I. Past life

According to the Garga Samhita in his past life he had been a brāmaṇa named Varatantu, who was a disciple of Bṛhaspati. One day he sat facing his guru with his feet extended toward him. Bṛhaspati told him "You sit as a bull sits! Fool, you now become a bull!" He then took birth as a bull in East Bengal, and by the association of demoniac bulls he also became a demon.

II. Some History

In Lalita Madhava Paurṇamasi explains that Kamsa had had some idea that something was going on in Vṛṇdāvana with one young boy, so he sent Keśi and Ariṣta there to investigate. When they returned Keśi explained the glory of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and then Ariṣta suggested that Kamsa steal Rādhā. Then Kamsa sent Sankacuḍa. When he failed Kamsa sent Ariṣta.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswami says: "When the frightened demons headed by Ariṣta, Vatsa and Keśi, saw Your kindness to the cows and other animals, they abandoned all pride and assumed the forms of animals."

III. Brhad Bhāgavatamrta on Aristāsūra and Keśi

Once, Kamsa's two great demon servants Kesi and Ariṣta, the first assuming the form of a great horse, and the second assuming the form of a bull, both of them so tall their great bodies touched the sky, both of them like death personified, and both of them terrifying the gopas, wreaking havoc in Gokula, and with their roaring making every living entity fall to the ground, came to Vraja. Surrounded by His dear friends terrified of the two demons, Krsna, comforting them and showing them His heroic power, flexed His arm. First the horse came running, and Krsna kicked it far away. Then Krsna went to the bull, pierced its nose, and brought it before the deity of Lord Siva, so Lord Siva could ride it

IV. The Pastime

Arișțāsura

3 Vṛndāvana was always absorbed in the thought of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone remembered His pastimes and was constantly merged in the ocean of transcendental bliss.

Description is found Srimad Bhagavatam (Krishna Book)

- 3 But the material world is so contaminated that even in Vṛndāvana the asuras, or demons, tried to disturb the peaceful situation.
- 3 Once a demon named Ariṣṭāsura entered the village in the form of a great bull with a gigantic body and huge horns, digging up the earth with his hooves.

- 3 When the demon entered Vṛndāvana, the whole land appeared to tremble, as if there were an earthquake.
- He roared fiercely, and after digging up the earth on the riverside, he entered the village proper.
- The fearful roaring of the bull was so piercing that some of the pregnant cows and women had miscarriages.
- 3 Its body was so big, stout and strong that a cloud hovered over its body just as clouds hover over mountains.
- 3 Ariṣṭāsura entered Vṛndāvana with such a fearful appearance that just on seeing this great demon all the men and women were afflicted with great fear, and the cows and other animals fled the village.
- The situation became very terrible, and all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana began to cry, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa, please save us!"
- 3 Kṛṣṇa saw that the cows were running away, and He immediately replied, "Don't be afraid."
- 3 He then appeared before Aristāsura and said, "You lowest of living entities!
- 3 Why are you frightening the inhabitants of Gokula?
- 3 What will you gain by this action?
- 3 If you have come to challenge My authority, then I am prepared to fight you."
- In this way, Kṛṣṇa challenged the demon, and the demon became very angry by the words of Krsna.
- 🕉 Kṛṣṇa stood before the bull, resting His hand on the shoulder of a friend.
- ₹ The bull proceeded toward Kṛṣṇa in anger.
- 3 Digging the earth with his hooves, Ariṣṭāsura lifted his tail, and it appeared that clouds were hovering about the tail.
- Fig. 3. His eyes were reddish and moving in anger.
- 3 Pointing his horns at Kṛṣṇa, he charged Him just like the thunderbolt of Indra.
- 3 But Kṛṣṇa immediately caught his horns and tossed him away, just as a gigantic elephant repels a small inimical elephant.
- 3 Although the demon was perspiring and appeared very tired, he took courage and got up.
- 3 Again he charged Kṛṣṇa with great force and anger.
- 3 While rushing toward Kṛṣṇa, he breathed very heavily.
- 3 Kṛṣṇa again caught his horns and immediately threw him to the ground, breaking his horns.
- 3 Kṛṣṇa then began to kick his body, just as one squeezes a wet cloth on the ground.

