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## INTRODUCTION

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura explains in his Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa's activities are of two distinct types; namely nitya (eternal), and naimittika (occasional). In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's nitya-līlā or eternal pastimes are conducted throughout eight periods of the day, and they are constantly in motion. But in Bhauma Vṛndāvana this aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā is mixed with the naimittika-līlā or occasional pastimes. Some occasional pastimes include Kṛṣṇa's leaving Vṛndāvana to live in Mathurā and Dvārakā, His returning to Vraja, His killing of various demons and so forth. These pastimes are very useful for an aspiring devotee who is bound within the material world. The naimittika-līlā or occasional pastimes of leaving Vraja actually exist in Goloka Vṛndāvana, but only in a conspicuously absent manner; they are truly manifest only in the material world. Practicing devotees (sādhakas) understand these occasional pastimes to be like negatively-tinted reflections of the eternal pastimes. And such sincere devotees hope that by the influence of understanding the purpose of Kṛṣṇa's performance of different occasional pastimes, their own various anārthas or unwanted material contaminations will be destroyed."

In the above-mentioned book Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has explained how the demons Lord Kṛṣṇa killed in Vṛndāvana represent the main obstacles facing the aspiring devotee. If, by the Lord's grace, these demons can be killed in the various ways they may manifest themselves in our lives, then our progress in devotional service is guaranteed. That is the theme of this course.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmi has explained in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu that there are nine stages devotees pass through as they advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

adau śraddha tataḥ sādhu-  
sango-'tha bhajana-kriya  
tato'nārtha nivṛttiḥ syāt  
tato niṣṭha rucis tataḥ

athāsaktis tato bhāvas  
tataḥ premābhyudancati  
sādhakānam ayam premnaḥ  
pradhurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ

Śrīla Prabhupāda translates these verses as follows: "In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in

bhāva, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called prema, the highest perfectional stage of life."

The specific stages are:

1. Śraddha — faith
2. Sādhu-sanga — association with devotees
3. Bhajana-kriya — trying to seriously take up the process of devotional service
4. Anārtha-nivṛtti — becoming free of all unwanted things
5. Niṣṭha — steadiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness
6. Rūci — a deep taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness
7. Āsakti — attachment for Kṛṣṇa
8. Bhāva — ecstasy, the first rays of the sun of love for Kṛṣṇa
9. Prema — pure love for Kṛṣṇa

To attain Vraja-bhakti, pure devotional service in Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma is no cheap thing. In one purport Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thāura summarizes this growth of love of Godhead as a gradual process. A person becomes interested in devotional service by some good fortune. Eventually he becomes interested in pure devotional service without material contamination. At that point, a person wants to associate with devotees. As a result of this association, he becomes more and more interested in discharging devotional service and hearing and chanting. The more one is interested in hearing and chanting, the more he is purified of material contamination. Liberation from material contamination is called anārtha-nivṛtti, indicating a diminishing of all unwanted things. This is the test of development in devotional service. If one actually develops the devotional attitude, he must be freed from the material contamination of illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and meat-eating. These are the preliminary symptoms. When one is freed from all material contamination, his firm faith awakens in devotional service. When firm faith develops, a taste arises, and by that taste, one becomes attached to devotional service. When this attachment intensifies, the seed of love of Kṛṣṇa fructifies. This position is called prīti or rati (affection) or bhāva (emotion). When rati intensifies, it is called love of Godhead. This love of Godhead is actually life's highest perfection and the reservoir of all pleasure."

Once one has passed through the stage of anārtha-nivṛtti one is able to advance more quickly, seeing that one's obstacles are largely overcome. While lecturing on Bhagavad Gītā in 1971 Śrīla Prabhupāda explained: "In this way, when anārtha-nivṛttiḥ is finished, perfect, then he becomes firmly stuck up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Tato niṣṭha tato rūciḥ. Then taste. The taste is so nice that one cannot give up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One cannot give up chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. It increases the transcendental taste. And after taste, there is āsakti. Kṛṣṇa is speaking from that stage here. Mayy āsakta-manah, āsakti, attachment. When there is attachment of Kṛṣṇa, that is the almost final stage of your perfectional life."

# THE ANATOMY OF THE CLOUD OF ANĀRTHA

As Described in Madhurya Kadambini  
By Śrīla Viśvanāth Cakravartī Thākura

Śrīla Viśvanāth Cakravartī Thākura explains that there are four types of anārthas, recognized according to their origins:

1. Anārthas arising from previous sin
2. Anārthas arising from previous pious activities
3. Anārthas arising from imperfectly performed bhakti
4. Anārthas arising from offenses in devotional service

## **Anārthas Arising From Previous Sinful Activities:**

Anārthas arising from previous sin are the five types of kleśas, or material sufferings:

1. Avidyā — ignorance (mistaking impermanent to be permanent etc.)
2. Asmīta — false ego (bodily identification and the tendency to only accept sense perception)
3. Rāga — attachment (the desire for material happiness and the means to achieve it)
4. Dveṣa — hatred (of unhappiness and the causes of it)
5. Abhiniveṣa — acquired nature (absorption in bodily existence, including fear of death)

## **Anārthas Arising From Previous Pious Activities:**

Anārthas arising from previous pious activities are attachments to sattva gūna sense enjoyment, and mukti.

## **Anārthas Arising From The Improper Performance Of Bhakti:**

Anārthas arising from improper performance of devotional service are a little more subtle Śrīla Viśvanāth Cakravartī Thākura says that, just as, along with the main plant, many weeds grow, similarly, by the cultivation of bhakti there appears acquisition of material wealth and other facilities, worship and respect by others, a comfortable position, fame etc. By their very nature, they have the power to influence the heart of the devotee, grow in size, and cover up the main plant intended for cultivation, bhakti.

NB: One should note carefully that these do not include seva aparādhas.

## **Anārthas Arising From Offenses:**

Anārthas arising from offenses in devotional service are the ten offenses against the chanting of the holy names:

1. To blaspheme devotees
2. To consider the demigods equal to or independent of Viṣṇu
3. To disobey one's spiritual master
4. To blaspheme the Vedic (or related) scriptures
5. To consider the glories of chanting the holy name to be imagination
6. To give some mundane interpretation on the holy name
7. To commit sin on the strength of the holy name
8. To consider the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa to be a karma kandiya activity
9. To preach the glories of the holy name to the faithless
10. To not have complete faith in the chanting of the holy names, and to maintain material attachments, even after hearing many instructions on the matter

It is also an offense to be inattentive while chanting

- Seva aparādhas do not fit into this category, because they are normally overcome in the course of the performance of one's devotional service, due to the potency of the devotional activities, or through some activity specifically performed for their nullification.
- However, if one commits seva aparādhas knowingly, that becomes the seventh offense against the chanting of the holy names.
- A person who commits nāma aparādha loses the mercy of the Lord in the form of His name, and therefore suffers in many ways, but if such a person humbly takes the appropriate remedial methods for his offenses (there are recommended remedies for each of the ten types) then he is able to gradually get the mercy of the name again, and his diseased condition is relieved.

### **The Removal of Anārthas**

According to Śrīla Viśvanāth Cakravarti Thākura there are five grades of eradication of anārthas: limited (to one anārtha), pervasive (affecting many anārthas), general, complete and absolute.

In the case of anārthas arising from nāma aparādha the rate of nullification is as follows: On the level of bhajana kriya the eradication is limited. On niṣṭha the eradication is pervasive. On the level of bhāva the eradication is general. At prema the eradication is complete, and with the attainment of the Lord's lotus feet the eradication is absolute.

Anārthas arising from previous sin or piety are eradicated as follows: On the level of bhajana kriya it is general, at niṣṭha complete, and on asakti absolute.

Anārthas arising from improperly performed devotional service are eradicated as follows: With the performance of bhajana kriya, eradication is limited. With the appearance of niṣṭha it is complete, and with the appearance of rūci it is absolute.

## **A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DEMONS AND THE ANĀRTHAS THEY REPRESENT**

In his Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura gives the following summary of the demons Kṛṣṇa killed in His Vṛndāvana pastimes and the anārthas they represent. (Of course we should note that not in all cases is Lord Kṛṣṇa dealing with demons as such, like in the pastime of the Brahmā-vimohana-līlā, and the lifting of Govardhana Hill, although He is always dealing with people who have antagonistic mentalities.)

- 1. Pūtana.** The pseudo-guru.
- 3. Śakatāsūra** (the cart demon). Carrying the burden of the cart-load of old and new bad habits, lethargy and vanity.
- 2. Tṛṇāvarta** (the whirlwind demon). The false pride arising from material scholarship, which gives rise to bogus philosophies.
- 4. Deliverance of Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva** (breaking the twin arjuna trees). Arrogant pride from puffed-up aristocracy, rooted in madness for wealth.
- 5. Vatsāsūra** (the calf-demon). A childish type of mentality which gives rise to a type of greediness which results in a wicked type of mischievousness.
- 6. Bakāsūra** (the duck/stork demon). Cunning duplicity, deceptiveness and false types of behaviour.
- 7. Aghāsūra** (the snake demon). Cruelty and violence.
- 8. Brahmā-vīmohana līla** (Lord Brahmā steals the cowherd boys and calves). Mundane activities and speculative scholasticism.
- 9. Dhenukāsūra** (the ass demon). Gross materialistic intelligence, ignorance of spiritual knowledge.
- 10. Kāliya** (chastising the Kāliya serpent). Brutality and treachery.
- 11. Extinguishing the First Forest Fire.** Inter-communal discord among Vaiṣṇavas.

**12. Pralambāsūra** (killing the Pralamba demon). Lusty inclinations desire for personal gain or honour.

**13. The Second Forest Fire.** Disruption of religious principles and interference with religious people by atheism.

**14. Correcting the Brāhmaṇas Performing Sacrifice.** Callousness towards Kṛṣṇa due to pride because of one's position in varnāśrāma.

**15. Overcoming the Pride of Lord Indra.** Demigod worship, and the tendency to think "I am Supreme."

**16. Nanda Mahārāja Stolen by Varuna.** Thinking that spiritual life can be enhanced by intoxication.

**17. Nanda Mahārāja Delivered from the Snake.** Rescuing the truth of eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness which has been swallowed by impersonalists.

**18. Śankhacūḍā** (killing the conch-shell demon and retrieving the jewel stolen by him). Proneness towards acquiring name and fame, and desire for sensuous enjoyment, under the plea of devotion.

**19. Ariṣṭāsūra** (the bull demon).Pride arising from indulging in false religions invented by cheaters which causes neglect of bhakti.

**20. Keśi** (the horse demon). The feeling that "I am a great devotee and spiritual master"

**21. Vyomāsūra** (the sky demon). Associating with thieves and other rascals, and with people who put themselves forward as avataras.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura says: "The devotee who worships the holy name should first petition the Lord for the strength to cast out all these unfavourable tendencies — and should pray thus before Lord Hari on a daily basis. By doing this regularly, the devotee's heart will eventually become purified. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has killed a number of demons which may arise in the kingdom of the heart — so in order to destroy these problems, a devotee must cry very humbly before the Lord and admit defeat — then the Lord will nullify all contaminations."

## PŪTANĀ

Pūtanā represents the pseudo-guru. The pseudo-guru may appear in one or both of two forms:

1. A deceitful, so-called guru who preaches sense gratification or liberation or both. In some cases this may be a person who is engaged in some Kṛṣṇa conscious activity but has not realized the course of pure devotional service and tries to give instructions to his disciples beyond his own understanding, or without regard for their situations
2. The inwardly manifest "spiritual" guide, in the form of the mundane empiric reasoning faculty (the material mind), is also like Pūtanā.

