

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

Bhṛgu Muni's tests

- ॐ Long, long ago, there was an assembly of great sages on the bank of the river Sarasvatī who performed a great sacrifice of the name Satra.
- ॐ In such assemblies, the great sages present usually discuss Vedic subject matters and philosophical topics,
- ॐ and in this particular meeting the following question was raised: The three predominating deities of this material world, namely, Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, are directing all the affairs of this cosmos, but who among them is the Supreme?
- ॐ After much discussion on this question, the great sage named Bhṛgu, the son of Lord Brahmā, was deputed to test all three predominating deities and report to the assembly as to who is the greatest.
- ॐ Being thus deputed, the great sage Bhṛgu Muni first of all went to his father's residence in Brahmāloka.
- ॐ The three deities are the controllers of the three material qualities, namely the qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance.
- ॐ The plan decided upon by the sages was for Bhṛgu to test which one of the predominating deities possesses the quality of goodness in full.
- ॐ Therefore, when Bhṛgu Muni reached his father, Lord Brahmā, because Bhṛgu wanted to test whether Brahmā had the quality of goodness, he purposely did not offer his respects to his father, either by offering obeisances or by offering prayers.
- ॐ It is the duty of a son or a disciple to offer respects and recite suitable prayers when he approaches his father or spiritual master.
- ॐ But Bhṛgu Muni purposely failed to offer respects, just to see Lord Brahmā's reaction to this negligence.
- ॐ Lord Brahmā was very angry at his son's impudence, and he showed signs which definitely proved this to be so.
- ॐ He was even prepared to condemn Bhṛgu by cursing him, but because Bhṛgu was his son, Lord Brahmā controlled his anger with his great intelligence.
- ॐ *This means that although the quality of passion was prominent in Lord Brahmā, he had the power to control it. Lord Brahmā's anger and his controlling his anger are likened to fire and water. Water is produced from fire at the beginning of creation, but fire can be extinguished with water. Similarly, although Lord Brahmā was very angry due to his quality of passion, he could still control his passion because Bhṛgu Muni was his son.*
- ॐ After testing Lord Brahmā, Bhṛgu Muni went directly to the Mount Kailāsa, where Lord Śiva resides.
- ॐ Bhṛgu Muni happened to be Lord Śiva's brother.

- ॐ Therefore, as soon as Bhṛḡu Muni approached, Lord Śiva was very glad and personally rose to embrace him.
- ॐ But when Lord Śiva approached, Bhṛḡu Muni refused to embrace him.
- ॐ “My dear brother,” he said, “you are always very impure.
- ॐ Because you smear your body with ashes, you are not very clean.
- ॐ Please do not touch me.”
- ॐ When Bhṛḡu Muni refused to embrace his brother, saying that Lord Śiva was impure, the latter became very angry with him.
- ॐ *It is said that an offense can be committed either with the body, with the mind or by speech. Bhṛḡu Muni’s first offense, committed toward Lord Brahmā, was an offense with the mind. His second offense, committed toward Lord Śiva by insulting him, criticizing him for unclean habits, was an offense by speech.*
- ॐ Because the quality of ignorance is prominent in Lord Śiva, when he heard Bhṛḡu’s insult his eyes immediately became red with anger.
- ॐ With uncontrollable rage, he took up his trident and prepared to kill Bhṛḡu Muni.
- ॐ At that time Lord Śiva’s wife, Pārvatī, was present.
- ॐ Her personality, like Lord Śiva’s, is a mixture of the three qualities, and therefore she is called Trigunamayī.
- ॐ In this case, she saved the situation by evoking Lord Śiva’s quality of goodness.
- ॐ She fell down at the feet of her husband, and with her sweet words she talked him out of killing Bhṛḡu Muni.
- ॐ After being saved from the anger of Lord Śiva, Bhṛḡu Muni went directly to the planet Śvetadvīpa, where Lord Viṣṇu was lying on a bed of flowers in the company of His wife, the goddess of fortune, who was engaged in massaging His lotus feet.
- ॐ There Bhṛḡu Muni purposely committed the greatest sin by offending Lord Viṣṇu by his bodily activities.
- ॐ *The first offense committed by Bhṛḡu Muni was mental, the second offense was vocal, and the third offense was corporal. These different offenses are progressively greater in degree. An offense committed within the mind is a positive offense, the same offense committed verbally is comparatively more grave, and when committed by bodily action it is superlative in offensiveness.*
- ॐ So Bhṛḡu Muni committed the greatest offense by kicking the chest of the Lord with his foot in the presence of the goddess of fortune.
- ॐ Of course, Lord Viṣṇu is all-merciful. He did not become angry at the activities of Bhṛḡu Muni, for Bhṛḡu Muni was a great brāhmaṇa.