- 3 Being thus kicked by Kṛṣṇa, Ariṣṭāsura rolled over and began to move his legs violently.
- Bleeding from the mouth and passing stool and urine, his eyes starting from their sockets, he passed to the kingdom of death.
- 3 The demigods in the celestial planets showered flowers on Kṛṣṇa for His wonderful achievement.
- 3 Kṛṣṇa was already the life and soul of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, and after killing this demon in the shape of a bull, He became the cynosure of all eyes.
- 36 With Balarāma, He triumphantly entered Vṛndāvana village, and the inhabitants glorified Him and Balarāma with great jubilation.
- 3 It was after this incident that the great sage Nārada disclosed to Kamsa the secret of Krsna.

V. The anartha

A. Krsna Samhita

Many weak-hearted people give up the path of regulative principles and enter the path of attachment. When they are unable to realize the souls' spiritual attachment they behave like Vṛṣabhāsura [Ariṣṭāsura, the bull] by cultivating perverted material attachment. They will be killed by the prowess of Kṛṣṇa. The example of this obstacle is regularly found among the selfish *dharma-dvajīs*, the show-bottle devotees.

B. Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta

36 (18) The Ariṣṭāsura-vadha-līlā, the killing by Kṛṣṇa of the demon that had assumed the form of a bull, symbolizes destroying the attraction for cheating religion with its external show of pomp and splendor and the concomitant disregard for śuddha-bhakti.

C. Professor Sanyal

The ninth obstacle is offered by the conduct of those weak-minded persons who take to the unconventional method of service for the purpose of gratifying their senses which it is not possible to do under the method of regulated service. This is the conduct of the demon Brishabhāsura. These persons will be killed by the burning quality of Krishna's personality. The example of such offensive conduct is by no means rare among those hypocrites who make a parade of their religiosity.

VI. Dharmadvajīs (from Bhaktyāloka)

One should give up the association of *dharmadvajīs*, the hypocritically devout, with special care. Those who accept the external signs of dharma but do not actually follow dharma are called *dharmadvajīs*. There are two types of *dharmadvajīs*-the

hypocrites and the fools, or the cheaters and the cheated. Such hypocrisy in jñāna-kaṇḍa and karma-kaṇḍa is also condemned. In devotional service this hypocrisy ruins everything. Better associate with sense enjoyers, for in this whole world there is no worse association than the dharmadvajī. The deceitful dharmadvajīs accept the signs of dharma with a desire to cheat the world, and to fulfill their crooked desires they cheat the foolish by helping them in their rascaldom. Some of them become gurus and others become disciples, and by trickery they accumulate wealth, women, false-prestige, and material assets. If one gives up the association of crooked hypocrites, then he can honestly engage in devotional service. Honest worship is the only way to attain Kṛṣṇa's mercy. As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.38):

sa veda dhātuh padavīm parasya duranta-vīryasya rathānga-pāṇeḥ yo 'māyayā santatayānuvṛttyā bhajeta tat-pāda-saroja-gandham

"Only those who render unreserved, uninterrupted, favorable service unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who carries the wheel of the chariot in His hand, can know the creator of the universe in His full glory, power and transcendence."

Again in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.7.42) Lord Brahmā tells Nārada:

yeṣām sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyām naiṣām mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śṛgāla-bhakṣye

"But anyone who is specifically favored by the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, due to unalloyed surrender unto the service of the Lord, can overcome the insurmountable ocean of illusion and can understand the Lord. But those who are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals, cannot do so."

Externally exhibiting the symptoms of a Vaiṣṇava while internally remaining a Māyāvādī is actually pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism, or hypocrisy. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 13.93, 109-110) there is a description of Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa, who was externally a great Vaiṣṇava, devoted to Lord Rāmacandra:

aṣṭa-prahara rāma-nāma japena rātri-dine sarva tyaji' calilā jagannātha-daraśane

rāmadāsa yadi prathama prabhure mililā mahāprabhu adhika tānre kṛpā nā karilā

antare mumukṣu teṅho, vidyā-garvavān sarva-citta-jñātā prabhu—sarvajña bhagavān

"Rāmadāsa had renounced everything and was going to see Lord Jagannātha. While traveling, he chanted the holy name of Lord Rāma twenty-four hours a day. When Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord did not show him any special mercy, although this was their first meeting. Within his heart, Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa was an impersonalist who desired to merge into the existence of the Lord, and he was very proud of his learning. Since Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, He can understand the heart of everyone, and thus He knew all these things."

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, in his great humility, has stated:

kāma, krodha chaya jane lañā phire nānā sthāne viṣaya bhuñjāya nānā mate. haiyā māyāra dāsa kari nānā abhilāṣa tomāra smaraṇa gela dūre artha-lābha-ei āśe kapaṭa-vaiṣṇava-veṣe bhramiyā bulaye ghare ghare.

