way.
- ॐ Every day he would get the necessities of life in just the quantity required, and not more.
- ॐ That was his destiny.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa had no desire to get more than what he needed, and thus he was peacefully executing the regulative principles of a brāhmaṇa’s life, as enjoined in the revealed scriptures.
- ॐ Fortunately, the King of Mithilā was as good a devotee as the brāhmaṇa.
- ॐ The name of this famous king was Bahulāśva.
- ॐ He was very well established in his reputation as a good king, and he was not at all ambitious to extend his kingdom for the sake of sense gratification.
- ॐ As such, both the brāhmaṇa and King Bahulāśva remained pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Mithilā.
- ॐ Since Lord Kṛṣṇa was very merciful toward these two devotees, King Bahulāśva and the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva, He one day asked His driver, Dāruka, to take His chariot into the capital city of Mithilā.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa was accompanied by the great sages Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Vyāsadeva, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, Śukadeva, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Cyavana and others.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages passed through many villages and towns, and everywhere the citizens would receive them with great respect and offer them articles in worship.
- ॐ To the citizens who came to see the Lord and all the assembled sages, it seemed as though the sun were present along with his various satellite planets.
- ॐ In that journey, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages passed through the kingdoms of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-jāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pāñcāla, Kuntī, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala and Arṇa,

- ॐ and thus all the citizens of these places, both men and women, could see Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face.
- ॐ In this way they enjoyed celestial happiness, with open hearts full of love and affection for the Lord, and when they saw the face of the Lord, it seemed to them that they were drinking nectar through their eyes.
- ॐ When they saw Kṛṣṇa, all the ignorant misconceptions of their lives dissipated.
- ॐ When the Lord passed through the various countries and the people came to visit Him, simply by glancing over them the Lord would bestow all good fortune upon them and liberate them from all kinds of ignorance.
- ॐ In some places the demigods would join with the human beings, and their glorification of the Lord would cleanse all directions of all inauspicious things.
- ॐ In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa gradually reached the kingdom of Videha.
- ॐ When the citizens received the news of the Lord’s arrival, they all felt unlimited happiness and came to welcome Him, taking gifts in their hands to offer.
- ॐ As soon as they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, their hearts immediately blossomed in transcendental bliss, just like lotus flowers upon the rising of the sun.
- ॐ Previously they had simply heard the names of the great sages but had never seen them.
- ॐ Now, by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they had the opportunity of seeing both the great sages and the Lord Himself.
- ॐ
- ॐ King Bahulāśva and the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva, knowing well that the Lord had come there just to grace them with favor, immediately fell at the Lord’s lotus feet and offered their respects.
- ॐ With folded hands, the King and the brāhmaṇa each simultaneously invited Lord Kṛṣṇa and all the sages to his home.
- ॐ In order to please both of them, Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into two and went to the houses of each one of them;
- ॐ yet neither the King nor the brāhmaṇa could understand that the Lord had gone to the house of the other.
- ॐ Both thought that the Lord had gone only to his own house.
- ॐ That He and His companions were present in both houses, although both the brāhmaṇa and the King thought He was present in one house only, is another opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ *This opulence is described in the revealed scriptures as vaibhava-prakāśa. When Lord Kṛṣṇa married sixteen thousand wives, He expanded Himself into sixteen thousand forms, each one of them as powerful as He Himself. Similarly, in Vṛndāvana, when Brahmā stole Kṛṣṇa’s calves and cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into many new calves and boys.*

- ॐ Bahulāśva, the King of Videha, was very intelligent and was a perfect gentleman.
- ॐ He was astonished that so many great sages, along with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, were personally present in his home.
- ॐ He knew perfectly well that conditioned souls engaged in worldly affairs cannot be one hundred percent pure, whereas the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His pure devotees are always transcendental to worldly contamination.
- ॐ Therefore, when he found that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and all the great sages were at his home, he was astonished, and he began to thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for His causeless mercy.
- ॐ Feeling very much obliged and wanting to receive his guests to the best of his ability, he called for nice chairs and cushions, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, along with all the sages, sat down very comfortably.
- ॐ At that time, King Bahulāśva’s mind was very restless, not because of any problems but because of great ecstasy of love and devotion.
- ॐ His heart was filled with love and affection for the Lord and His associates, and his eyes were filled with tears of ecstasy.
- ॐ He washed the feet of his divine guests, and afterward he and his family members sprinkled the water on their own heads.
- ॐ After this, he offered the guests nice flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, incense, new garments, ornaments, lamps, cows and bulls.
- ॐ In a manner just befitting his royal position, he worshiped each one of them in this way.
- ॐ When all had been fed sumptuously and were sitting very comfortably, Bahulāśva came before Lord Kṛṣṇa and caught His lotus feet.
- ॐ
- ॐ He placed them on his lap and, while massaging the feet with his hands, began to speak about the glories of the Lord in a sweet voice.
- ॐ “My dear Lord, You are the Supersoul of all living entities, and as the witness within the heart You are cognizant of everyone’s activities.
- ॐ Thus we are duty-bound to always think of Your lotus feet so that we can remain in a secure position and not deviate from Your eternal service.
- ॐ As a result of our continuous remembrance of Your lotus feet, You have kindly visited my place personally to favor me with Your causeless mercy.
- ॐ We have heard, my dear Lord, that by Your various statements You confirm Your pure devotees to be more dear to You than Lord Balarāma or Your constant servitor the goddess of fortune.
- ॐ Your devotees are dearer to You than Your first son, Lord Brahmā, and I am sure that You have so kindly visited my place in order to prove Your divine statement.