- ॐ A brāhmaṇa is to be excused even if he sometimes commits an offense, and Lord Viṣṇu set the example.
- ॐ Yet it is said that from the time of this incident the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, has not been very favorably disposed toward the brāhmaṇas, and therefore, because the goddess of fortune withholds her benedictions from them, the brāhmaṇas are generally very poor.
- ॐ Bhṛgu Muni’s kicking the chest of Lord Viṣṇu with his foot was certainly a great offense, but Lord Viṣṇu is so great that He did not care.
- ॐ The so-called brāhmaṇas of the Kali-yuga are sometimes very proud that a great brāhmaṇa like Bhṛgu Muni could touch the chest of Lord Viṣṇu with his foot.
- ॐ But in fact when Bhṛgu Muni kicked the chest of Lord Viṣṇu it was the greatest offense, although Lord Viṣṇu, being greatly magnanimous, did not take it very seriously.
- ॐ Instead of being angry or cursing Bhṛgu Muni, Lord Viṣṇu immediately got up from His bed along with His wife, the goddess of fortune, and offered respectful obeisances to the brāhmaṇa.
- ॐ He addressed Bhṛgu Muni as follows:
- ॐ “My dear brāhmaṇa, it is My greatest fortune that you have come here.
- ॐ Please, therefore, sit down on this cushion for a few minutes.
- ॐ My dear brāhmaṇa, I am very sorry that when you first entered My home I could not receive you properly.
- ॐ It was a great offense on My part, and I beg you to pardon Me.
- ॐ You are so pure and great that the water which washes your feet can purify even the places of pilgrimage.
- ॐ Therefore, I request you to purify the Vaikuṅṭha planet where I live with My associates.
- ॐ My dear father, O great sage, I know that your feet are very soft, like a lotus flower,
- ॐ and that My chest is as hard as a thunderbolt. I am therefore afraid that you may have felt some pain by kicking My chest.
- ॐ Let Me touch your feet to relieve the pain you have suffered.”
- ॐ Lord Viṣṇu then began to massage the feet of Bhṛgu Muni.
- ॐ The Lord continued to address Bhṛgu Muni.
- ॐ “My dear lord,” He said, “My chest has now become sanctified because of the touch of your feet,
- ॐ and I am now assured that the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, will be very glad to live there perpetually.”
- ॐ *Another name for Lakṣmī is Cañcalā, indicating that she does not stay in one place for a long time. Therefore, we see that a rich man’s family sometimes*

becomes poor after a few generations, and sometimes we see that a poor man's family becomes very rich. Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, is Cañcalā in this material world, whereas in the Vaikuṅṭha planets she eternally lives at the lotus feet of the Lord.

ॐ Because Lakṣmī is famous as Cañcalā, Lord Nārāyaṇa indicated that she might not have been living perpetually by His chest, but because His chest had been touched by the feet of Bhṛgu Muni, it was now sanctified, and there was no chance that the goddess of fortune would leave.

ॐ Bhṛgu Muni, however, could understand his position and that of the Lord, and he was struck with wonder at the behavior of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of his gratitude, his voice choked up,

ॐ and he was unable to reply to the words of the Lord.

ॐ Tears glided from his eyes, and he could not say anything. He simply stood silently before the Lord.

ॐ After testing Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu, Bhṛgu Muni returned to the assembly of great sages on the bank of the river Sarasvatī and described his experience.

ॐ After hearing him with great attention, the sages concluded that of all the predominating deities, Lord Viṣṇu is certainly the greatest.

ॐ *In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam these great sages are described as brahma-vādinām. Brahma-vādinām means those who talk about the Absolute Truth but have not yet come to a conclusion. Generally brahma-vādī refers to the impersonalists or to those who are students of the Vedas. It is to be understood, therefore, that all the gathered sages were serious students of the Vedic literature but had not come to a definite conclusions as to who is the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead. But after hearing of Bhṛgu Muni's experience in meeting all three predominating deities—Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and Lord Viṣṇu—the sages concluded that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead. It is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that after hearing the details from Bhṛgu Muni the sages were astonished because although Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva were immediately agitated, Lord Viṣṇu, in spite of being kicked by Bhṛgu Muni, was not agitated in the least. The example is given that small lamps may be agitated by a slight breeze, but the greatest lamp or the greatest illuminating source, the sun, is never moved, even by the greatest hurricane. One's greatness has to be estimated by one's ability to tolerate provoking situations. The sages gathered on the bank of the river Sarasvatī concluded that one who wants actual peace and freedom from all fear should take shelter of the lotus feet of Viṣṇu. Since Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva lost their peaceful attitude upon a slight provocation, how can they maintain the peace and tranquillity of their*

devotees? As for Lord Viṣṇu, however, it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā that anyone who accepts Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa as the supreme friend attains the highest perfection of peaceful life.

ॐ The sages thus concluded that by following the principles of vaiṣṇava-dharma one becomes actually perfect, but that if one follows all the religious principles of a particular sect and does not become advanced in understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, all such labor of love is fruitless.

