

LORD'S EXALTED DEVOTEE



Śukadeva Gosvāmī said to Mahārāja Parīkṣit: Of Rṣabhadeva's one hundred sons, the eldest, named Bharata, was a great, exalted devotee qualified with the best attributes. In his honor, this planet has become known as Bhārata-varṣa. My dear King, Bharata Mahārāja was a topmost devotee. Following the orders of his father, who had already decided to install him on

the throne, he began to rule the earth accordingly. When Bharata Mahārāja ruled the entire globe, he followed the orders of his father and married Pañcajanī, the daughter of Viśvarūpa.

Formerly this planet was known as Ajanābha-varṣa, but since Mahārāja Bharata's reign it has become known as Bhārata-varṣa. Mahārāja Bharata was a very learned and experienced king on this earth. He perfectly ruled the citizens, being himself engaged in his own respective duties. Mahārāja Bharata was as affectionate to the citizens as his father and grandfather had been. Keeping them

engaged in their occupational duties, he ruled the earth.

With great faith King Bharata performed various kinds of sacrifice. After performing the preliminaries of various sacrifices, Mahārāja Bharata offered the results in the name of religion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. In other words, he performed all the yajñas for the satisfaction of Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa.

In this way, being purified by ritualistic sacrifices, the heart of Mahārāja Bharata was completely uncontaminated. His devotional service unto Vāsudeva, Lord

Kṛṣṇa, increased day after day.

Destiny fixed the time for Mahārāja Bharata's enjoyment of material opulence at one thousand times ten thousand years.

When that period was finished, he retired from family life and divided the wealth he had received from his forefathers among his sons. He left his paternal home, the reservoir of all opulence, and started for Pulahāśrama, which is situated in Hardwar.

In the gardens of Pulaha-āśrama, Mahārāja Bharata lived alone and collected a variety of flowers, twigs and tulasī leaves. He also collected the water of the Gaṇḍakī River,

as well as various roots, fruits and bulbs. With these he offered food to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, and, worshiping Him, he remained satisfied. In this way his heart was completely uncontaminated, and he did not have the least desire for material enjoyment. All material desires vanished. In this steady position, he felt full satisfaction and was situated in devotional service.

That most exalted devotee, Mahārāja Bharata, in this way engaged constantly in the devotional service of the Lord. Naturally his love for Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, increased more and more and melted his

heart. Consequently he gradually lost all attachment for regulative duties. The hairs of his body stood on end, and all the ecstatic bodily symptoms were manifest. Tears flowed from his eyes, so much so that he could not see anything. Thus he constantly meditated on the reddish lotus feet of the Lord.