In order to show mercy to His devotees Kṛṣṇa sucks the life out of Pūtanā's breast to protect His own innocent ecstasy, which has arisen within the young devotees' hearts.

According to the Brahmā-vaivarta Purāna, in her last life Pūtanā was Ratnamāla, the younger sister of Bali Mahārāja, although the Garga Saṁhīta says she was his daughter.

### **The Story of Pūtanā** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

After consulting with his demoniac ministers, Kaṁsa instructed a witch named Pūtanā, who knew the black art of killing small children by ghastly sinful methods, to kill all kinds of children in the cities, villages and pasturing grounds. Such witches can play their black art only where there is no chanting or hearing of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. It is said that wherever the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is done, even negligently, all bad elements — witches, ghosts, and dangerous calamities — immediately disappear. And this is certainly true of the place where the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is done seriously — especially in Vṛndāvana when the Supreme Lord was personally present. Therefore, the doubts of Nanda Mahārāja were certainly based on affection for Kṛṣṇa. Actually there was no danger from the activities of Pūtanā, despite her powers. Such witches are called khecari,



which means they can fly in the sky. This black art of witchcraft is still practiced by some women in the remote northwestern side of India. They can transfer themselves from one place to another on the branch of an uprooted tree. Pūtanā knew this witchcraft, and therefore she is described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as khecari.

Pūtanā entered the county of Gokula, the residential quarter of Nanda Mahārāja, without permission. Dressing herself just like a beautiful woman, she entered the house of mother Yaśoda. She appeared very beautiful, with raised hips, nicely swollen breasts, earrings, and flowers in her hair. She looked especially beautiful on account of her thin waist. She was glancing at everyone with very attractive looks and smiling face, and all the residents of Vṛndāvana were captivated. The innocent cowherd women thought that she was a goddess of fortune appearing in Vṛndāvana with a lotus flower in her hand. It seemed to them that she had personally come to see Kṛṣṇa, who is her husband. Because of her exquisite beauty, no one checked her movement, and therefore she freely entered the house of Nanda Mahārāja. Pūtanā, the killer of many, many children, found baby Kṛṣṇa lying on a small bed, and she could at once perceive that the baby was hiding His unparalleled potencies. Pūtanā thought, "This child is so powerful that He can destroy the whole universe immediately."

Pūtanā's understanding is very significant. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is situated in everyone's heart. It is stated in the Bhagavad Gītā that He gives one necessary intelligence, and He also causes one to forget. Pūtanā was immediately aware that the child whom she was observing in the house of Nanda Mahārāja was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. He was lying there as a small baby, but that does not mean that He was less powerful. The materialistic theory that God-worship is anthropomorphic is not correct. No living being can become God by undergoing meditation or austerities. God is always God. Kṛṣṇa as the child-baby is as complete as He is as a full-fledged youth. The Māyāvāda theory holds that the living entity was formerly God but has now become overwhelmed by the influence of māyā. Therefore they say that presently he is not God, but when the influence of māyā is taken away, then he again becomes God. This theory cannot be applied to the minute living entities. The living entities are minute parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; they are minute particles or sparks of the supreme fire, but are not the original fire, or Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even from the beginning of His appearance in the house of Vasudeva and Devaki.

Kṛṣṇa showed the nature of a small baby and closed His eyes, as if to avoid the face of Pūtanā. This closing of the eyes is interpreted and studied in different ways by the devotees. Some say that Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes because He did not like to see the face of Pūtanā, who had killed so many children and who had now come to kill Him. Others say that something extraordinary was being dictated to her, and in order to give her assurance, Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes so that she would not be frightened. And yet others interpret in this way: Kṛṣṇa appeared to kill the demons and give protection to the devotees, as stated in the Bhagavad Gītā: *paritrānāya sādhunām vināśaya ca duṣkṛtam*. The first demon to be killed was a woman. According to Vedic rules, the killing of a woman, a brāhmaṇa, cows or a child is forbidden. Kṛṣṇa was obliged to kill the demon Pūtanā, and because the killing of a woman is forbidden according to Vedic śāstra, He could not help but close His eyes. Another interpretation is that Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes because He simply took Pūtanā to be His nurse.

Pūtanā came to Kṛṣṇa just to offer her breast for the Lord to suck. Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that even though He knew Pūtanā was there to kill Him, He took her as His nurse or mother.

There are seven kinds of mothers according to Vedic injunction: the real mother, the wife of a teacher or spiritual master, the wife of a king, the wife of a brāhmaṇa, the cow, the nurse, and the mother earth. Because Pūtanā came to take Kṛṣṇa on her lap and offer her breast's milk to be sucked by Him, she was accepted by Kṛṣṇa as one of His mothers. That is considered to be another reason He closed His eyes: He had to kill a nurse or mother. But His killing of His mother or nurse was no different from His love for His real mother or foster mother Yaśoda. We further understand from Vedic information that Pūtanā was also treated as a mother and given the same facility as Yaśoda. As Yaśoda was given liberation from the material world, Pūtanā was also given liberation. When the baby Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes, Pūtanā took Him on her lap. She did not know that she was holding death personified. If a person mistakes a snake for a rope, he dies. Similarly, Pūtanā killed so many babies before meeting Kṛṣṇa, but now she was accepting the snake that would kill her immediately.

When Pūtanā was taking baby Kṛṣṇa on her lap, both Yaśoda and Rohini were present, but they did not forbid her because she was so beautifully dressed and because she showed motherly affection towards Kṛṣṇa. They could not understand that she was a sword within a decorated case. Pūtanā had smeared a very powerful poison on her breasts, and immediately after taking the baby on her lap, she pushed her breastly nipple within His mouth. She was hoping that as soon as He would suck her breast, He would die. But baby Kṛṣṇa very quickly took the nipple in anger. He sucked the milk-poison along with the life air of the demon. In other words, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously sucked the milk from her breast and killed her by sucking out her life. Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that because the demon Pūtanā came to offer her breast milk to Him, He fulfilled her desire and accepted her activity as motherly. But to stop her from further nefarious activities, He immediately killed her. And because the demon was killed by Kṛṣṇa, she got liberation. When Kṛṣṇa sucked out her very breath, Pūtanā fell down on the ground, spread her arms and legs and began to cry, "Oh, child, leave me, leave me!" She was crying loudly and perspiring, and her whole body became wet.

As she died, screaming, there was a tremendous vibration both on the earth and in the sky, in all directions, and people thought that thunderbolts were falling. Thus the nightmare of the Pūtanā witch was over, and she assumed her real feature as a great demon. She opened her fierce mouth and spread her arms and legs all over. She fell exactly as Vṛtrāsura when struck by the thunderbolt of Indra. The long hair on her head was scattered all over her body. Her fallen body extended up to twelve miles and smashed all the trees to pieces, and everyone was struck with wonder upon seeing this gigantic body. Her teeth appeared just like plowed roads, and her nostrils appeared just like mountain caves. Her breasts appeared like small hills, and her hair was a vast reddish bush. Her eye sockets appeared like blind wells, and her two thighs appeared like two banks of a river; her two hands appeared like two strongly constructed bridges, and her abdomen seemed like a dried-up lake. All the cowherd men and women became struck with awe and wonder upon seeing this. And the tumultuous sound of her falling shocked their brains and ears and made their hearts beat strongly.

## **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura on Pūtanā**

In one issue of the Harmonist Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura wrote extensively on the subject of Pūtanā, as follows:

**(Point 1)** (Points extracted by the teacher of this course, not by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifest His eternal birth in the pure cognitive essence of the serving soul who is located above all mundane limitations. King Kāṁsa is the typical aggressive empiricist, ever on the lookout for the appearance of the truth for the purpose of suppressing Him before He has time to develop. This is no exaggeration of the real connotation of the consistent empiric position. The materialist has a natural repugnance for the transcendental. He is disposed to think that faith in the incomprehensible is the parent of dogmatism and hypocrisy in the guise of religion. He is also equally under the delusion that there is no really dividing line between the material and the spiritual. He is strengthened in his delusion by the interpretation of scriptures by persons who are like-minded with himself. This includes all the lexicographic interpreters. (Lexicographical means a strict dictionary meaning)

**(Point 2)**

The lexicographical interpretation is upheld by Kāṁsa as the real scientific explanation of the scriptures, and is perfectly in keeping with his dread of and aversion for the transcendental. These lexicographical interpreters are employed by Kāṁsa in putting down the first suspected appearance of any genuine faith in the transcendental. King Kāṁsa knows very well that if the faith in the transcendental is once allowed to grow it is sure to upset all his empiric prospects.

There is historical ground for such misgivings. Accordingly if the empiric domination is to be preserved intact it would be necessary not to lose a moment to put down the transcendental heresy the instant it threatens to make its appearance in earnest. King Kāṁsa, acting on this traditional fear is never slow to take the scientific precaution of deputing empiric teachers of the scriptures, backed by the resources of dictionary and grammar and all empiric subtleties to put down, by the show of specious arguments based on hypothetical principles, the true interpretation of the eternal religion revealed by the scriptures.

Kāṁsa is strongly persuaded that faith in the transcendental can be effectively put down by empiricism if prompt and decisive measures are adopted at the very outset. He attributes the failure of atheism in the past to the neglect of the adoption of such measures before the theistic fallacy has had time to spread among the fanatical masses.

But Kāṁsa is found to count without his host. When Kṛṣṇa is born He is found to be able to upset all sinister designs against those who are apprised by Himself of His advent. The apparently causeless faith displayed by persons irrespective of age, sex, and condition may

confound all rabid empiricists who are on principle averse to the Absolute Truth Whose appearance is utterly incompatible with the domination of empiricism.

But no adverse efforts of the empiricists, whose rule seems till then to be perfectly well-established over the minds of the deluded souls of this world can dissuade any person from exclusively following the Truth when He actually manifest His birth in the pure cognitive essence of the soul.

**(Point 3)**

Pūtanā is the slayer of all infants. The baby, when he or she comes out of the mother's womb, falls at once into the hands of the pseudo teachers of religion. These teachers are successful in forestalling the attempts of the good preceptor whose help is never sought by the atheists of this world at the baptisms of their babies. This is ensured by the arrangements of all established churches of the world. They have been successful only in supplying watchful Pūtanās for effecting the spiritual destruction of persons from the moment of their birth with the co-operation of their worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Pūtanās from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is due to the general prevalence of atheistic disposition in the people of this world.

**(Point 4)**

The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism. The churches have always proved the staunchest upholders of the grossest form of worldliness from which even the worst of non-ecclesiastical criminals are found to recoil.

It is not from any deliberate opposition to the ordained clergy that these observations are made. The original purpose of the established churches of the world may not always be objectionable. But no stable religious arrangement for instructing the masses has yet been successful. The Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in pursuance of the teachings of the scriptures enjoins all absence of conventionalism for the teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow that the mechanical adoption of the unconventional life by any person will make him a fit teacher of religion. Regulation is necessary for controlling the inherent worldliness of conditioned souls.

**(Point 5)**

But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bonafide teacher of religion is neither any product of nor the favourer of any mechanical system. In his hands no system has likewise the chance of degenerating into a lifeless arrangement. The mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and fixed liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy.

The idea of an organized church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dykes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona fide spiritual teacher. The people of this world understand preventive systems, they have no idea at all of the unprevented positive eternal life. Neither can there be any earthly

contrivance for the permanent preservation of the life eternal on this mundane plane on the popular scale.

**(Point 6)**

Those are, therefore, greatly mistaken who are disposed to look forward to the amelioration of the worldly state in any worldly sense from the worldly success of any really spiritual movement. It is these worldly expectants who become the patrons of the mischievous race of the pseudo-teachers of religion, the Pūtanās, whose congenial function is to stifle the theistic disposition at the very moment of its suspected appearance. But the real theistic disposition can never be stifled by the efforts of those Pūtanās. The Pūtanās have power only over the atheists. It is a thankless but salutary task which they perform for the benefit of their unwilling victims.