ॐ *To execute religious principles means to come to the platform of perfect knowledge. If one comes to the platform of perfect knowledge, then he will be uninterested in material affairs. Perfect knowledge means knowledge of one's own self and the Supreme Self. The Supreme Self and the individual self, although one in quality, are different in quantity. This analytical understanding of knowledge is perfect. Simply to understand "I am not matter; I am spirit" is not perfect knowledge. The real religious principle is devotional service, or bhakti. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Give up all other religious principles and simply surrender unto Me." Therefore, the term dharma applies only to vaiṣṇava-dharma, or bhagavad-dharma, by following which one automatically achieves all good qualities and advancements in life.*

ॐ *The highest perfectional knowledge is knowledge of the Supreme Lord. He cannot be understood by any process of religion other than devotional service; therefore, the immediate result of perfect knowledge is achieved by executing devotional service. After attainment of knowledge, one becomes uninterested in the material world. This is not because of dry philosophical speculation. The devotees become uninterested in the material world not simply because of theoretical understanding but because of practical experience. When a devotee realizes the effect of association with the Supreme Lord, he naturally hates the association of so-called society, friendship and love. This detachment is not dry but is due to achieving a higher status of life by relishing transcendental mellows. It is further stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that after attainment of such knowledge and such detachment from material sense gratification, one's advancement in the eight opulences attained through mystic yoga practice, such as the aṇimā, laghimā and prāpti siddhis, is also achieved without separate effort. The perfect example is Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. He was not a mystic yogī but a great devotee, yet in a disagreement with Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, the great mystic Durvāsā was defeated in the presence of the King's devotional attitude. In other words, a devotee does not need to practice the mystic yoga system to achieve power. The power is behind him by the grace of the Lord, just as when a small child is surrendered to a powerful father, all the powers of the father are behind him.*

ॐ When a person becomes famous as a devotee of the Lord, his reputation is never to be extinguished. Lord Caitanya, when discoursing with Rāmānanda Rāya, questioned, “What is the greatest fame?” Rāmānanda Rāya replied that to be known as a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the perfect fame. The conclusion, therefore, is that viṣṇu-dharma, or the religion of devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is meant for persons who are thoughtful. By proper utilization of thoughtfulness, one comes to the stage of thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one becomes free from the contamination of the faulty association of the material world, and thus one becomes peaceful. The world is in a disturbed condition because of a scarcity of such peaceful devotees in human society. Unless one is a devotee, one cannot be equal to all living entities. A devotee is equally disposed toward the animals, the human beings and all living entities because he sees every living entity as a part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. In the Īsopaniṣad it is clearly stated that one who has come to the stage of seeing all living beings equally does not hate anyone or favor anyone. The devotee does not hanker to possess more than he requires. Devotees are therefore akiñcana; in any condition of life a devotee is satisfied. It is said that a devotee is even-minded whether he is in hell or in heaven. A devotee is callous to all subjects other than his engagement in devotional service. This mode of life is the highest perfectional stage, from which one can be elevated to the spiritual world, back home, back to Godhead. The devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are especially attracted by the highest material quality, goodness, and the qualified brāhmaṇa is the symbolic representation of this goodness. Therefore, a devotee is attached to the brahminical stage of life. He is not very much interested in passion or ignorance, although these qualities also emanate from the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the devotees are described as nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ, which means that they are the most intelligent class of men. Uninfluenced by attachment or hatred, the devotee lives very peacefully and is not agitated by the influence of passion and ignorance.

ॐ It may be questioned here why a devotee should be attached to the quality of goodness in the material world if he is transcendental to all material qualities. The answer is that there are different kinds of people existing in the modes of material nature. Those in the mode of ignorance are called Rākṣasas, those in the mode of passion are called asuras, and those in the mode of goodness are called suras, or demigods. Under the direction of the Supreme Lord, these three classes of men are created by material nature, but those in the mode of goodness have a greater chance to be elevated to the spiritual world, back home, back to Godhead.

- ॐ Thus all the sages who assembled on the bank of the river Sarasvatī to try to determine who is the supreme predominating deity became freed from all doubts about Viṣṇu worship.
- ॐ All of them thereafter engaged in devotional service, and thus they achieved the desired result and went back to Godhead.
- ॐ *Those who are actually eager to be liberated from material entanglement would do well to accept at once the conclusion given by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In the beginning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it is said that hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is extremely conducive to liberation. The same fact is now confirmed by Sūta Gosvāmī: if anyone who is traveling aimlessly within this material world cares to hear the nectarean words spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, certainly he will come to the right conclusion, which is that simply by discharging devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead one will be able to stop the fatigue of perpetually migrating from one material body to another. In other words, one who becomes fixed in loving devotional service to Viṣṇu will certainly be able to get relief from this journey of material life, and the process is very simple: one has to give aural reception to the sweet words spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the form of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*
- ॐ *Another conclusion is that we should never consider the demigods, even Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, to be on an equal level with Lord Viṣṇu. If we do this, then according to the Padma Purāṇa we are immediately categorized as atheists. Also, in the Vedic scripture known as Hari-vaṁśa it is stated that only the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, is to be worshiped and that the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, or any such viṣṇu-mantra, is always to be chanted. In the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Lord Brahmā says, “Both Lord Śiva and I are engaged by the Supreme Personality of Godhead to act in different capacities under His direction.” In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta it is also stated that the only master is Kṛṣṇa and that all others in all categories of life are servants of Kṛṣṇa only.*
- ॐ *In the Bhagavad-gītā it is confirmed by the Lord that there is no truth superior to Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī also, in order to draw attention to the fact that among all viṣṇu-tattva forms Lord Kṛṣṇa is one hundred percent the Supreme Personality of Godhead, narrated the story of an incident which took place when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present.*

The brāhmaṇa’s children

- ॐ Once upon a time in Dvārakā, a brāhmaṇa’s wife gave birth to a child.
- ॐ Unfortunately, however, just after being born and touching the ground, the child immediately died.