"The six enemies, beginning with lust and anger, are taking me here and there to enjoy various forms of sense gratification. Being a servant of Māyā, I have unlimited desires and have therefore forgotten You. Hoping to gain wealth, I wander from house to house in the dress of a pseudo-Vaiṣṇava."

Unless one gives up the association of this type of *dharmadvajī*, one cannot purely engage in devotional service. Most of the people in the world are of this type. Therefore until one gets the opportunity to associate with a pure devotee, he should pass his life engaged in devotional service in a solitary place.

VII. Different types of Irreligion (from SB 7.15.12-14)

There are five branches of irreligion, appropriately known as irreligion [vidharma], religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma], pretentious religion [ābhāsa], analogical religion [upadharma] and cheating religion [chala-dharma]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious.

Any religious principles opposed to the principle of surrendering to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, are to be considered religious principles of irregularity or cheating, and one who is actually interested in religion must give them up. One should simply follow the instructions of Kṛṣṇa and surrender unto Him. To do this, of course, one needs very good intelligence, which may be awakened after many, many births through good association with devotees and the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everything but the principle of religion

recommended by Kṛṣṇa—sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja [Bg. 18.66]—should be given up as irreligion. [SB 7.15.12]

A. Irreligion [vidharma]

Religious principles that obstruct one from following his own religion are called vidharma.

To create a new type of dharma has become fashionable in this age. So-called svāmīs and vogīs support that one may follow any type of religious system, according to one's own choice, because all systems are ultimately the same. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, however, such fashionable ideas are called vidharma because they go against one's own religious system. The real religious system is described by the Supreme Personality of Godhead: sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja [Bg. 18.66]. The real religious system is that of surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord. In the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, in connection with Ajāmila's deliverance, Yamarāja says, dharmam tu sāksād bhagavat-pranītam: [SB 6.3.19] real religion is that which is given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as real law is that which is given by the government. No one can manufacture actual law at home, nor can one manufacture actual religion. Elsewhere it is said, sa vai pumsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje: [SB 1.2.6] the real religious system is that which leads one to become a devotee of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, anything opposed to this religious system of progressive Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called vidharma, paradharma, upadharma or chala-dharma. [SB 7.15.13]

- 3 vidharmāt—unauthorized duties [SB 3.28.2]
- **ॐ** *vidharmah*—irreligion [SB 7.15.12]
- 3 vidharmah—against the principles of religion [SB 7.15.13]
- 3 Vidharma refers not just to the materialistic "religion" of the puruṣārthas, but to a complete misuse or distortion of religion. [DWT]
- 3 vidharma means anti. Anti-occupational duty. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.28.1 -- Honolulu, June 1, 1975]
- B. Religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma]
 Religious principles introduced by others are called para-dharma. [SB 7.15.13]
 - 3 Not to be confused with parā dharma.
 - C. Analogical religion [upadharma]

A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the Vedas is called *upadharma*

3 Such ahimsa is not a religious principle itself, but it is an important quality for persons who are actually religious. It is a common-sense religion because one is advised to do no harm to any other animal or living being because such

harmful actions are equally harmful to he who does the harm. But before learning these principles of nonviolence one has to learn two other principles, namely to be humble and to be prideless. Unless one is humble and prideless, one cannot be harmless and nonviolent. And after being nonviolent one has to learn tolerance and simplicity of living. One must offer respects to the great religious preachers and spiritual leaders and also train the senses for controlled action, learning to be unattached to family and home, and enacting devotional service to the Lord, etc. At the ultimate stage one has to accept the Lord and become His devotee; otherwise there is no religion. In religious principles there must be God in the center; otherwise simple moral instructions are merely subreligious principles, generally known as *upadharma*, or nearness to religious principles. [SB 2.7.37 purport]

- **3** Ābhāsa: a hint [Ādi 4.229],
- 3 dim reflection of faith [Ādi 5.173],
- ³ reflection [Ādi 7.60],
- **3** even a tinge [Ādi 16.46],
- 3 indication [Madhya 24.106]
- 38 So similarly, so-called meditation, so-called spiritualism, concocted idea, there is some touch of spiritual life, but that is not spiritual life. One should understand. That is not spiritual life. It is called ābhāsa. Ābhāsa means just like day, sunlight, full sunlight. But early in the morning, you cannot see the sun, but there is light. There is no darkness. [Bhagavad-gītā 17.1-3 -- Honolulu, July 4, 1974]

D. Pretentious religion [dharmābhāsa]

A pretentious religious system manufactured by one who willfully neglects the prescribed duties of his order of life is called $\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ [a dim reflection or false similarity].