- ॐ I cannot imagine how people can be godless and demoniac even after knowing of Your causeless mercy and affection for Your devotees who are constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- ॐ How can they forget Your lotus feet?
- ॐ “My dear Lord, it is known to us that You are so kind and liberal that when a person leaves everything just to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, You sometimes give Yourself in exchange for that unalloyed service.
- ॐ You have appeared in the Yadu dynasty to fulfill Your mission of reclaiming all conditioned souls rotting in the sinful activities of material existence, and this appearance is already famous all over the world.
- ॐ My dear Lord, You are the ocean of unlimited mercy, love and affection.
- ॐ Your transcendental form is full of bliss, knowledge and eternity.
- ॐ You can attract everyone’s heart by Your beautiful form as Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ Your knowledge is unlimited, and to teach all people how to execute devotional service You have sent Your incarnation Nara-Nārāyaṇa, who is engaged in severe austerities and penances at Badarīnārāyaṇa.
- ॐ Kindly, therefore, accept my humble obeisances at Your lotus feet.
- ॐ My dear Lord, I beg to request You and Your companions, the great sages and brāhmaṇas, to remain at my place at least for a few days so that this family of the famous King Nimi may be sanctified by the dust of Your lotus feet.”
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa could not refuse the request of His devotee, and thus He remained there for a few days with the sages to sanctify the city of Mithilā and all its citizens.

Śrutadeva

- ॐ Meanwhile, the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva, simultaneously receiving Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates at his home, was transcendently overwhelmed with joy.
- ॐ After offering his guests nice sitting places, the brāhmaṇa began to dance, waving around his wrap.
- ॐ Śrutadeva, being not at all rich, offered only mattresses, wooden planks, straw carpets and so on to his distinguished guests, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the sages, but he welcomed them to the best of his ability.
- ॐ He spoke very highly of the Lord and the sages, and he and his wife washed the feet of each one of them.
- ॐ After this, he took the water and sprinkled it over all the members of his family, and although the brāhmaṇa appeared very poor, he was at that time most fortunate.
- ॐ While Śrutadeva was welcoming Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates, he simply forgot himself in transcendental joy.

- ॐ After welcoming the Lord and His companions, according to his ability he brought fruits, incense, scented water, scented clay, tulasī leaves, kuśa straw and lotus flowers.
- ॐ They were not costly items and could be secured very easily, but because they were offered with devotional love, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates accepted them gladly.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa’s wife cooked simple foods like rice and dhal, and Lord Kṛṣṇa and His followers were very much pleased to accept them because they were offered in devotional love.
- ॐ
- ॐ When Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates were fed in this way, the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva was thinking thus:
- ॐ “I have fallen into the deep, dark well of householder life and am the most unfortunate person.
- ॐ How has it become possible that Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His associates, the great sages, whose very presence makes a place as sanctified as a pilgrimage site, have agreed to come to my place?”
- ॐ
- ॐ While the brāhmaṇa was thinking in this way, the guests finished their lunch and sat back very comfortably.
- ॐ At that time, the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva and his wife, children and other relatives appeared there to render service to the distinguished guests.
- ॐ
- ॐ While touching the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the brāhmaṇa began to speak.
- ॐ “My dear Lord,” he said, “You are the Supreme Person, Puruṣottama, transcendently situated beyond the manifested and unmanifested material creation.
- ॐ The activities of this material world and of the conditioned souls have nothing to do with Your position.
- ॐ We can appreciate that not only today have You given me Your audience, but You are associating with all the living entities as Paramātmā since the beginning of creation.”
- ॐ *This statement by the brāhmaṇa is very instructive. It is a fact that the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, in His Paramātmā feature, enters the creation of this material world as Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and in a very friendly attitude the Lord sits along with the conditioned soul in the body. Therefore, every living entity has the Lord with him from the very beginning, but due to his mistaken consciousness of life, the living entity cannot understand this. When his consciousness, however, is changed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can immediately understand how Kṛṣṇa is trying to assist the conditioned souls to get out of the material entanglement.*