**(Point 7)**

But as soon as theistic disposition proper makes its appearance in the pure cognitive essence of the awakened soul, the Pūtanās are decisively silenced at the very earliest stage of their encounter with new-born Kṛṣṇa. The would-be slayer is herself slain. This is the reward of the negative services that the Pūtanās unwittingly render to the cause of theism by strangling all hypocritical demonstrations against their own hypocrisy.

**(Point 8)**

But Pūtanā does not at all like to receive her reward in the only form which involves the total destruction of her wrong personality. King Kamsa also does not like to lose the services of the most trusted of his agents. The effective silencing of the whole race of pseudo-teachers of religion is the first clear indication of the appearance of the Absolute on the mundane plane. The bonafide teacher of the Absolute heralds the Advent of Kṛṣṇa by his uncompromising campaign against the pseudo-teachers of religion.

**Points from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta' article:**

1. Kamsa (the chief materialist, in the form of "aggressive empiricism") likes to suppress the truth before it has time to develop. He has an innate dislike for anything spiritual.
2. He is associated with like-minded people, including lexicographers (those who uphold dictionary definitions of subjects that are transcendental to dictionaries), and he engages these lexicographers to put down Kṛṣṇa consciousness at its earliest stage.
3. As soon as the transcendental child is born he falls into the hands of Pūtanā — the pseudo teachers of religion.
4. The attempted success of Pūtanā over the genuine spiritual teachers is aided by the efforts of organized religion, which is "atheism in the garb of theism."
5. "Organized" religion is an attempt to force the people in general to follow certain religious principles, without effecting any spiritual advancement in them, so is doomed to failure.
6. They would like to improve materialism through their "religion," and so enlist the aid of the Pūtanās.
7. But Pūtanā cannot be successful once real religion has actually appeared, in fact she is destroyed at the earliest point in its development. "The would-be slayer is herself slain. This

is the reward of the negative services that the Pūtanās unwittingly render to the cause of theism by strangling all hypocritical demonstrations against their own hypocrisy."

9. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta concludes by saying: "The effective silencing of the whole race of pseudo-teachers of religion is the first clear indication of the appearance of the Absolute on the mundane plane. The bonafide teacher of the Absolute heralds the Advent of Kṛṣṇa by his uncompromising campaign against the pseudo-teachers of religion."

## ŚAKATĀSŪRA

Śakatāsūra represents a load-carrying mentality arising out of old and new bad habits, from this life and previous lives. He also represents lethargy, dullness and false pride. Kṛṣṇa removes this contamination by kicking it aside.

According to Garga Saṁhīta he had a body made of air. He tried to make the cart fall on Lord Kṛṣṇa's head. In his previous life he was a demon, a son of Hiranyakṣa named Utkaca. He went to the hermitage of Lomaṣa Muni and broke some trees there and was cursed to become bodiless. (He had a huge body). He then fell at the Muni's feet and begged for mercy. The Muni told him that in the next manvantara he would be touched by the foot of the Lord and would be liberated.

### **The Story of Śakatāsūra** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

While listening to the chanting of the Vedic hymns, the child appeared to be falling asleep, and therefore mother Yaśoda very silently laid Him down on the bed. Being engaged in receiving all the friends, relatives and residents of Vṛndāvana on that holy occasion, she forgot to feed the child milk. He was crying, being hungry, but mother Yaśoda could not hear Him cry because of the various noises. The child, however, became angry because He was hungry and His mother was not paying attention to Him. So He lifted His legs and began to kick His lotus feet just like an ordinary child.

Baby Kṛṣṇa had been placed underneath a hand-driven cart, and while He was kicking His legs, He accidentally touched the wheel of the cart, and it collapsed. Various kinds of utensils and brass and metal dishes had been piled up in the handcart, and they all fell down with a great noise. The wheel of the cart separated from the axle, and the spokes of the wheel were all broken and scattered hither and thither.

Mother Yaśoda and all the gopis, as well as Mahārāja Nanda and the cowherd men, were astonished as to how the cart could have collapsed by itself. All the men and women who were assembled for the holy function crowded around and began to suggest how the cart might have collapsed. No one could ascertain the cause, but some small children who were entrusted to play with baby Kṛṣṇa informed the crowd that it was due to Kṛṣṇa's striking His feet against the wheel. They assured the crowd that they had seen how it happened with their own eyes, and they strongly asserted the point. Some were listening to the statement of the small children, but others said, "How can you believe the statements of these children?" The cowherd men and women could not understand that the all-powerful Personality of Godhead was lying there as a baby and that He could do anything. Both the possible and impossible were in His power.

## ṬṚNĀVARTA

Ṭṛnāvarta represents the false pride produced by useless scholarship, which gives rise to wrangling debates and arguments, dry reasoning and dry logical indulgences in the association of people who are attached to such things. It produces controversy which is disloyal to the path of pure bhakti, such as Māyāvāda and Buddhism. It is the breeding place of demoniac, sinful philosophies.

Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes moved by the humility of His devotees, who carefully avoid this fault, and He strangles the demon and removes the thorn from His devotees' endeavours in devotional service.

According to the Brahmā-vaivarta Purāna, in his last life he was a king of Pandyādeśa, named Sahasrākṣa who was cursed by Durvāsā Muni for appearing naked before him while the king was enjoying with his 1000 wives. He was cursed to live on earth for 100,000 years and then be killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

### **The Story of Ṭṛnāvarta** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

One day, shortly after the ceremony, when mother Yaśoda was patting her baby on her lap, the baby felt too heavy, and being unable to carry Him, she unwillingly placed Him on the

ground. After a while, she became engaged in household affairs. At that time, one of the servants of Kāṁsa, known as Ṭṛṇāvarta, as instructed by Kāṁsa, appeared there in the shape of a whirlwind. He picked the child up on his shoulders and raised a great dust storm all over Vṛṇdāvana. Because of this, everyone's eyes became covered within a few moments, and the whole area of Vṛṇdāvana became densely dark so that no one could see himself or anyone else. During this great catastrophe, mother Yaśoda could not see her baby, who was taken away by the whirlwind, and she began to cry very piteously. She fell down on the ground exactly like a cow who has just lost her calf. When mother Yaśoda was so piteously crying, all the cowherd women immediately came and began to look for the baby, but they were disappointed and could not find Him.

The Ṭṛṇāvarta demon who took baby Kṛṣṇa on his shoulder went high in the sky, but the baby assumed such a weight that suddenly he could not go any further, and he had to stop his whirlwind activities. Baby Kṛṣṇa made Himself heavy and began to weigh down the demon. The Lord caught hold of his neck. Ṭṛṇāvarta felt the baby to be as heavy as a big mountain, and he tried to get out of His clutches, but he was unable to do so, and his eyes popped out from their sockets. Crying very fiercely, he fell down to the ground of Vṛṇdāvana and died. The demon fell exactly like Tripūrāsūra, who was pierced by the arrow of Lord Śiva. He hit the stone ground, and his limbs were smashed. His body became visible to all the inhabitants of Vṛṇdāvana.

## **THE DELIVERANCE OF NALAKŪVARA AND MAṆIGRĪVA**

This pastime represents the pride and arrogance coming from the feeling that one has an aristocratic birth and is wealthy. It gives rise to cruelty to animals, lust for women, and indulgence in alcohol. These further give rise to debauchery of the tongue — uncontrolled eating habits and loose talking. Then come general hard-heartedness, shamelessness and all sorts of disgraceful activities.

Kṛṣṇa very mercifully breaks down the twin Arjuna trees while tied to the grinding mortar in order to destroy all these faults.

- It is very interesting to note that this pastime of Kṛṣṇa's is very directly illustrating the predicament of people who are wealthy and aristocratic, but who become involved in licentiousness.
- It is also interesting to note the remedy applied by Nārada Muni — poverty, or in terms which are particularly relevant to ourselves as aspiring devotees, simple living and high thinking.



## **The Story of Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

The two great demigods Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were sons of the treasurer of the demigods, Kuvera, who was a great devotee of Lord Śiva. By the grace of Lord Śiva, Kuvera's material opulences had no limit. As a rich man's sons often become addicted to wine and women, so these two sons of Kuvera were also addicted to wine and sex. Once, these two demigods, desiring to enjoy, entered the garden of Lord Śiva in the province of Kailāsa on the bank of Mandakini Ganges. There they drank much and engaged in hearing the sweet singing of beautiful women who accompanied them in that garden of fragrant flowers. In an intoxicated condition, they both entered the water of the Ganges, which was full with lotus flowers, and there they began to enjoy the company of the young girls exactly as the male elephant enjoys the female elephants within the water.

While they were thus enjoying themselves in the water, all of a sudden Nārada, the great sage, happened to pass that way. He could understand that the demigods Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were too intoxicated and could not even see that he was passing. The young girls, however, were not so intoxicated as the demigods, and they at once became ashamed at being naked before the great sage Nārada. They began to cover themselves with all haste. The two demigod sons of Kuvera were so intoxicated that they could not appreciate the presence of the sage Nārada and therefore did not cover their bodies. On seeing the two demigods so degraded by intoxication, Nārada desired their welfare, and therefore he exhibited his causeless mercy upon them by cursing them.

Because the great sage was compassionate upon them, he wanted to finish their false enjoyment of intoxication and association with young girls and wanted them to see Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face. He conceived of cursing them as follows. He said that the attraction for material enjoyment is due to an increase of the mode of passion. A person in the material world, when favored by the material opulence of riches, generally becomes addicted to three things — intoxication, sex and gambling. Materially opulent men, being puffed up with the accumulation of wealth, also become so merciless that they indulge in killing animals by opening slaughterhouses. And they think that they themselves will never die. Such foolish persons, forgetting the laws of nature, become overly infatuated with the body. They forget that the material body, even though very much advanced in civilization, up to the position of the demigods, will finally be burned to ashes. And while one is living, whatever the external condition of the body may be, within there is only stool, urine and various kinds of worms. Thus being engaged in jealousy and violence to other bodies, materialists cannot understand the ultimate goal of life, and without knowing this goal of life, they generally glide down to a hellish condition in their next life. Such foolish persons commit all kinds of sinful activities on account of this temporary body, and they are even unable to consider whether this body actually belongs to them. Generally it is said that the body belongs to the persons who feed the body. One might therefore consider whether this body belongs to one personally or to the master to whom one renders service. The master of slaves claims full right to the bodies of the slaves because the master feeds the slaves. It may be questioned then whether the body belongs to the father, who is the seed-giving master of this body, or to the mother, who develops the child's body in her womb.

Foolish persons are engaged in committing all sorts of sins due to the misconception of identifying the material body with the self. But one should be intelligent enough to understand to whom this body belongs. A foolish person indulges in killing other animals to maintain the body, but he does not consider whether this body belongs to him or to his father or mother or maternal grandfather. Sometimes a father gives his daughter in charity to a person with a view of getting back the daughter's child as a son. The body may also belong to a stronger man who forces it to work for him. Sometimes the slave's body is sold to the master on the basis that the body will belong to the master. And at the end of life, the body belongs to the fire, because the body is given to the fire and burned to ashes. Or the body is thrown into the street to be eaten by the dogs and vultures.

Before committing all kinds of sins to maintain the body, one should understand to whom the body belongs. Ultimately it is concluded that the body is a product of material nature, and at the end it merges into material nature; therefore, the conclusion should be that the body belongs to material nature. One should not wrongly think that the body belongs to him. To maintain a false possession, why should one indulge in killing? Why should one kill innocent animals to maintain the body?