- ॐ The brāhmaṇa father took the child and went directly to the palace of the King.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa was very upset because of the untimely death of the child in the presence of his young father and mother.
- ॐ Thus his mind became very much disturbed.
- ॐ *Formerly, when there were responsible kings, up to the time of Dvāpara-yuga, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present, the king was liable to be blamed for the untimely death of a child in the presence of his parents. Similarly, such responsibility was there during the time of Lord Rāmacandra. As we have explained in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the king was so responsible for the comforts of the citizens that he was to see that there was not even excessive heat or cold.*
- ॐ Now the brāhmaṇa whose child had died, thinking there was no fault on his own part, immediately went to the palace door with the dead child in his arms and accused the King as follows.
- ॐ “The present King, Ugrasena, is envious of the brāhmaṇas!”
- ॐ The exact word used in this connection is **brahma-dviṣaḥ**. One who is envious of the Vedas, of a qualified brāhmaṇa or of the brāhmaṇa caste is called brahma-dviṣ. So the King was accused of being brahma-dviṣ.
- ॐ He was also accused of being **saṅgha-dhī**, falsely intelligent. The executive head of a state must be very intelligent to see to the comforts of the citizens, but according to the brāhmaṇa the King was not at all intelligent, although he was occupying the royal throne.
- ॐ Therefore the brāhmaṇa also called him **lubdha**, which means “greedy.” In other words, a king or an executive head of state should not occupy the exalted post of president or king if he is greedy and self-interested.
- ॐ But it is natural that an executive head becomes self-interested when he is attached to material enjoyment. Therefore, another word used here is **viṣayātmanaḥ**.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa also accused the King of being **kṣatra-bandhu**, which refers to a person born in the family of kṣatriyas, or the royal order, but lacking the qualifications of a royal personality. A king should protect brahminical culture and should be very alert to the welfare of his citizens; he should not be greedy due to attachment to material enjoyment. If a person with no qualifications represents himself as a kṣatriya of the royal order, he is not called a kṣatriya but a kṣatra-bandhu. Similarly, if a person is born of a brāhmaṇa father but has no brahminical qualification, he is called brahma-bandhu or dvija-bandhu. This means that a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya is not accepted simply by birth. One has to qualify himself for the particular position; only then is he accepted as a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya.
- ॐ Thus the brāhmaṇa charged that his newly born baby was dead due to the disqualifications of the King.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa took it to be most unnatural, and therefore he held the King responsible.

- ॐ *We also find in Vedic history that if a kṣatriya king was irresponsible, sometimes a consulting board of brāhmaṇas maintained by the monarchy would dethrone him. Considering all these points, it appears that the post of monarch in the Vedic civilization is a very responsible one.*
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa therefore said, “No one should offer respects or worship to a king whose only business is envy.
- ॐ Such a king spends his time either hunting and killing animals in the forest or killing citizens for criminal acts.
- ॐ He has no self-control and possesses bad character.
- ॐ If such a king is worshiped or honored by the citizens, the citizens will never be happy.
- ॐ They will always remain poor, full of anxieties and aggrievement, and always unhappy.”
- ॐ *In modern politics the post of monarch has been abolished, and the president is not held responsible for the comforts of the citizens. In this Age of Kali, the executive head of a state somehow or other gets votes and is elected to an exalted post, but the condition of the citizens continues to be full of anxiety, distress, unhappiness and dissatisfaction.*
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa’s second child also died at birth,
- ॐ and the third also.
- ॐ He had nine children, who all died at birth, and each time he came to the gate of the palace to accuse the King.
- ॐ When the brāhmaṇa came to accuse the King of Dvārakā for the ninth time, Arjuna happened to be present with Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ On hearing that a brāhmaṇa was accusing the King of not properly protecting him, Arjuna became inquisitive and approached the brāhmaṇa.
- ॐ He said, “My dear brāhmaṇa, why do you say that there are no proper kṣatriyas to protect the citizens of your country?”
- ॐ Is there not even someone who can pretend to be a kṣatriya, who can carry a bow and arrow at least to make a show of protection?
- ॐ Do you think that all the royal personalities in this country simply engage in performing sacrifices with the brāhmaṇas but have no chivalrous power?”
- ॐ *Thus Arjuna indicated that kṣatriyas should not sit back comfortably on the pretext of performing Vedic rituals but must rather be very chivalrous in protecting the citizens. Brāhmaṇas, being engaged in spiritual activities, are not expected to do anything which requires physical endeavor. Therefore, they need to be protected by the kṣatriyas so that they will not be disturbed in the execution of their higher occupational duties.*
- ॐ “If the brāhmaṇas feel unwanted separation from their wives and children,” Arjuna continued,