- ॐ Śrutadeva continued: “My dear Lord, You have entered this material world as if sleeping.
- ॐ A conditioned soul, while sleeping, creates false or temporary worlds in his mind;
- ॐ he becomes busy in many illusory activities—sometimes becoming a king, sometimes being murdered or sometimes going to an unknown city—and all these are simply temporary affairs.
- ॐ Similarly, Your Lordship, apparently also in a sleeping condition, enters this material world to create a temporary manifestation, not for Your personal necessities but for the conditioned soul who wants to imitate Your Lordship as enjoyer.
- ॐ The conditioned soul’s enjoyment in the material world is temporary and illusory.
- ॐ And yet the conditioned soul is by himself unable to create such a temporary situation for his illusory enjoyment.
- ॐ To fulfill his desires, although they are temporary and illusory, You enter this temporary manifestation to help him.
- ॐ Thus from the beginning of the conditioned soul’s entering into the material world, You are his constant companion.
- ॐ When, therefore, the conditioned soul comes in contact with a pure devotee and takes to devotional service, beginning with the process of hearing Your transcendental pastimes, glorifying Your transcendental activities, worshiping Your eternal form in the temple, offering prayers to You and engaging in discussion to understand Your transcendental position, he gradually becomes freed from the contamination of material existence.
- ॐ And as his heart becomes cleansed of all material dust, You gradually become visible there.
- ॐ Although You are constantly with the conditioned soul, only when he becomes purified by devotional service do You become revealed to him.
- ॐ Others, who are bewildered by fruitive activities, either by Vedic injunction or by customary dealings, and who do not take to devotional service, are captivated by the external happiness of the bodily concept of life.
- ॐ You are not revealed to such persons. Rather, You remain far, far away from them.
- ॐ But for one who engages in Your devotional service and purifies his heart by constant chanting of Your holy name, You are very easily understood as his eternal, constant companion.
- ॐ “It is said that Your Lordship, sitting in the heart of a devotee, gives him direction by which he can very quickly come back home, back to You.
- ॐ This direct dictation by You reveals Your existence within the heart of the devotee.

- ॐ Only a devotee can immediately appreciate Your existence within his heart, whereas for a person who has only a bodily concept of life and is engaged in sense gratification, You always remain covered by the curtain of yogamāyā.
- ॐ Such a person cannot realize that You are very near, sitting within his heart.
- ॐ For a nondevotee, You are appreciated only as ultimate death.
- ॐ The difference is like the difference between a cat’s carrying its kittens in its mouth and carrying a rat in its mouth.
- ॐ In the mouth of the cat, the rat feels its death, whereas the kittens in the mouth of the cat feel motherly affection.
- ॐ Similarly, You are present to everyone, but the nondevotee feels You as ultimate cruel death,
- ॐ whereas for a devotee You are the supreme instructor and philosopher.
- ॐ The atheist, therefore, understands the presence of God as death,
- ॐ but the devotee understands the presence of God always within his heart, takes dictation from You and lives transcendently, unaffected by the contamination of the material world.
- ॐ “You are the supreme controller and superintendent of the material nature’s activities.
- ॐ The atheistic class of men simply observe the activities of material nature but cannot find You as the original background.
- ॐ A devotee, however, can immediately see Your hand in every movement of material nature.
- ॐ The curtain of yogamāyā cannot cover the eyes of the devotee of Your Lordship, but it can cover the eyes of the nondevotee.
- ॐ The nondevotee is unable to see You face to face, just as a person whose eyes are blocked by the covering of a cloud cannot see the sun, although persons flying above the cloud can see the sunshine brilliantly, as it is.
- ॐ My dear Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.
- ॐ My dear self-effulgent Lord, I am Your eternal servitor.
- ॐ Therefore, kindly order me—what can I do for You?
- ॐ The conditioned soul feels the pangs of material contamination as the threefold miseries as long as You are not visible to him.
- ॐ And as soon as You are visible by development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all miseries of material existence are simultaneously vanquished.”
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- ॐ The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is naturally very much affectionately inclined to His devotees.