When a man is infatuated with the false prestige of opulence, he does not care for any moral instruction, but indulges in wine, women and animal killing. In such circumstances, a poverty-stricken man is often better situated because a poor man thinks of himself in relation to other bodies. A poor man often does not wish to inflict injuries upon other bodies because he can understand more readily that when he himself is injured he feels pain. As such, the great sage Nārada considered that because the demigods Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were so infatuated by false prestige, they should be put into a condition of life devoid of opulence.

A person who has a pinprick in his body does not wish others to be pricked by pins; a considerate man in the life of poverty does not wish others to be also put into that condition. Generally it is seen that one who has risen from a poverty-stricken life and becomes wealthy creates some charitable institution at the end of his life so that other poverty-stricken men might be benefited. In short, a compassionate poor man may consider other's pains and pleasures with empathy. A poor man may be seldom puffed up with false pride, and he may be freed from all kinds of infatuation. He may remain satisfied by whatever he gets for his maintenance by the grace of the Lord.

To remain in the poverty-stricken condition is a kind of austerity. According to Vedic culture, therefore, the brāhmaṇas, as a matter of routine, keep themselves in a poverty-stricken condition to save themselves from the false prestige of material opulence. False prestige due to advancement of material prosperity is a great impediment for spiritual emancipation. A poverty-stricken man cannot become unnaturally fat by eating more and more. And on account of not being able to eat more than he requires, his senses are not very turbulent. When the senses are not very turbulent, he cannot become violent.

Another advantage of poverty is that a saintly person can easily enter a poor man's house, and thus the poor man can take advantage of the saintly person's association. A very opulent man does not allow anyone to enter his house; therefore, the saintly person cannot enter.

According to the Vedic system, a saintly person takes the position of a mendicant so that on the plea of begging something from the householder, he can enter any house. The householder, who has usually forgotten everything about spiritual advancement because he is busy maintaining family affairs, can be benefited by the association of a saintly person. There is a great chance for the poor man to become liberated through association with a saint. Of what use are persons who are puffed up with material opulence and prestige if they are bereft of the association of saintly persons and devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

The great sage Nārada thereafter thought that it was his duty to put those demigods into a condition where they could not be falsely proud of their material opulence and prestige. Nārada was compassionate and wanted to save them from their fallen life. They were in the mode of darkness, and being therefore unable to control their senses, they were addicted to sex life. It was the duty of a saintly person like Nārada to save them from their abominable condition. In animal life, the animal has no sense to understand that he is naked. But Kuvera was the treasurer of the demigods, a very responsible man, and Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were two of his sons. And yet they became so animalistic and irresponsible that they could not understand, due to intoxication, that they were naked. To cover the lower part of the body is a principle of human civilization, and when men or women forget this principle, they become degraded. Nārada therefore thought that the best punishment for them was to make them immovable living entities, or trees. Trees are, by nature's laws, immovable. Although trees are covered by the mode of ignorance, they cannot do harm. The great sage Nārada thought it fitting that, although the brothers, by his mercy, would be punished to become trees, they continue to keep their memory to be able to know why they were being punished. After changing the body, a living entity generally forgets his previous life, but in special cases, by the grace of the Lord, as with Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, one can remember.

Sage Nārada therefore contemplated that the two demigods should remain for one hundred years, in the time of the demigods, in the form of trees, and after that they would be fortunate enough to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, face to face, by His causeless mercy. And thus they would be again promoted to the life of the demigods and great devotees of the Lord.

After this, the great sage Nārada returned to his abode known as Nārāyanāśrāma, and the two demigods turned into trees, known as twin arjuna trees. The two demigods were favored by the causeless mercy of Nārada and given a chance to grow in Nanda's courtyard and see Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face.

Although the child Kṛṣṇa was bound up to the wooden mortar, He began to proceed towards the twin trees in order to fulfill the prophecy of His great devotee Nārada. Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Nārada was His great devotee and that the trees standing before Him as twin arjuna trees were actually the sons of Kuvera. "I must now fulfill the words of My great devotee Nārada," He thought. Then He began to proceed through the passage between the two trees. Although He was able to pass through the passage, the large wooden mortar stuck horizontally between the trees. Taking advantage of this, Lord Kṛṣṇa began to pull the rope which was tied to the mortar. As soon as He pulled, with great strength, the two trees, with all branches and limbs, fell down immediately with a great sound. Out of the broken, fallen

trees came two great personalities, shining like blazing fire. All sides became illuminated and beautiful by their presence. The two purified bodies immediately came before child Kṛṣṇa and bowed down to offer their respects and prayers.

## VATSĀSŪRA

Vatsāsūra (the calf demon) represents a childish mentality, mischievous and too easily influenced by bad association. It gives rise to a type of greediness for sense gratification through which one becomes absorbed in materialism.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta in his last birth he had been a demon, Pramila, the son of Muru. He conquered the demigods in battle and then entered the sage Vasīṣṭha's āśrama, and saw Vasīṣṭha's cow named Nandini. Pramila wanted that cow so he disguised himself as a brāhmaṇa and tried to beg her. The cow spoke and said "You are a demon in disguise. For this offense you will have to appear as a calf." Pramila then surrendered to Vasīṣṭha and begged for mercy, and Vasīṣṭha said that after taking birth as a calf he would be liberated by the Lord.

**The Story of Vatsāsūra**  
(from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

Once, when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were playing on the bank of the Yamunā, a demon of the name Vatsāsūra assumed the shape of a calf and came there intending to kill the brothers. By taking the shape of a calf, the demon could mingle with other calves. Kṛṣṇa, however, specifically noticed this, and He immediately told Balarāma about the entrance of the demon. Both brothers then followed him and sneaked up upon him. Kṛṣṇa caught hold of the demon-calf by the two hind legs and tail, whipped him around very forcibly and threw him up into a tree. The demon lost his life and fell down from the top of the tree to the ground. When the demon lay dead on the ground, all the playmates of Kṛṣṇa congratulated Him, "Well done, well done," and the demigods in the sky began to shower flowers with great satisfaction. In this way, the maintainers of the complete creation, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, used to take care of the calves in the morning every day, and thus They enjoyed Their childhood pastimes as cowherd boys in Vṛndāvana.

## **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura** **on Vatsāsūra** **(from The Harmonist)**

He represents evils that are peculiar to boyhood. The neophyte is extremely susceptible to such evils. They can only be eliminated by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. If one engages in Kṛṣṇa's service they will be completely eradicated at an early stage.

### **(Point 1)**

There is an English proverb that sowing of wild oats is inevitable at a young age. The term Puritanism was originally coined to express the protest of boys and young men against any undue curtailment of the scope of enjoyment that should be regarded as permissible to them. Boys and young men claim the right to be merry and frolicsome. There is nothing objectionable and much that is of positive value in the display of these juvenile qualities. If the attempt be made to stifle this innocent play of the boyish nature under the impression that it is an exhibition of sensuousness and for that reason is as harmful as similar conduct on the part of grown-up persons, the result is not assurance but discouragement of juvenile innocence.

### **(Point 2)**

There are indeed black sheep and these should not be allowed to taint the whole flock, and for this purpose caretakers with full sense of their delicate responsibility are required to keep watch over them for ensuring the innocence of boyhood and youth without killing their joys. But with every precaution it has been found impossible to attain this double purpose. The scriptures say that it is not in the power of man to ensure the immunity of boys and girls from the blight of sensuousness except by means of the service of Kṛṣṇa.

This is declared to be the only effective and natural method. Let the boys be exposed to the attraction of the Cowherd Boy of Vraja. They will soon learn to pick up His company. They will easily realize that Kṛṣṇa can alone save them from every form of danger to which they are exposed by the 'right' of their juvenile nature.

**(Point 3)**

Why should this be so? There is a very simple reason. Kṛṣṇa does not limit His service only to the middle-aged and old people. The Puritanic idea of Godhead is a conception which owes its origin to persons who are elderly although honestly enough anxious to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth. But if you scratch the thin coating on the surface of their sage and sober scheme as befitting their age you only detect the rotten arrangement for securing the maximum of sensuous enjoyment for those very children who are to be brought up in this virtuous way. If the child is allowed to spoil his health in boyhood, think these righteous people, he will not be in a position later to enjoy the legitimate pleasures of the grown-up man. Unless the young man husbands his resources of sense gratification he will also be a victim of premature old age. It is a policy of expediency of postponing a small present measure of enjoyment for reaping a much larger measure of it through the long tracts of the years to come.

**(Point 4)**

The spurious brahmacharya ideal as misconceived by its worldly supporters embodies this Puritanic outlook. The scriptures indeed, enjoin that everyone should serve Godhead from the womb. This is the real meaning of brahmacharya. The ascetic practices that have come to attach themselves to the conception were interpolated into the scriptures in order to ensure worldly values by this form of the empiric method. The scheme requires that the laws of the growth of the physical and mental bodies should be observed and followed. Nature is regarded as the kind mother who favours only those of her children who cultivate the filial habit of prying into her secrets. Nature is supposed to be unable to avoid divulging her secrets to her inquisitive children although she is well aware that her children will exploit this knowledge for troubling her by harnessing her to their service. In other words it is also assumed to be the duty of the kind mother to consent to put herself in chains in order to minister to the sensuous appetites of her worthier children. Nature is assumed to be able to do good to her children only by submitting to be the victim of their lust.

The practices of asceticism are really conceived in the epicurian spirit. The ascetic dreams of obtaining the mastery over nature by the method of controlling the senses. If the senses grown callous to the temptations of the world the ascetic thinks that he will have less chance of falling into the power of nature. He has an idea that when he will have perfected these defensive arrangements he will have become the real master of the situation. The brahmacharya, according to the ascetic point of view, is to pass through a period of training in sever abstinence with his guru in order to be fitted to discharge the duties of citizenship, which will make a great demand on his nerves and muscles with greater thoroughness. There is no reference to the service of God or to any spiritual issue.

We have had many occasions to explain that the spiritual is transcendental. No mundane consideration can form any part of spiritual training or conduct. It is not a spiritual affair to be even able to control one's carnal desires. Such self-control is indeed automatically produced by the awakening of the soul. But self-control is not therefore a function of the soul. The soul has nothing to do with the senses. The soul desires neither sensuality or sexual purity. The soul is not a mere mortal being. If brahmacharya means a method of gaining moral power it is wholly a mundane affair and is as such not only of no concern to the soul but is positively obstructive to spiritual well-being.

This is bound to be so because the point of view of the soul is all-embracing. The soul rejects nothing. He regards nothing as redundant or useless. The soul has a use for everything. But the soul sees everything as it is really related to himself and to other entities. Everything is absolutely good on the platform of the soul. The scriptural brahmacarya institution accordingly means service of the Brahman i.e., the Reality Who is always the Great and always the Help. The servant of the Absolute is always free from delusion.

Morality is a valued commodity only on the plane of delusion. But it has no locus standi on the plane where the conditions of existence are perfect.

Till the service of Godhead is realized it is impossible to be really moral in the sense of being needlessly and perfectly virtuous. If a person is causelessly virtuous in the worldly sense he or she will be an easy subject of exploitation for all the cunning rascals of this world. This is so because morality as conceived by the empiricist has a reference to the physical body and the changeable mind and is therefore liable to change so long as the conditions are not radically altered.

The empiric contriver of juvenile welfare strives to produce conditions that will favour the growth and continuance of the empiric moral aptitude. These artificial conditions are confidently enough expected to be likely to prove of permanent benefit to those young persons who are brought up under these improvised conditions. But the brand of morality that has to be produced by the artificial manipulation of the natural environment is likely to prove of little value when the props are withdrawn. The analogy of needed protection for the growth of delicate plants does not apply as such plants are always exotics. Hot-house morality is thus a misnomer and a delusion in relation to the soul.