It is indicated here that everyone should strictly follow the principles of *varna* and *aśrama* as given in the *śastra*. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.8.9) it is said:

varnāśramācaravatā puruṣena parāḥ puman viṣṇur arādhyate pantha nanyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam

One should focus upon the destination for progress, which is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. This is the aim and end of all *varṇas* and *aśramas*. However, if Viṣṇu is not worshiped, the followers of the *varṇāśrama* institution manufacture some concocted God. Thus it has now become fashionable for any rascal or fool to be elected God, and there are many missionaries who have concocted their own gods, giving up their relationship with the real God. In *Bhagavad-gita* it is clearly said that one who worships the demigods has lost his intelligence. Nonetheless we find that even an illiterate person who has lost all intelligence is elected God, and although he

has a temple, it has meat-eating *sannyasis*, and many polluted activities go on there. This type of religious system, which misguides its poor followers, is strictly forbidden. Such pretentious religions should be stopped altogether.

The original system is that a *brāhmaṇa* should actually become a *brāhmaṇa*; he should not only take birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family, but must also be qualified. Also, even if one is not born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but has *brahminical* qualifications, he must be considered a *brāhmaṇa*. By strictly following this system, one can be happy without extra endeavor. *Sva-bhāva-vihito dharmaḥ kasya neṣṭaḥ praśāntaye*. The real aim of life is to mitigate distress, and one can do this very easily by following the principles of *śāstra*. [SB 7.15.14]

E. Cheating religion [chala-dharma]

And interpretation by one's jugglery of words is called chala-dharma.

- Misinterpretation of Bhagavad-gītā is *chala-dharma*. When Kṛṣṇa directly says something and some rascal interprets it to mean something different, this is *chala-dharma*—a religious system of cheating—or *śabda-bhit*, a jugglery of words. One should be extremely careful to avoid these various types of cheating systems of religion. [SB 7.15.13]
- 3 Chala-dharma means cheating. [Room Conversation with Indian Guests -- July 11, 1973, London]
- 36 Dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam. (Bhāg. 6.3.19) Dharma is given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as the law is given by the state government. Man-made dharma has no meaning. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam refers to man-made dharma as kaitava-dharma, cheating religion. The Supreme Lord sends an avatāra (incarnation) to teach human society the proper way to execute religious principles. Such religious principles are bhakti-mārga.
- Today many scholars defend the science of religion, and they have some conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but religion without practical experience of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is no religion at all. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes this as a form of cheating. Religion means abiding by the orders of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one is not qualified to talk with Him and take lessons from Him, how can one understand the principles of religion? Thus talks of religion or religious experience without Kṛṣṇa consciousness are a useless waste of time.
- Any religion that does not accept the Supreme Lord as the absolute father is called *kaitava-dharma*, or a cheating religion. Such religious systems are rejected in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2): *dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra*. Only an atheist does not accept the omnipotent supreme father. If one accepts the omnipotent supreme father, he abides by His orders and becomes a religious person.

- Nowadays, because of a lack of training, nobody knows God, what to speak of loving Him. People are satisfied simply going to church and praying, "O God, give us our daily bread." In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam this is called a cheating religion, because the aim is not to know and love God but to gain some personal profit. In other words, if I profess to follow some religion but I do not know who God is or how to love Him, I am practicing a cheating religion.
- They are busy only with worldly progress; forgotten are the spiritual message and spiritual goals and ideals. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2) has defined such showbottle religion as kaitava-dharma, "cheating religion."

VIII. The Appearance of Rādhā kuṇḍa

- There are 20 verses in the Puranas describing a conversation between Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs after this pastime: "Ah, Kṛṣṇa, don't touch us now, O killer of a bull!
- 3 Alas, even though this Arista was a terrible demon, still he was a bull.
- 3 You will have to undergo atonement just as Lord Indra did after killing Vritrasura.
- But how can You purify Yourself without going to the trouble, as is enjoined, of visiting every single holy place in the three worlds?

35

- 🕉 "Why should I have to wander the entire universe?" Kṛṣṇa replied.
- 3 "I will immediately bring here all the countless pilgrimage places and take bath in them.
- 3 Just watch!"
- 3 Saying this, Lord Kṛṣṇa struck the heel of His foot on that spot.