- ॐ When He heard Śrutadeva’s prayers of pure devotion, He was very much pleased and immediately caught his hands and addressed him thus:
- ॐ “My dear Śrutadeva, all these great sages, brāhmaṇas and saintly persons have been very kind to you by personally coming here to see you.
- ॐ You should consider this opportunity to be a great fortune for you.
- ॐ They are so kind that they are traveling with Me, and wherever they go they immediately make the whole atmosphere as pure as transcendence simply by the touch of the dust of their feet.
- ॐ People are accustomed to go to the temples of God.
- ॐ They also visit holy places of pilgrimage, and after prolonged association with such activities for many days by touch and by worship, they gradually become purified.
- ॐ But the influence of great sages and saintly persons is so great that by seeing them one immediately becomes completely purified.
- ॐ “Moreover, the very purifying potency of pilgrimages or worship of different demigods is also achieved by the grace of saintly persons.
- ॐ A pilgrimage site becomes a holy place because of the presence of the saintly persons.
- ॐ My dear Śrutadeva, when a person is born as a brāhmaṇa, he immediately becomes the best of all human beings.
- ॐ And if such a brāhmaṇa, remaining self-satisfied, practices austerities, studies the Vedas and engages in My devotional service, as is the duty of the brāhmaṇa
- ॐ —or in other words, if a brāhmaṇa becomes a Vaiṣṇava—how wonderful is his greatness!
- ॐ My feature of four-handed Nārāyaṇa is not so pleasing or dear to Me as is a brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava.
- ॐ Brāhmaṇa means ‘one well conversant with Vedic knowledge.’
- ॐ A brāhmaṇa is the insignia of perfect knowledge, and I am the full-fledged manifestation of all gods.
- ॐ Less intelligent men do not understand Me, nor do they understand the influence of the brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava.
- ॐ They are influenced by the three modes of material nature and thus dare to criticize Me and My pure devotees.
- ॐ A brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇava, or a devotee already on the brahminical platform, can realize Me within his heart, and therefore he definitely concludes that the whole cosmic manifestation and its different features are effects of different energies of the Lord.
- ॐ Thus he has a clear conception of the whole material nature and the total material energy, and in every action such a devotee sees Me only, and nothing else.
- ॐ “My dear Śrutadeva, you may therefore accept all these great saintly persons, brāhmaṇas and sages as My bona fide representatives.

- ॐ By worshiping them faithfully, you will be worshiping Me more diligently.
- ॐ I consider worship of My devotees to be better than direct worship of Me.
- ॐ If someone attempts to worship Me directly without worshiping My devotees, I do not accept such worship, even though it may be presented with great opulence.”
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- ॐ In this way both the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva and the King of Mithilā, under the direction of the Lord, worshiped both Kṛṣṇa and His followers, the great sages and saintly brāhmaṇas, on an equal level of spiritual importance.
- ॐ Both brāhmaṇa and King ultimately achieved the supreme goal of being transferred to the spiritual world.
- ॐ *The devotee does not know anyone except Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is most affectionate to His devotee.*
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa remained in Mithilā both at the house of the brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva and at the palace of King Bahulāśva.
- ॐ And after favoring them lavishly by His transcendental instructions, He went back to His capital city, Dvārakā.
- ॐ *The instruction we receive from this incident is that King Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva the brāhmaṇa were accepted by the Lord on the same level because both were pure devotees. This is the real qualification for being recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because it has become the fashion of this age to be falsely proud of having taken birth in the family of a kṣatriya or a brāhmaṇa, we see persons without any qualification other than birth claiming to be a brāhmaṇa or kṣatriya or vaiśya. But as stated in the scriptures, kalau śūdra-sambhavaḥ: “In this Age of Kali, everyone is born a śūdra.” This is because there is no performance of the purificatory processes known as saṁskāras, which begin from the time of the mother’s pregnancy and continue up to the point of the individual’s death. No one can be classified as a member of a particular caste, especially of a higher caste—brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya or vaiśya—simply by birthright. If one is not purified by the process of the seed-giving ceremony, or garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, he is immediately classified amongst the śūdras because only the śūdras do not undergo this purificatory process. Sex life without the purificatory process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is merely the seed-giving process of the śūdras or the animals. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is therefore the best process of purification. By this process everyone can come to the platform of a Vaiṣṇava, which includes having all the qualifications of a brāhmaṇa. The Vaiṣṇavas are trained to become freed from the four kinds of sinful activities—illicit sex, indulgence in intoxicants, gambling and eating animal foods. One cannot be on the brahminical platform without having these preliminary qualifications, and without becoming a qualified brāhmaṇa, one cannot become a pure devotee.*