Brahmacarya fully embodies the substantive ideal of spiritual purity distortedly reflected in the empirical ethical conception. Brahmacarya means service of the absolute. Juvenile innocence is not the monopoly of juvenile persons, any more than juvenile naughtiness. They are animal entities corresponding to analagous spiritual qualities. The spiritual activities are perfectly wholesome. They include all value and harmonize all disruptive conflict both of which are so utterly wanting in their mundane perverted reflections to be found in this world.

It is not to be supposed that everything is done by Kṛṣṇa and there is nothing to be done by ourselves in any matter. As a matter of fact there is a division of parts to be played in functions that relate even to ourselves as between us and Kṛṣṇa. Certain duties are allotted to us. Certain other functions are reserved to Kṛṣṇa. Vatsāsura cannot be killed by us. He is too strong for us. This is in keeping with the experience of most educationists. Juvenile innocence is a necessity for both young and old. One cannot acquire it by any artificial process. No person can also ordinarily retain it after boyhood and youth. This is the real tragedy of human life.

**(Point 5)**

Juvenile innocence is desired on account of its enjoyability. But it should properly be desired only for the service of Kṛṣṇa. The parent can have no higher duty than to employ his

boy in the service of Kṛṣṇa by putting him under the proper teacher, the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. No parent is entitled to undertake the charge of spiritual training of his own boy. He is unfitted for the task by his mundane relationship. Once such relationship is grasped to be an obstacle in the way of juvenile training the necessity of sending the boy at the earliest opportunity to the proper teacher becomes self-evident. If the parent continues to retain his parental interest in the boy after he has been put into school for the above purpose he will only be standing in the way of the boy's progress. The training is not for the boy only, but it is a training for his parents as well.

**(Point 6)**

Boyish naughtiness is apt to be overlooked, nay encouraged, under the impression that it is nature to be naughty. This opinion overlooks the all-important factor that the training is intended for the welfare of the soul of the boy and not for the juvenile body or mind. The soul does not require to be treated with indulgence. He is neither young nor old in the worldly sense. The body and mind of the boy have to be employed in the interest of the soul. Boyish naughtiness and boyish virtue are alike unnecessary for the soul. It is necessary for the soul to be freed from either form of worldliness. The mundane nature of the boy is no less a clog to the wheel of spiritual progress than the adult nature of the grown-up worldling. The process of training is identical in the two cases as the soul is neither young nor old.

Much irrational pity is wasted on boys who are employed from early infancy in the full-time service of Kṛṣṇa, on exactly the same terms as grown up persons. Persons who affect much kindness of disposition towards juvenile frailties profess to be unable to understand why juvenile offenses are taken as seriously in spiritual training as those of adult persons.

But the teacher in charge of the spiritual training of boys can perform his duty by them only as the special agent of Kṛṣṇa. If such a teacher chooses to confide in his own devices he is bound to be undeceived at every step. What he has really to do is to use the boy constantly in the service of Kṛṣṇa. For this purpose it is necessary for the teacher himself to be a full-time servant of Kṛṣṇa. It is only by abstaining from anything that is not distinctively commanded by Kṛṣṇa or His real agent, the guru, that the spiritual teacher of the boys can hope to be of any help to his pupils.

The so-called science of pedagogies requires to be thoroughly overhauled in order to afford a free hand to the bonafide devotee of Kṛṣṇa in managing young persons. The present arrangements based on the experience of this world and on the hypotheses of an absolute causal relationship connecting each phenomenon with the rest, by leaving out the reference to Kṛṣṇa can only realize the tragic part of a quack lightly administering all the wrong drugs to a parent smitten with a mortal illness.

The King of atheists, Kāṁsa, is always setting the demon Vatsāsura to corrupt and destroy the boys. The teacher of the young employed by the atheistic society is verily the agent of Kāṁsa. The atheist is afraid lest the boys are employed in the service of Kṛṣṇa. He is naturally anxious to prevent any acquaintance of the boys with Kṛṣṇa. But if a boy has really found Kṛṣṇa the nefarious activities of the empiric teacher are powerless to destroy his innocence. If such a teacher perseveres in the fruitless attempt he will thereby quickly bring about his own utter moral degradation and his sorry trick will also be fully exposed.



Because in this case it is Kṛṣṇa Himself who opposes his wicked activities on behalf of his protégé.

As a matter of fact the concern of empiric educationists for ensuring immunity of boys from the blighting effects of precocity is altogether hypocritical. The empiric pedant only wants the boy to grow a body and mind that will ensure greater and longer scope for their worldly use. He does not want that the worldly use of his body and mind should be curtailed in any way. In other words he is on principle opposed to the employment of the healthy body and sound mind for any spiritual purpose. But why does he want a healthy body for his nasty purpose? Is it only in order to be able to have the pleasure of a more prolonged wastage and the rake's progress in downright earnest? A sickly body is not really harmful to a person who has no higher object in view than undiluted sense gratification.

### **Points from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's article:**

1. Children are by nature playful, and this should not be stifled.
2. The only effective way to protect children from becoming contaminated by sensuality is to engage them in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, not just restrict them.
3. The object of the Puritanic idea is to stop children engaging in sinful activities so they can enjoy those same activities more when they are adults.
4. There is also a spurious idea that young boy's should be trained as morally upright brahmacaris so that in the future they will have the strength to carry out worldly duties very nicely — but "morality is a valued commodity only on the plane of delusion."
5. Parents must hand their sons over to properly qualified spiritual teachers. This is also a type of training for the parents.
6. "The mundane nature of the boy is no less a clog to the wheel of spiritual progress than the adult nature of the grown-up worldling. The process of training is identical in the two cases as the soul is neither young nor old."

## **BAKĀSŪRA**

Bakāsūra represents cunning duplicity, deceptive behaviour and hypocrisy, the outward manifestations of a false lifestyle of cheating activities.

According to the Brahmā-vaivarta Purāna, in his last life he was Suhotra, a Gandharva disciple of Durvāsā Muni. Along with his three brothers (who became Pralamba and Keṣi) he performed austerities at Puṣkara-tīrtha. Once, the three of them were picking lotuses at the celestial lake Citra-sarovara for offering to Lord Kṛṣṇa, when they were arrested by servants of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva received them very nicely, but told them that he had promised Parvati that he would curse anyone who took lotuses from that lake, as she had vowed to offer a thousand lotuses a day to Lord Kṛṣṇa for 100 days, and there were exactly 100,000 lotuses there, some of which they had now picked. So they had to appear as these demons, but they were then killed by Kṛṣṇa and liberated.

## **The Story of Bakāsūra** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

All the cowherd boys would daily go to the bank of the River Yamunā to water their calves. Usually, when the calves drank water from the Yamunā, the boys also drank. One day, after drinking, when they were sitting on the bank of the river, they saw a huge animal which looked something like a duck and was as big as a hill. Its top was as strong as a thunderbolt. When they saw that unusual animal, they became afraid of it. The name of this beast was Bakāsūra, and he was a friend of Kāṁsa's. He appeared on the scene suddenly and immediately attacked Kṛṣṇa with his pointed, sharp beaks and quickly swallowed Him up. When Kṛṣṇa was thus swallowed, all the boys, headed by Balarāma, became almost breathless, as if they had died.

But when the Bakāsūra demon was swallowing up Kṛṣṇa, he felt a burning fiery sensation in his throat. This was due to the glowing effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. The demon quickly threw Kṛṣṇa up and tried to kill Him by pinching Him in his beaks. Bakāsūra did not know that although Kṛṣṇa was playing the part of a child of Nanda Mahārāja, He was still the original father of Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe. The child of mother Yaśoda, who is the reservoir of pleasure for the demigods and who is the maintainer of saintly persons, caught hold of the beaks of the great gigantic duck and, before His cowherd boyfriends, bifurcated his mouth, just as a child very easily splits a blade of grass. From the sky, the denizens of the heavenly planets showered flowers like the cameli, the most fragrant of all flowers, as a token of their congratulations. Accompanying the showers of flowers was a vibration of bugles, drums and conchshells.

## **AGHĀSŪRA**

Aghāsūra represents the mentality of cruelty to others, and violence and causing trouble to others out of envy. This attitude is an offense against the chanting of the holy names. It may also manifest in the form of an unwillingness to help other living beings by giving them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta in his previous life he was Agha, a son of Śaṅkhāsura. He had a very attractive body, of which he was very proud. One time he saw the muni Aṣṭavakra, whose body is disfigured, and he laughed and said "Who is this ugly person?" The sage cursed him to become the ugliest snake on earth. Agha then fell at his feet and begged for mercy, so the sage blessed him that he would be delivered by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

## **The Story of Aghāsūra** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

The demon Aghāsūra appeared before Kṛṣṇa and His friends. Aghāsūra happened to be the younger brother of Pūtanā and Bakāsūra, and he thought, "Kṛṣṇa has killed my brother and sister. Now I shall kill Him along with all His friends and calves." Aghāsūra was instigated by Kāṁsa, so he had come with determination. Aghāsūra also began to think that when he would offer grains and water in memory of his brother and sister and kill Kṛṣṇa and all the cowherd boys, then automatically all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana would die. Generally, for the householders, the children are the life and breath force. When all the children die, then naturally the parents also die on account of strong affection for them.

Aghāsūra, thus deciding to kill all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, expanded himself by the yogic siddhi called mahimā. The demons are generally expert in achieving almost all kinds of mystic powers. In the yoga system, by the perfection called mahimā-siddhi, one can expand himself as he desires. The demon Aghāsūra expanded himself up to eight miles and assumed the shape of a very fat serpent. Having attained this wonderful body, he stretched his mouth open just like a mountain cave. Desiring to swallow all the boys at once, including Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he sat on the path.

The demon in the shape of a big fat serpent expanded his lips from land to sky; his lower lip was touching the ground, and his upper lip was touching the clouds. His jaws appeared like a big mountain cave, without limitation, and his teeth appeared just like mountain summits. His tongue appeared to be a broad traffic way, and he was breathing just like a hurricane. The fire of his eyes was blazing. At first the boys thought that the demon was a statue, but after examining it, they saw that it was more like a big serpent lying down on the road and widening his mouth. The boys began to talk among themselves: "This figure appears to be a great animal, and he is sitting in such a posture just to swallow us all. Just see--is it not a big snake that has widened his mouth to eat all of us?"

One of them said, "Yes, what you say is true. This animal's upper lip appears to be just like the sunshine, and its lower lip is just like the reflection of red sunshine on the ground. Dear friends, just look to the right- and left-hand side of the mouth of the animal. Its mouth appears to be like a big mountain cave, and its height cannot be estimated. The chin is also raised just like a mountain summit. That long highway appears to be its tongue, and inside the mouth it is as dark as in a mountain cave. The hot wind that is blowing like a hurricane is his breathing, and the fishy bad smell coming out from his mouth is the smell of his intestines. "Then they further consulted among themselves: "If we all at one time entered into the mouth of this great serpent, how could it possibly swallow all of us? And even if it were to swallow all of us at once, it could not swallow Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will immediately kill him, as He did Bakāsūra." Talking in this way, all the boys looked at the beautiful lotuslike face of Kṛṣṇa, and they began to clap and smile. And so they marched forward and entered the mouth of the gigantic serpent.

Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supersoul within everyone's heart, could understand that the big statuesque figure was a demon. While He was planning how to stop the destruction of His intimate friends, all the boys along with their cows and calves entered the mouth of the serpent. But Kṛṣṇa did not enter. The demon was awaiting Kṛṣṇa's entrance, and he was thinking, "Everyone has entered except Kṛṣṇa, who has killed my brother and sister. "Kṛṣṇa is the assurance of safety to everyone. But when He saw that His friends were already out of His hands and were lying within the belly of a great serpent, He became, momentarily, aggrieved. He was also struck with wonder how the external energy works so wonderfully. He then began to consider how the demon should be killed and how He could save the boys and calves. Although there was no factual concern on Kṛṣṇa's part, He was thinking like that. Finally, after some deliberation, He also entered the mouth of the demon. When Kṛṣṇa entered, all the demigods, who had gathered to see the fun and who were hiding within the clouds, began to express their feelings with the words "Alas! Alas!" At the same time, all the friends of Aghāsūra, especially Kāmsa, who were all accustomed to eating flesh and blood, began to express their jubilation, understanding that Kṛṣṇa had also entered the mouth of the demon.

While the demon was trying to smash Kṛṣṇa and His companions, Kṛṣṇa heard the demigods crying, "Alas, alas," and He immediately began to expand Himself within the throat of the demon. Although he had a gigantic body, the demon choked by the expanding of Kṛṣṇa. His big eyes moved violently, and he quickly suffocated. His life-air could not come out from any source, and ultimately it burst out of a hole in the upper part of his skull. Thus his life-air passed off. After the demon dropped dead, Kṛṣṇa, with His transcendental glance alone, brought all the boys and calves back to consciousness and came with them out of the mouth of the demon. While Kṛṣṇa was within the mouth of Aghāsūra, the demon's spirit soul came out like a dazzling light, illuminating all directions, and waited in the sky. As soon as Kṛṣṇa with His calves and friends came out of the mouth of the demon, that glittering effulgent light immediately merged into the body of Kṛṣṇa within the vision of all the demigods.

## **BRAHMĀ-VIMOHANA-LĪLĀ**

The pastime of the bewilderment of Lord Brahmā and his subsequent purification frees us from the cultivation of fruitive activities (karma) and speculative knowledge (jñāna). It also rectifies the offense of disrespecting the Lord's mādhyama feature in favour of His aiśvarya feature.

### **The Story of**

## **Brahmā-vimohana-līlā** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

After saving His friends from the mouth of Aghāsūra and after killing the demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa brought His friends to the bank of Yamuna and addressed them as follows: "My dear friends, just see how this spot is very nice for taking lunch and playing on the soft, sandy Yamunā bank. You can see how the lotus flowers in the water are beautifully blown and how they distribute their flavor all around. The chirping of the birds along with cooing of the peacocks, surrounded by the whispering of the leaves in the trees, combine and present sound vibrations that echo one another. And this just enriches the beautiful scenery created by the trees here. Let us have our lunch in this spot because it is already late and we are feeling hungry. Let the calves remain near us, and let them drink water from the Yamunā. While we engage in our lunch-taking, the calves may engage in eating the soft grasses that are in this spot.' "

On hearing this proposal from Kṛṣṇa, all the boys became very glad and said, "Certainly, let us all sit down here to take our lunch." They then let loose the calves to eat the soft grass. Sitting down on the ground and keeping Kṛṣṇa in the center, they began to open their different boxes brought from home. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seated in the center of the circle, and all the boys kept their faces toward Him. They ate and constantly enjoyed seeing the Lord face to face. Kṛṣṇa appeared to be the whorl of a lotus flower, and the boys surrounding Him appeared to be its different petals. The boys collected flowers, leaves of flowers and the bark of trees and placed them under their different boxes, and thus they began to eat their lunch, keeping company with Kṛṣṇa. While taking lunch, each boy began to manifest different kinds of relations with Kṛṣṇa, and they enjoyed each other's company with joking words. While Lord Kṛṣṇa was thus enjoying lunch with His friends, His flute was pushed within the belt of His cloth, and His bugle and cane were pushed in on the left-hand side of His cloth. He was holding a lump of foodstuff prepared with yogurt, butter, rice and pieces of fruit salad in His left palm, which could be seen through His petallike finger-joints. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who accepts the results of all great sacrifices, was laughing and joking, enjoying lunch with His friends in Vṛndāvana. And thus the scene was being observed by the demigods from heaven. As for the boys, they were simply enjoying transcendental bliss in the company of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

At that time, the calves that were pasturing nearby entered into the deep forest, allured by new grasses, and gradually went out of sight. When the boys saw that the calves were not nearby, they became afraid for their safety, and they immediately cried out, "Kṛṣṇa!" Kṛṣṇa is the killer of fear personified. Everyone is afraid of fear personified, but fear personified is afraid of Kṛṣṇa. By crying out the word "Kṛṣṇa," the boys at once transcended the fearful situation. Out of His great affection, Kṛṣṇa did not want His friends to give up their pleasing lunch engagement and go searching for the calves. He therefore said, "My dear friends, you need not interrupt your lunch. Go on enjoying. I am going personally where the calves are." Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately started to search out the calves in the caves and bushes. He searched in the mountain holes and in the forests, but nowhere could He find them.

At the time when Aghāsūra was killed and the demigods were looking on the incident with great surprise, Brahmā, who was born of the lotus flower growing out of the navel of Viṣṇu, also came to see. He was surprised how a little boy like Kṛṣṇa could act so wonderfully. Although he was informed that the little cowherd boy was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he wanted to see more glorified pastimes of the Lord, and thus he stole all the calves and cowherd boys and took them to a different place. Lord Kṛṣṇa, therefore, in spite of searching for the calves, could not find them, and He even lost His boyfriends on the bank of the Yamunā where they had been taking their lunch. In the form of a cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa was very little in comparison to Brahmā, but because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He could immediately understand that all the calves and boys had been stolen by Brahmā. Kṛṣṇa thought, "Brahmā has taken away all the boys and calves. How can I alone return to Vṛndāvana? The mothers will be aggrieved!"

Therefore in order to satisfy the mothers of His friends as well as to convince Brahmā of the supremacy of the Personality of Godhead, He immediately expanded Himself as the cowherd boys and calves. In the Vedas it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead expands Himself in so many living entities by His energy. Therefore it was not very difficult for Him to expand Himself again into so many boys and calves. He expanded Himself to become exactly like the boys, who were of all different features, facial and bodily construction, and who were different in their clothing and ornaments and in their behavior and personal activities. In other words, everyone has different tastes; being an individual soul, each person has entirely different activities and behavior. Yet Kṛṣṇa exactly expanded Himself into all the different positions of the individual boys. He also became the calves, who were also of different sizes, colors, activities, etc. This was possible because everything is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa's energy. In the Viṣṇu Purāna it is said, *parāsyā brāhmaṇaḥ śaktiḥ*. Whatever we actually see in the cosmic manifestation--be it matter or the activities of the living entities--is simply an expansion of the energies of the Lord, as heat and light are the different expansions of fire.

Thus expanding Himself as the boys and calves in their individual capacities, and surrounded by such expansions of Himself, Kṛṣṇa entered the village of Vṛndāvana. The residents had no knowledge of what had happened. After entering the village, Vṛndāvana, all the calves entered their respective cowsheds, and the boys also went to their respective mothers and homes.

The mothers of the boys heard the vibration of their flutes before their entrance, and to receive them, they came out of their homes and embraced them. And out of maternal affection, milk was flowing from their breasts, and they allowed the boys to drink it. However, their offering was not exactly to their boys but to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who had expanded Himself into such boys. This was another chance for all the mothers of Vṛndāvana to feed the Supreme Personality of Godhead with their own milk. Therefore not only did Lord Kṛṣṇa give Yaśoda the chance to feed Him, but this time He gave the chance to all the elderly gopis.

All the boys began to deal with their mothers as usual, and the mothers also, on the approach of evening, began to bathe their respective children, decorate them with tilaka and ornaments and give them necessary food after the day's labor. The cows also, who were away in the pasturing ground, returned in the evening and began to call their respective

calves. The calves immediately came to their mothers, and the mothers began to lick the bodies of the calves. These relations between the cows and the gopis with their calves and boys remained unchanged, although actually the original calves and boys were not there. Actually the cows' affection for their calves and the elderly gopis' affection for the boys causelessly increased. Their affection increased naturally, even though the calves and boys were not their offspring. Although the cows and elderly gopis of Vṛndāvana had greater affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own offspring, after this incident their affection for their offspring increased exactly as it did for Kṛṣṇa. For one year continually, Kṛṣṇa Himself expanded as the calves and cowherd boys and was present in the pasturing ground.

As it is stated in the Bhagavad Gītā, Kṛṣṇa's expansion is situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. Similarly, instead of expanding Himself as the Supersoul, He expanded Himself as a portion of calves and cowherd boys for one continuous year.

One day, when Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, was maintaining the calves in the forest, They saw some cows grazing on the top of Govardhana Hill. The cows could see down into the valley where the calves were being taken care of by the boys. Suddenly, on sighting their calves, the cows began to run towards them. They leaped downhill with joined front and rear legs. The cows were so melted with affection for their calves that they did not care about the rough path from the top of Govardhana Hill down to the pasturing ground. They began to approach the calves with their milk bags full of milk, and they raised their tails upwards. When they were coming down the hill, their milk bags were pouring milk on the ground out of intense maternal affection for the calves, although they were not their own calves. These cows had their own calves, and the calves that were grazing beneath Govardhana Hill were larger; they were not expected to drink milk directly from the milk bag but were satisfied with the grass. Yet all the cows came immediately and began to lick their bodies, and the calves also began to suck milk from the milk bags. There appeared to be a great bondage of affection between the cows and calves.

When the cows were running down from the top of Govardhana Hill, the men who were taking care of them tried to stop them. Elderly cows are taken care of by the men, and the calves are taken care of by the boys; and as far as possible, the calves are kept separate from the cows, so that the calves do not drink all the available milk. Therefore the men who were taking care of the cows on the top of Govardhana Hill tried to stop them, but they failed. Baffled by their failure, they were feeling ashamed and angry. They were very unhappy, but when they came down and saw their children taking care of the calves, they all of a sudden became very affectionate toward the children. It was very astonishing. Although the men came down disappointed, baffled and angry, as soon as they saw their own children, their hearts melted with great affection. At once their anger, dissatisfaction and unhappiness disappeared. They began to show paternal love for the children, and with great affection they lifted them in their arms and embraced them. They began to smell their children's heads and enjoy their company with great happiness. After embracing their children, the men again took the cows back to the top of Govardhana Hill. Along the way they began to think of their children, and affectionate tears fell from their eyes.

When Balarāma saw this extraordinary exchange of affection between the cows and their calves and between the fathers and their children — when neither the calves nor the children needed so much care — He began to wonder why this extraordinary thing

happened. He was astonished to see all the residents of Vṛndāvana so affectionate for their own children, exactly as they had been for Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the cows had grown affectionate for their calves--as much as for Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma therefore concluded that the extraordinary show of affection was something mystical, either performed by the demigods or by some powerful man. Otherwise, how could this wonderful change take place? He concluded that this mystical change must have been caused by Kṛṣṇa, whom Balarāma considered His worshipable Personality of Godhead. He thought, "It was arranged by Kṛṣṇa, and even I could not check its mystic power." Thus Balarāma understood that all those boys and calves were only expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

Balarāma inquired from Kṛṣṇa about the actual situation. He said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, in the beginning I thought that all these cows, calves and cowherd boys were either great sages and saintly persons or demigods, but at the present it appears that they are actually Your expansions. They are all You; You Yourself are playing as the calves and cows and boys. What is the mystery of this situation? Where have those other calves and cows and boys gone? And why are You expanding Yourself as the cows, calves and boys? Will You kindly tell Me what is the cause?" At the request of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa briefly explained the whole situation: how the calves and boys were stolen by Brahmā and how He was concealing the incident by expanding Himself so people would not know that the original cows, calves, and boys were missing.