35

- 3 "This is the water of the Bhogavati, coming from the Patala region.
- 3 And now, O all the holy places, please come here!"
- 3 Upon these words of the Supreme Lord, all the holy places came there and appeared before Him. Kṛṣṇa then spoke as follows to the gopīs.

35

- ॐ "See all the holy places!"
- The gopīs however, responded to this statement of the Lord as follows:
- 3 "We don't see how this is as You describe."
- Then those best of pilgrimage places spoke up, folding their hands in supplication:
- 3 "I am the salt ocean. I am the ocean of milk...... (they all identified themselves.)

38

- 36 After purifying Himself by taking bath, Lord Hari then became quite arrogant, saying, "I have produced a lake containing all the various holy places.
- 3 You gopīs must have never executed many religious duties on this earth, for the pleasure of Lord Brahmā."

35

- 3 But Śrīmati Rādhārāni then addressed Her girlfriends.
- "I must make an even more beautiful pond.
- ॐ So go to work!"
- Hearing these words of Hers the gopīs saw that the hooves of Ariṣta had dug a shallow ditch to the west of the Kṛṣṇa's kuṇḍa.
- 3 On that spot, not far from Kṛṣṇa's kuṇḍa, each of the gopīs helped dig with her own hands lumps of soft moist mud, and in this manner a divine pond manifested in the sort time of one hour.

35

- 3 Seeing the lake produced by them, Kṛṣṇa was astonished.
- Francisco He then said, "Go ahead, O lotus-eyed one."
- You and Your companions should fill this pond with water from My kuṇḍa."

35

- Rādhā replied, "No, no, no, no! This is impossible, since the water of Your kunda is contaminated by Your terrible sin of killing a cow."
- 3 "Having My countless gopī companions bring the pure water of Manasa Ganga here in billions of pots," Śrīmati Rādhārāni continued,
- 3 "I will fill this lake with My own water. Thus I will make its widespread fame unequaled in the entire world."

35

- 36 Gestured to by Lord Kṛṣṇa, a heavenly personality, an intimate friend of all the holy places, suddenly appeared from out of His pond.
- That person bowed down to the daughter of Vrṣabhānu and began to pray to Her in devotion, with folded palms and tears pouring from his eyes.
- 36 "O goddess, Lord Brahmā himself the knower of all scriptures cannot understand Your glories, nor can Lord Siva and Laksmi.
- 3 Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme goal of all human endeavors, knows this, and He feels Himself personally obliged to assure You that You can wash away the perspiration of Your fatigue.
- 35 "On the order of that same person who is always engaged in anointing Your lotus feet with the nectar of caru and yavaka and placing ankle bells on Your

feet, and Who simply by accompishing the satisfaction of the tips of Your lotus feet rejoices, considering Himself the most fortunate — on His order we have immediately come here and has taken up residence in this most excellent of ponds which He has created by the striking of His sole.

3 If You now feel satisfied with us and show us Your merciful glance, only then will the tree of our desires bear its fruit."

38

- Hearing this prayer of the full assembly of holy places, Śrīmati Rādhārāni was pleased and said, "So kindly inform Me, what is your desire?"
- 3 They then told Her, "Our lives would now be successful if we could come to Your pond. That is the benediction we desire."

3

- 3 Smiling the daughter of Vrsabhanu replied, "Please come," glancing all the while at Her beloved from the corner of Her eyes.
- Her gopī companions, all in agreement with Her decision, became submerged in the ocean of happiness, and indeed all creatures, both mobile and stationary, appeared beautified.

38

Thus gaining the grace of Śrīmati Rādhārāni, the holy places within Kṛṣṇa's kuṇḍa forcibly broke through the boundary walls of the pond and swiftly filled Rādhā-kunda with their waters.

35

- 36 Lord Hari then said, "My dear Rādhā, may this pond of Yours become even more glorified in this world than Mine. I will always come here to perform My water sports and bathing.
- 3 As such, as You are dear to Me, so is this lake."

35

- Rādhā replied, "I will also come to take bath in Your pond, even though You may kill hundreds of Ariṣta demons here.
- Anyone in the future who has explicit devotion for this lake where You chastised Ariṣtāsūra, and who takes bath here or who resides here, is sure to become very dear to Me."

35

- That night Lord Kṛṣṇa initiated on that spot a performance of the rāsa dance, generating a torrent of the greatest mood of splendorous pleasure.
- 3 At that time Kṛṣṇa appeared like a cloud and Śrīmati Rādhārāni like a brilliant ray of lightning which abundantly filled the sky with beauty.
- 3 In this way Their divine glories permeated the expanses of the three worlds.