- ॐ “and the kṣatriya kings do not take care of them, then such kṣatriyas are to be considered no more than stage players.
- ॐ In dramatic performances in the theater, an actor may play the part of a king,
- ॐ but no one expects any benefits from such a make-believe king.
- ॐ Similarly, if the king or the executive head of a state cannot give protection to the head of the social structure, he is considered merely a bluffer.
- ॐ Such executive heads simply live for their own livelihood while occupying exalted posts as chiefs of state.
- ॐ My lord, I promise that I shall give protection to your children,
- ॐ and if I am unable to do so, then I shall enter into blazing fire so that the sinful contamination which has infected me will be counteracted.”
- ॐ Upon hearing Arjuna speak in this way, the brāhmaṇa replied,
- ॐ “My dear Arjuna, Lord Balarāma is present, but He could not give protection to my children.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is also present, but He also could not give them protection.
- ॐ There are also many other heroes, such as Pradyumna and Aniruddha, carrying bows and arrows, but they could not protect my children.”
- ॐ *The brāhmaṇa directly hinted that Arjuna could not do that which was impossible for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He felt that Arjuna was promising something beyond his power.*
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa said, “I consider your promise to be like that of an inexperienced child. I cannot put my faith in your promise.”
- ॐ Arjuna then understood that the brāhmaṇa had lost all faith in the kṣatriya kings.
- ॐ Therefore, to encourage him, Arjuna spoke as if criticizing even his friend Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ While Lord Kṛṣṇa and others were listening, he specifically attacked Kṛṣṇa by saying,
- ॐ “My dear brāhmaṇa, I am neither Saṅkarṣaṇa nor Kṛṣṇa nor one of Kṛṣṇa’s sons like Pradyumna or Aniruddha.
- ॐ My name is Arjuna, and I carry the bow known as Gāṇḍīva.
- ॐ You cannot insult me, for I have satisfied even Lord Śiva by my prowess when we were both hunting in the forest.
- ॐ I had a fight with Lord Śiva, who appeared before me as a hunter,
- ॐ and when I satisfied him by my prowess he gave me the weapon known as Pāśupata.
- ॐ Do not doubt my chivalry.
- ॐ I shall bring back your sons even if I have to fight with death personified.”
- ॐ When the brāhmaṇa was assured by Arjuna in such exalted words, he was somehow or other convinced, and thus he returned home.

- ॐ When the brāhmaṇa's wife was to give birth to another child, the brāhmaṇa began to chant, "My dear Arjuna, please come now and save my child."
- ॐ After hearing him, Arjuna immediately prepared himself by touching sanctified water and uttering holy mantras to protect his bows and arrows from danger.
- ॐ He specifically took the arrow presented to him by Lord Śiva, and while going out he remembered Lord Śiva and his great favor.
- ॐ In this way, he appeared in front of the maternity home, equipped with his bow, known as Gāṇḍīva, and with various other weapons.

ॐ *Arjuna, who apparently had not left Dvārakā because he had to fulfill his promise to the brāhmaṇa, was called at night when the brāhmaṇa's wife was to give birth to the child. While going to the maternity home to attend to the delivery case of the brāhmaṇa's wife, Arjuna remembered Lord Śiva, and not his friend Kṛṣṇa; he thought that since Kṛṣṇa could not give protection to the brāhmaṇa, it was better to take shelter of Lord Śiva. This is another instance of how a person takes shelter of the demigods. This is explained in the Bhagavad-gītā: kāmāis tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ [Bg. 7.20]. "A person who loses his intelligence because of greed and lust forgets the Supreme Personality of Godhead and takes shelter of the demigods." Of course, Arjuna was not an ordinary living entity, but because of his friendly dealings with Kṛṣṇa he thought that Kṛṣṇa was unable to give protection to the brāhmaṇa and that he would do better to remember Lord Śiva. Later it was proved that Arjuna's taking shelter of Lord Śiva instead of Kṛṣṇa was not at all successful. Arjuna, however, did his best by chanting different mantras, and he shot arrows up and down to guard the maternity home from all directions. The brāhmaṇa's wife delivered a male child, and as usual the child began to cry. But suddenly, within a few minutes, both the child and Arjuna's arrows disappeared into the sky.*

ॐ *It appears that the brāhmaṇa's house was near Kṛṣṇa's residence and that Lord Kṛṣṇa was enjoying everything that was taking place, apparently in defiance of His authority. It was He who played the trick of taking away the brāhmaṇa's baby as well as the arrows, including the one given by Lord Śiva, of which Arjuna was so proud. Anta-vat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām: "Less intelligent men take shelter of the demigods due to bewilderment and are satisfied with the temporary benefits they award."*

- ॐ In the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa and others, the brāhmaṇa began to accuse Arjuna:
- ॐ "Everyone see my foolishness!"
- ॐ I put my faith in the words of Arjuna, who is impotent and who is expert only in false promises.
- ॐ How foolish I was to believe Arjuna.