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were talking, Brahmā returned after a moment's interval (according to the duration of his life). We have information of Lord Brahmā's duration of life from the Bhagavad Gītā: 1,000 times the duration of the four ages, or 1,000 x 4,300,000, comprise Brahmā's twelve hours. Similarly, one moment of Brahmā is equal to one year of our solar calculation. After one moment of Brahmā's calculation, Brahmā came back to see the fun caused by his stealing the boys and calves. But he was also afraid that he was playing with fire. Kṛṣṇa was his master, and he had played mischief for fun by taking away His calves and boys. He was really anxious, so he did not stay away very long; he came back after a moment (of his calculation). He saw that all the boys, calves and cows were playing with Kṛṣṇa in the same way as when he had come upon them, although he was confident that he had taken them and made them lie down asleep under the spell of his mystic power. Brahmā began to think, "All the boys, calves and cows were taken away by me, and I know they are still sleeping. How is it that a similar batch of cows, boys and calves is playing with Kṛṣṇa? Is it that they are not influenced by my mystic power? Have they been playing continually for one year with Kṛṣṇa?" Brahmā tried to understand who they were and how they were uninfluenced by his mystic power, but he could not ascertain it. In other words, he himself came under the spell of his own mystic power.

## **DHENUKĀSŪRA**

Dhenukāsūra represents ignorance of knowledge of the soul through gross materialistic intelligence, or jackass-like foolishness.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta, in his previous life he was a son of Bali Mahārāja named Sāhasika. He offended Durvāsā Muni by disturbing him when the muni was meditating, by



making a lot of noise while he was enjoying with 10,000 women on Mt Gandhamādana. Durvāsā cursed him to become an ass, saying: "Fool! Ass-like person! Become an ass! O demon, after 400,000 years, in transcendental circle of Mathūra, in the sacred forest of Talavāna, you will attain liberation by Lord Balarāma's hand." He could not be killed by Kṛṣṇa because He had given His word to Prahlāda Mahārāja that He would not kill any of his family members.

### **Some Special Considerations Regarding the Demons Killed by Lord Balarāma**

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura explains in Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta: "There are two demons killed by Śrī Baladeva — but the contaminations they represent will have to be removed by dint of the devotee's own endeavours. This is one of the secret mysteries of Vraja-bhakti.

"The jack-ass demon Dhenukāsūra represents the bad mentality of overburdened load-carrying, and the Pralambāsūra demon represents lust for the company of the opposite sex, as well as the desire for profit, adoration and distinction. When a devotee endeavours with enthusiasm to remove these contaminations, then, by Lord Balarāma's mercy they will be cast far away. Dhenukāsūra causes complete and total ignorance of one's eternal identity; it also stimulates foolish misconceptions about the eternal nature of the holy name of the Lord, plus it misdirects one with delusions about what is actually worshipable. These contaminations must be cast out through great endeavour on the part of the devotee.

"The methods of the process of purification are very deep and mysterious; therefore it is necessary to learn about them directly from a bonafide spiritual master."

Teacher's note: Lord Balarāma is the original guru, and those who are bonafide spiritual masters are empowered by Him. When the aspiring devotee takes shelter of the spiritual master he or she receives some of that transcendental śakti and is thereby able to overcome the influence of Dhenukāsūra.

### **The Story of Dhenukāsūra (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

While Kṛṣṇa was thus engaged in exhibiting His internal potency along with the supermost fortunate friends, there occurred another chance for Him to exhibit the superhuman powers of Godhead. His most intimate friends Śrīdāma, Subāla and Stokakṛṣṇa began to address Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great love and affection thus: "Dear Balarāma, You are very powerful; Your arms are very strong. Dear Kṛṣṇa, You are very expert in killing all kinds of disturbing demons. Will You kindly note that just near this place there is a big forest of the name Talavāna. This forest is full of palm trees, and all the trees are filled with fruits. Some are falling down, and some of them are very ripe even in the trees. It is a very nice place, but because of a great demon, Dhenukāsūra, it is very difficult to go there. No one can reach the trees to collect the fruits. Dear Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, this demon is present there in the

form of an ass, and he is surrounded by similar demon friends who assume the same shape. All of them are very strong, so it is very difficult to approach this place. Dear brothers, You are the only persons who can kill such demons. Other than You, no one can go there for fear of being killed. Not even animals go there, and no birds are sleeping there; they have all left. One can only appreciate the sweet aroma that is coming from that place. It appears that up until now, no one has tasted the sweet fruits there, either on the tree or on the ground. Dear Kṛṣṇa, to tell You frankly, we are very attracted by this sweet aroma. Dear Balarāma, let us all go there and enjoy these fruits. The aroma of the fruits is now spread everywhere. Don't You smell it from here?"

When Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were thus petitioned by Their smiling, intimate friends, They were inclined to please them, and They began to proceed towards the forest, surrounded by all Their friends. Immediately upon entering the Talavāna, Balarāma began to yank the trees with His arms, exhibiting the strength of an elephant. Because of this jerking, all the ripe fruits fell down on the ground. Upon hearing the sound of the falling fruits, the demon Dhenukāsūra, who was living there in the form of an ass, began to approach with great force, shaking the whole field so that all the trees began to move as if there were an earthquake. The demon appeared first before Balarāma and began to kick His chest with his hind legs. At first, Balarāma did not say anything, but the demon with great anger began to kick Him again more vehemently. This time Balarāma immediately caught hold of the legs of the ass with one hand and, wheeling him around, threw him into the treetops. While he was being wheeled around by Balarāma, the demon lost his life. Balarāma threw the demon into the biggest palm tree about, and the demon's body was so heavy that the palm tree fell upon other trees, and several fell down. It appeared as if a great hurricane had passed through the forest, and all the trees were falling down, one after another. This exhibition of extraordinary strength is not astonishing because Balarāma is the Personality of Godhead known as Ānānta Śeṣanāga, who is holding all the planets on the hoods of His millions of heads. He maintains the whole cosmic manifestation exactly as two threads hold the weaving of a cloth.

After the demon was thrown into the trees, all the friends and associates of Dhenukāsūra immediately assembled and attacked Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa with great force. They were determined to retaliate and avenge the death of their friend. But Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to catch each of the asses by the hind legs and, exactly in the same way, wheel them around. Thus They killed all of them by throwing them into the palm trees. Because of the dead bodies of the asses, there was a panoramic scene. It appeared as if clouds of various colors were assembled in the trees. Hearing of this great incident, the demigods from the higher planets began to shower flowers on Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and began to beat their drums and offer devotional prayers.

## KĀLIYA

Kāliya represents brutal cruelty, maliciousness, pride, envy and a snake-like crookedness. He particularly tries to pour his poison into the hearts of innocent Vaiṣṇavas, which Kṛṣṇa cannot tolerate, so then the Lord kills him.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta in his last life, during the manvantara of Svāyambhūva Manu, at the beginning of the creation, he was a sage named Vedaśirā who was cursed for not allowing the sage Aśvaśirā to meditate in his āśrama. "You are angry for no reason! You hiss just like a snake! Become a snake!" Then Lord Viṣṇu appeared and told him that He would place His lotus feet on his head in that lifetime. Then Vedaśirā took birth with the first generation of great snakes to appear in the universe, from Dakṣa's daughter Kadrū.

## **The Story of Kāliya** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa used to go with His boyfriends and with Balarāma, and sometimes He used to go alone with His friends to the bank of the Yamunā and tend the cows. Gradually, the summer season arrived, and one day, while in the field, the boys and cows became very thirsty and began to drink the water of the Yamunā. The river, however, was made poisonous by the venom of the great serpent known as Kāliya.

Because the water was so poisonous, the boys and cows became visibly affected immediately after drinking. They suddenly fell down on the ground, apparently dead. Then Kṛṣṇa, who is the life of all lives, simply cast His merciful glance over them, and all the boys and cows regained consciousness and began to look at one another with great astonishment. They could understand that by drinking the water of Yamunā they had died and that the merciful glance of Kṛṣṇa restored their life. Thus they appreciated the mystic power of Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Yogeśvara, the master of all mystic yogis.

When He understood that the water of the Yamunā was being polluted by the black serpent Kāliya, Lord Kṛṣṇa took action against him and made him leave the Yamunā and go elsewhere, and thus the water became purified.

When this story was being narrated by Śukadeva Gosvāmi, Mahārāja Parīkṣit became eager to hear more about Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. He inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmi how Kṛṣṇa chastised Kāliya, who was living in the water for many years. Actually, Mahārāja Parīkṣit was becoming more and more enthusiastic to hear the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and his inquiry was made with great interest.

Śukadeva Gosvami narrated the story as follows. Within the River Yamunā there was a great lake, and in that lake the black serpent Kāliya used to live. Because of his poison, the whole area was so contaminated that it emanated a poisonous vapor twenty-four hours a day. If a bird happened to even pass over the spot, he would immediately fall down in the water and die.

Due to the poisonous effect of the Yamunā's vapors, the trees and grass near the bank of the Yamunā had all dried up. Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the effect of the great serpent's poison; the whole river that ran before Vṛndāvana was now deadly.

Kṛṣṇa, who advented Himself just to kill all undesirable elements in the world, immediately climbed up in a big kadamba tree on the bank of the Yamunā. The kadamba is a round yellow flower, generally seen only in the Vṛndāvana area. After climbing to the top of the tree, He tightened His belt cloth and, flapping His arms just like a wrestler, jumped in the midst of the poisonous lake. The kadamba tree from which Kṛṣṇa had jumped was the only tree there which was not dead. Some commentators say that due to touching the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the tree became immediately alive. In some other Purānas it is stated that Garuda, the eternal carrier of Viṣṇu, knew that Kṛṣṇa would take this action in the future, so he put some nectar on this tree to preserve it. When Lord Kṛṣṇa jumped into the water, the river overflowed its banks, as if something very large had fallen into it. This exhibition of Kṛṣṇa's strength is not at all uncommon because He is the reservoir of all strength.

When Kṛṣṇa was swimming about, just like a great strong elephant, He made a tumultuous sound which the great black serpent Kāliya could hear. The tumult was intolerable for him, and he could understand that this was an attempt to attack his home. Therefore he immediately came before Kṛṣṇa. Kāliya saw that Kṛṣṇa was indeed worth seeing because His body was so beautiful and delicate; its color resembled that of a cloud, and His legs resembled a lotus flower. He was decorated with Śrīvatsa, jewels and yellow garments. He was smiling with a beautiful face and was playing in the River Yamunā with great strength. But in spite of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful features, Kāliya felt great anger within his heart, and thus he grabbed Kṛṣṇa with his mighty coils. Seeing the incredible way in which Kṛṣṇa was enveloped in the coils of the serpent, the affectionate cowherd boys and inhabitants of Vṛndāvana immediately became stunned out of fear. They had dedicated everything to Kṛṣṇa, their lives, property, affection, activities — everything was for Kṛṣṇa — and when they saw Him in that condition, they became overwhelmed with fear and fell down on the ground. All the cows, bulls and small calves became overwhelmed with grief, and they began to look at Him with great anxiety. Out of fear they could only cry in agony and stand erect on the bank, unable to help their beloved Kṛṣṇa.

While this scene was taking place on the bank of the Yamunā, there were ill omens manifest. The earth trembled, meteors fell from the sky, and the left side of men's bodies shivered. All these are indications of great immediate danger. Observing the inauspicious signs, the cowherd men, including Mahārāja Nanda, became very anxious out of fear. At the same time they were informed that Kṛṣṇa had gone to the pasturing ground without His elder brother, Balarāma. As soon as Nanda and Yaśoda and the cowherd men heard this news, they became even more anxious. Out of their great affection for Kṛṣṇa, unaware of the extent of Kṛṣṇa's potencies, they became overwhelmed with grief and anxiety because they had nothing dearer than Kṛṣṇa and because they dedicated their everything — life, property, affection, mind and activities — to Kṛṣṇa. Because of their great attachment for Kṛṣṇa, they thought, "Today Kṛṣṇa is surely going to be vanquished!"