- ॐ He promised to protect my child when even Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa had failed.
- ॐ If such great personalities could not protect my child, then who can do so?
- ॐ I therefore condemn Arjuna for his false promise,
- ॐ and I also condemn his celebrated bow Gāṇḍīva and his impudence in declaring himself greater than Lord Balarāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.
- ॐ How can anyone save my child, who has already been transferred to another planet?
- ॐ Due to sheer foolishness only, Arjuna thought he could bring back my child from another planet.”
- ॐ Thus condemned by the brāhmaṇa, Arjuna empowered himself with a mystic yoga perfection so that he could travel to any planet to find the brāhmaṇa’s baby.
- ॐ *It seems that Arjuna had mastered the mystic yoga power by which yogīs can travel to any planet they desire.*
- ॐ He first of all went to the planet known as Yamaloka, where the superintendent of death, Yamarāja, lives.
- ॐ There he searched for the brāhmaṇa’s baby, but was unable to find him.
- ॐ He then immediately went to the planet where the King of heaven, Indra, lives.
- ॐ When unable to find the baby there, he went to the planet of the fire demigod,
- ॐ then to the planet of the Nirṛti demigod,
- ॐ and then to the moon planet. Then he went to Vāyuloka and Varuṇaloka.
- ॐ When unable to find the baby on those planets, he went down to the Rasātala planet, the lowest of the planetary systems.
- ॐ After traveling to all these different planets, he finally went to Brahmaloḳa, where even mystic yogīs cannot go.
- ॐ By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna had that power, and he went above the heavenly planets to Brahmaloḳa.
- ॐ When he was unable to find the baby even after searching all possible planets, he then attempted to throw himself into a fire, since he had promised the brāhmaṇa he would do so if unable to bring back his baby.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, was very kind toward Arjuna because Arjuna was the most intimate friend of the Lord.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa persuaded Arjuna not to enter the fire in disgrace.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa indicated that since Arjuna was His friend, if he were to enter the fire in hopelessness, indirectly it would be a blemish on Him.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore checked Arjuna, assuring him that He would find the baby.
- ॐ He told Arjuna, “Do not foolishly commit suicide.”
- ॐ After addressing Arjuna in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa called for His transcendental chariot.
- ॐ He mounted it along with Arjuna and proceeded north.

- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa, the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, could have brought the child back without effort, but we should always remember that He was playing the part of a human being. As a human being has to endeavor to achieve certain results, so Lord Kṛṣṇa, like an ordinary human being, or like His friend Arjuna, left Dvārakā to bring back the brāhmaṇa's baby. By appearing in human society and exhibiting His pastimes as a human being, Kṛṣṇa definitely showed that there was not a single personality greater than He. "God is great." That is the definition of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So at least within this material world, while He was present, Kṛṣṇa proved that there was no greater personality within the universe.
- ॐ Seated on His chariot with Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa proceeded north, crossing over many planetary systems.
- ॐ These are described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as *sapta-dvīpa*. *Dvīpa* means "island." These planets are sometimes described in the Vedic literature as *dvīpas*. The planet on which we are living is called *Jambūdvīpa*. Outer space is taken as a great ocean of air, and within that great ocean of air there are many islands, which are the different planets. On each and every planet there are oceans also. On some of the planets the oceans are of salt water, and on some of them there are oceans of milk. On others there are oceans of liquor, and on others there are oceans of ghee or oil. There are different kinds of mountains also. Each and every planet has a different type of atmosphere.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa passed over all these planets and reached the covering of the universe.
- ॐ This covering is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as great darkness. The material world as a whole is described as dark. In the open space there is sunlight, and therefore it is illuminated, but in the covering, because of the absence of sunlight, it is naturally dark.
- ॐ When Kṛṣṇa approached the covering layer of this universe, the four horses which were drawing His chariot—Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka—all hesitated to enter the darkness.
- ॐ This hesitation is also a part of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa because the horses of Kṛṣṇa are not ordinary; it is not possible for ordinary horses to go all over the universe and then enter into its outer covering layers. As Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, His chariot and His horses and everything about Him are also transcendental, beyond the qualities of this material world. We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa was playing the part of an ordinary human being, and His horses also, by the will of Kṛṣṇa, played the parts of ordinary horses in hesitating to enter the darkness.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa is known as *Yogeśvara*, as stated in the last portion of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Yogeśvaro hariḥ*: all mystic powers are under His control. In our experience we can see many human beings who have yogic mystic power and

who sometimes perform very wonderful acts, but Kṛṣṇa is understood to be the master of all mystic power. Therefore, when He saw that His horses were hesitant to proceed into the darkness, He immediately released His disc, known as the Sudarśana cakṛa, which illuminated the sky a thousand times brighter than sunlight. The darkness of the covering of the universe is also a creation of Kṛṣṇa's, and the Sudarśana cakṛa is Kṛṣṇa's constant companion. Thus He penetrated the darkness by keeping the Sudarśana cakṛa before Him. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states that the Sudarśana cakṛa penetrated the darkness just as an arrow released from the Śārṅga bow of Lord Rāmacandra penetrated the army of Rāvaṇa. *Su* means "very nice," and *darśana* means "observation"; by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa's disc, Sudarśana, everything can be seen very nicely, and nothing can remain in darkness.

ॐ Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna crossed over the great region of darkness covering the material universes.

ॐ Arjuna then saw the effulgence of light known as the brahmajyoti.

ॐ *The brahmajyoti is situated outside the covering of the material universes, and because it cannot be seen with our present eyes, this brahmajyoti is sometimes called avyakta. This spiritual effulgence is the ultimate destination of the impersonalists known as Vedāntists. The brahmajyoti is also described as ananta-pāram, unlimited and unfathomed. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna reached this region of the brahmajyoti, Arjuna could not tolerate the glaring effulgence, and he closed his eyes. Lord Kṛṣṇa's and Arjuna's reaching the brahmajyoti region is described in the Hari-vaṁśa. In that portion of the Vedic literature, Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna, "My dear Arjuna, the glaring effulgence, the transcendental light you are seeing, is My bodily rays. O chief of the descendants of Bharata, this brahmajyoti is I Myself." As the sun disc and the sunshine cannot be separated, Kṛṣṇa and His bodily rays, the brahmajyoti, cannot be separated. Thus Kṛṣṇa claims that the brahmajyoti is He Himself. This is clearly stated in the Hari-vaṁśa, when Kṛṣṇa says aham saḥ. The brahmajyoti is a combination of the minute particles known as spiritual sparks, or the living entities, known as cit-kaṇa. The Vedic words so 'ham, or "I am the brahmajyoti," can also be applied to the living entities, who can also claim to belong to the brahmajyoti. In the Hari-vaṁśa, Kṛṣṇa further explains, "This brahmajyoti is an expansion of My spiritual energy."*

ॐ Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, "The brahmajyoti is beyond the region of My external energy, known as māyā-śakti."

ॐ *When one is situated within the material world, it is not possible to experience this Brahman effulgence. In other words, in the material world this effulgence is not manifested, whereas in the spiritual world it is manifested. That is the purport of the words vyakta-avyakta in the Hari-vaṁśa. In the Bhagavad-gītā*

it is said, avyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ: both these energies are eternally manifested.

ॐ After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna entered a vast spiritual water.

ॐ *This spiritual water is called the Kāraṇa Ocean, which means that this ocean is the origin of the creation of the material world; this place is also known as Virajā, because it is free from the influence of the three qualities of the material world. In the Mṛtyuñjaya-tantra, a Vedic scripture, there is a vivid description of this Kāraṇa Ocean, or Virajā. It is stated there that the highest planetary system within the material world is Satyaloka, or Brahmaloḥka, beyond which are Rudraloḥka and Mahā-Viṣṇuloka. Regarding this Mahā-Viṣṇuloka, it is stated in the Brahma-saṁhitā, yaḥ kāraṇārṇava-jale bhajati sma yoga-nidrām ananta-jagad-aṇḍa-sa-roma-kūpaḥ: [Bs. 5.47] “Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is lying in the Kāraṇa Ocean. When He exhales, innumerable universes come into existence, and when He inhales, innumerable universes enter within Him.” In this way, the material creation is generated and again withdrawn. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna entered the water, it appeared that there was a strong hurricane of transcendental effulgence blowing, and the water of the Kāraṇa Ocean was greatly agitated. By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna had the unique experience of being able to see the very beautiful Kāraṇa Ocean.*

ॐ Accompanied by Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna saw a large palace within the water.

ॐ There were many thousands of pillars and columns made of valuable jewels, and the glaring effulgence of those columns was so beautiful that Arjuna was charmed by it.

ॐ Within that palace, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa saw the gigantic form of Anantadeva, who is also known as Śeṣa.

ॐ Lord Anantadeva, or Śeṣa Nāga, was in the form of a great serpent with thousands of hoods, each one decorated with valuable, effulgent jewels, beautifully dazzling.

ॐ Each of Anantadeva’s hoods had two eyes, which appeared very fearful.

ॐ His body was as white as the mountaintop of Kailāsa, which is always covered with snow.

ॐ His necks were bluish, as were His tongues.

ॐ Thus Arjuna saw the Śeṣa Nāga form, and he also saw that on the very soft, white body of Śeṣa Nāga, Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu was lying very comfortably.

ॐ He appeared all-pervading and very powerful, and Arjuna could understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead in that form is known as Puruṣottama.

ॐ He is known as Puruṣottama, the supreme or best Personality of Godhead, because from this form emanates within the material world another form of Viṣṇu, known as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.

ॐ *The Mahā-Viṣṇu form of the Lord is also called Puruṣottama (Puruṣa-uttama) because He is beyond the material world. Tama means “darkness,”*

and ut means “above, transcendental”; therefore, uttama means “above the darkest region of the material world.”

- ॐ Arjuna saw that the bodily color of Puruṣottama, Mahā-Viṣṇu, was as dark as a new cloud in the rainy season.
- ॐ He was dressed in very nice yellow clothing, His face was beautifully smiling, and His eyes, which were like lotus petals, were very attractive.
- ॐ Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu’s helmet was bedecked with valuable jewels,
- ॐ and His beautiful earrings enhanced the beauty of the curling hair on His head.
- ॐ Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu had eight arms, all very long, reaching to His knees. His neck was decorated with the Kaustubha jewel,
- ॐ and His chest was marked with the symbol of Śrīvatsa, which means “the resting place of the goddess of fortune.”
- ॐ The Lord wore a garland of lotus flowers down to His knees. *This long garland is known as a Vaijayantī garland.*
- ॐ The Lord was attended by His personal associates Nanda and Sunanda,
- ॐ and the personified Sudarśana disc was also standing by Him.

ॐ *As stated in the Vedas, the Lord has innumerable energies, and they also stood there in their personified forms. The most important among them were as follows: Puṣṭi, the energy for nourishment; Śrī, the energy of beauty; Kīrti, the energy of reputation; and Ajā, the energy of material creation. All these energies are invested in the administrators of the material world, namely Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu, and also in Indra (the King of the heavenly planets), Candra, Varuṇa and the sun-god. In other words, all these demigods, being empowered by the Lord with certain energies, engage in the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Mahā-Viṣṇu feature is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s body. The Brahma-saṁhitā confirms that Mahā-Viṣṇu is a portion of a plenary expansion of Kṛṣṇa. All such expansions are nondifferent from the Personality of Godhead, but since Kṛṣṇa appeared within this material world to manifest His pastimes as a human being, He and Arjuna immediately offered their respects to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu by bowing down before Him. It is stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that Lord Kṛṣṇa offered respect to Mahā-Viṣṇu; this means that Kṛṣṇa offered obeisances unto none other than Himself, because Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. This offering of obeisances by Kṛṣṇa to Mahā-Viṣṇu is not, however, the form of worship known as ahaṅgrahopāsana, which is sometimes recommended for persons trying to elevate themselves to the spiritual world by performing the sacrifice of knowledge. Such persons are also mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā: jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye yajanto mām upāsate.*

- ॐ Although there was no necessity for Kṛṣṇa to offer obeisances, because He is the master teacher He taught Arjuna just how respect should be offered to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu.
- ॐ Arjuna, however, became very much afraid upon seeing the gigantic form of everything, distinct from the material experience.
- ॐ Seeing Kṛṣṇa offering obeisances to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, he immediately followed Him
- ॐ and then stood before the Lord with folded hands.
- ॐ After this, the gigantic form of Mahā-Viṣṇu, greatly pleased, smiled pleasingly and spoke as follows.
- ॐ “My dear Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I was very eager to see you both,
- ॐ and therefore I arranged to take away the babies of the brāhmaṇa and keep them here.
- ॐ I have been expecting to see you both at this palace.
- ॐ You have appeared in the material world as My incarnations in order to minimize the force of the demoniac persons who burden the world.
- ॐ Now, after killing all these unwanted demons, you will please come back to Me.
- ॐ The two of you are incarnations of the great sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa.
- ॐ Although you are both complete in yourselves, to protect the devotees and to annihilate the demons,
- ॐ and especially to establish religious principles in the world so that peace and tranquillity may continue, you are teaching the basic principles of factual religion so that the people of the world may follow you and thereby be peaceful and prosperous.”
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna then offered their obeisances to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu,
- ॐ and, taking back the brāhmaṇa’s children, they returned to Dvārakā via the same route by which they had entered the spiritual world.
- ॐ All the children of the brāhmaṇa had duly grown up.
- ॐ After returning to Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna delivered to the brāhmaṇa all of his sons.
- ॐ Arjuna, however, was struck with great wonder after visiting the transcendental world by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ And by the grace of Kṛṣṇa he could understand that whatever opulence there may be within this material world is an emanation from Him.
- ॐ *Any opulent position a person may have within this material world is due to Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. One should therefore always be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in complete gratefulness to Lord Kṛṣṇa, because whatever one may possess is all bestowed by Him.*
- ॐ Arjuna’s wonderful experience due to the mercy of Kṛṣṇa is one of the many thousands of pastimes performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa during His stay in this material world.

ॐ They were all unique and have no parallel in the history of the world.

ॐ *All these pastimes prove fully that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet while present within this material world He played just like an ordinary man with many worldly duties. He played the part of an ideal householder possessing more than 16,000 wives, 16,000 palaces and 160,000 children, and in that role He performed many sacrifices just to teach the royal order how to live in the material world for the welfare of humanity. As the ideal Supreme Personality, He fulfilled the desires of everyone, from the brāhmaṇas, the highest persons in human society, down to the ordinary living entities, including the lowest of men. Just as King Indra is in charge of distributing rain all over the world to satisfy everyone in due course, so Lord Kṛṣṇa satisfies everyone by pouring down His causeless mercy. His mission was to give protection to the devotees and to kill the demoniac kings. Therefore He killed many hundreds and thousands of demons. Some of them He killed personally, and some were killed by Arjuna, who was deputed by Kṛṣṇa. In this way He established many pious kings such as Yudhiṣṭhira at the helm of world affairs. Thus, by His divine arrangement, He created the good government of King Yudhiṣṭhira, and there ensued peace and tranquillity.*