All the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana came out of the village to see Kṛṣṇa. The assembly consisted of children, young and old men, women, animals and all living entities; they knew that Kṛṣṇa was their only means of sustenance. While this was happening, Balarāma, who is

the master of all knowledge, stood there simply smiling. He knew how powerful His younger brother Kṛṣṇa was and that there was no cause for anxiety when Kṛṣṇa was fighting with an ordinary serpent of the material world. He did not, therefore, personally take any part in their concern. On the other hand, all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, being disturbed, began to search out Kṛṣṇa by following the impression of His footprints on the ground, and thus they moved towards the bank of the Yamunā. Finally, by following the footprints marked with flag, bow and conchshell, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana arrived at the riverbank and saw that all the cows and boys were weeping to behold Kṛṣṇa enwrapped in the coils of the black serpent. Then they became still more overwhelmed with grief. While Balarāma was smiling to see their lamentation, all the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi merged into the ocean of grief because they thought that Kṛṣṇa was finished. Although the residents of Vṛndāvana did not know much about Kṛṣṇa, their love for Him was beyond comparison. As soon as they saw that Kṛṣṇa was in the River Yamunā enveloped by the serpent Kāliya and that all the boys and cows were lamenting, they simply began to think of Kṛṣṇa's friendship, His smiling face, His sweet words and His dealings with them. Thinking of all these and believing that their Kṛṣṇa was now within the clutches of Kāliya, they at once felt that the three worlds had become vacant. Lord Caitanya also said that He was seeing the three worlds as vacant for want of Kṛṣṇa. This is the highest stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Almost all of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana had the highest ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

When mother Yaśoda arrived, she wanted to enter the River Yamunā, and being checked, she fainted. Other friends who were equally aggrieved were shedding tears like torrents of rain or waves of the river, but in order to bring mother Yaśoda to consciousness, they began to speak loudly about the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśoda remained still, as if dead, because her consciousness was concentrated on the face of Kṛṣṇa. Nanda and all others who dedicated everything, including their lives, to Kṛṣṇa were ready to enter the waters of the Yamunā, but Lord Balarāma checked them because He was in perfect knowledge that there was no danger.

For two hours Kṛṣṇa remained like an ordinary child gripped in the coils of Kāliya, but when He saw that all the inhabitants of Gokula — including His mother and father, the gopis, the boys and the cows — were just on the point of death and that they had no shelter for salvation from imminent death, Kṛṣṇa immediately freed Himself. He began to expand His body, and when the serpent tried to hold Him, he felt a great strain. On account of the strain, his coils slackened, and he had no alternative but to let loose the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, from his grasp. Kāliya then became very angry, and his great hoods expanded. He exhaled poisonous fumes from his nostrils, his eyes blazed like fire, and flames issued from his mouth. The great serpent remained still for some time, looking at Kṛṣṇa. Licking his lips with bifurcated tongues, the serpent looked at Kṛṣṇa with double hoods, and his eyesight was full of poison. Kṛṣṇa immediately pounced upon him, just as Garuda swoops upon a snake. Thus attacked, Kāliya looked for an opportunity to bite Him, but Kṛṣṇa moved around him. As Kṛṣṇa and Kāliya moved in a circle, the serpent gradually became fatigued, and his strength seemed to diminish considerably. Kṛṣṇa immediately pressed down the serpent's hoods and jumped up on them. The Lord's lotus feet became tinged with red from the rays of the jewels on the snake's hoods. Then He who is the original artist of all fine arts, such as dancing, began to dance upon the hoods of the serpent, although they were moving to and fro. Upon seeing this, denizens from the upper planets began to shower flowers, beat drums, play different types of flutes and sing various prayers

and songs. In this way, all the denizens of heaven, such as the Gandharvas, Siddhas and demigods, became very pleased.

While Kṛṣṇa was dancing on his hoods, Kāliya tried to push Him down with some of his other hoods. Kāliya had about a hundred hoods, but Kṛṣṇa took control of them. He began to dash Kāliya with His lotus feet, and this was more than the serpent could bear. Gradually, Kāliya was reduced to struggling for his very life. He vomited all kinds of refuse and exhaled fire. While throwing up poisonous material from within, Kāliya became reduced in his sinful situation. Out of great anger, he began to struggle for existence and tried to raise one of his hoods to kill the Lord. The Lord immediately captured that hood and subdued it by kicking it and dancing on it. It actually appeared as if the Supreme Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu was being worshipped; the poisons emanating from the mouth of the serpent appeared to be like flower offerings. Kāliya then began to vomit blood instead of poison; he was completely fatigued. His whole body appeared to be broken by the kicks of the Lord. Within his mind, however, he finally began to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and he began to surrender unto Him. He realized that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, the master of everything.

## **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī** **on Kāliya** **(from The Harmonist)**

Kāliya is the type of cunning and malice. He is the embodiment of unrelenting cruelty. There is no place for Kāliya in the happy realm of Vraja. Deceit and cruelty are as poison to the artless loving nature of the denizens of Vraja. It is quite conceivable for the confidential friends of Kṛṣṇa not to entertain any suspicion regarding the malicious intention of cruel and deceitful persons whose purpose is to poison them against Kṛṣṇa. They may even unwittingly fall into the counsel of such evil persons. But Kṛṣṇa is sure to rescue His own from the wiles of His enemies.

Nay Kṛṣṇa has also a plan for curing the evil propensity of Kāliya himself. The process consists in making him feel the touches of His dancing feet. But Kāliya attempts to bear up against all curative chastisement. Instead of feeling the joy of supporting the feet of Kṛṣṇa on his nasty hoods the monster finds it impossible to bear his good fortune without undergoing the pangs of actual death. Even the loyal wives of Kāliya who desire the reformation of the monster and whose good wishes for his well-being are the cause of Kṛṣṇa's mercy towards him are at last forced to intercede by a prayer for his banishment from the realm of Vraja. But the pride of Kāliya had received a mortal check.

The banishment of Kāliya from the lake of the Yamunā has a most important spiritual significance. Those who have a purpose to create trouble against the pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa by infecting the devotees with their own malicious disposition meet with a certain degree of initial success in their nefarious undertaking. This emboldens them to make a direct attack

upon Kṛṣṇa Himself when He appears on the scene of their depraved activities in order to restore the living faith of His own bonafide associates.

Those who are not exceedingly clever can never be servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But the service of Kṛṣṇa is also never available to those whose cunning is employed for depriving Kṛṣṇa of the fullness of His enjoyment. Kāliya and those who are actuated by a naturally malicious disposition are also styled clever in the ordinary phraseology of this damned world. Such rascals may also have the impudence of taking their stand upon the texts of the scriptures and using their cunningness in the graceless attempt of depriving Kṛṣṇa of the service of His own. This kind of conduct may also pass undetected and may even be regarded as possessing the perfect skill of confidential service. But Kṛṣṇa is sure to expose the real nature of the villain just at the moment when it has been successful in misleading His best loved ones.

It is indeed very difficult to understand the ways of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa apparently permits almost every form of offense to be perpetrated with impunity against His own beloved ones. This has the effect of providing an opportunity to His own for proving their incomparable love for Him and by the means of this unique exhibition of their love to defeat in the most fruitful manner the machinations of His worst enemies. The friends of Kṛṣṇa are offered to the malice of cunning and relentless brutes in order to bring out the difference between the two and thereby enable the latter to desist from troubling the devotees of their own accord.

But these brutes are never allowed to associate with the servants of Kṛṣṇa even after they forego all their malice towards them. They are eternally debarred from the service of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. But the touch of Kṛṣṇa's feet makes a real difference between the recipient of His mercy and the other brutes. Kāliya is no longer regarded by Garuda as the enemy of Kṛṣṇa. Kāliya is, therefore, allowed a place among those who are protected by Kṛṣṇa.

It does not follow that it is a paying business to poison the hearts of His servants against Kṛṣṇa which is sure to be granted with the reward of His protection. Yes, this is so after the pride of the miscreant is thoroughly broken by being trod upon by Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is thereby inspired with a most wholesome dread which effectively prevents him from trying to breed mischief among the bonafide devotees by owning an unwilling allegiance to Kṛṣṇa and assuming the badge of His servitude by wearing on his head the print of His lotus feet.

The mercy shown to Kāliya is so obviously and disproportionately great in its magnitude in face of the extreme gravity of his offense that no rationalistic explanation can do justice to its full beneficent significance.

# **EXTINGUISHING THE FIRST FOREST FIRE**

The first forest fire represents hatred and arguments between Vaiṣṇavas or different religions, and disrespecting each other's Deities. It can also represent any type of clash or conflict.

Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmi makes the point that some people say that the fire was a friend of Kālīya's who assumed this form, and others say that he was a demon who was a follower of Kāmsa.

## **The Story of The First Forest Fire (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

Since it was almost night, and all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, including the cows and calves, were very tired, they decided to take their rest on the riverbank. In the middle of the night, while they were taking rest, there was suddenly a great forest fire, and it quickly appeared that the fire would soon devour all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. As soon as they felt the warmth of the fire, they immediately took shelter of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although He was playing just like their child. They began to say, "Our dear Kṛṣṇa! O Supreme Personality of Godhead! Our dear Balarāma, the reservoir of all strength! Please try to save us from this all-devouring and devastating fire. We have no other shelter than You. This devastating fire will swallow us all!" Thus they prayed to Kṛṣṇa, saying that they could not take any shelter other than His lotus feet. Lord Kṛṣṇa, being compassionate upon His own townspeople, immediately swallowed up the whole forest fire and saved them. This was not impossible for Kṛṣṇa because He is unlimited. He has unlimited power to do anything He desires.



# PRALAMBĀSŪRA

Pralambāsūra represents lust for the opposite sex, and the desire for profit, adoration and distinction.

According to the Brahmā-vaivarta Purāna in his previous life he was Sudarśana, one of the brothers of Suhotra, who became Bakāsūra. According to the Garga Saṁhīta he was Vijaya, the son of a Gandharva king named Hūhū. He was cursed by Kuvera to become a demon for stealing some flowers from one of his gardens.

## Some Special Considerations Regarding Pralambāsūra

Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes: "Lusty attractions for the opposite sex, greed for money, the desire for sense gratification, inclinations for increasing one's honour and false prestige, the desire for being worshipped — these are all certainly very strong obstacles, and are very difficult to overcome. But if one understands that they are very detrimental for one's development in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one will try very enthusiastically to cast them out.

"If one endeavours in a very humble mood Kṛṣṇa will certainly show His mercy. Then upon the awakening of the mood of Śrī Baladeva in the devotee's heart, these contaminations will instantly be removed.

"The methods of the process of purification are very deep and mysterious; therefore it is necessary to learn about them directly from a bonafide spiritual master."

## The Story of Pralambāsūra (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

Once while they were engaged in their transcendental pastimes, a great demon of the name Pralambāsūra entered their company, desiring to kidnap both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa was playing the part of a cowherd boy, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead He could understand everything — past, present and future. So when Pralambāsūra entered their company, Kṛṣṇa began to think how to kill the demon, but externally He received him as a friend. "O My dear friend," He said. "It is very good that you have come to take part in our pastimes." Kṛṣṇa then called all His friends and ordered them: "Now we shall play in pairs. We shall challenge one another in pairs." With this proposal, all the boys assembled together. Some of them took the side of Kṛṣṇa, and some of them took the side of Balarāma, and they arranged to play in duel. The defeated members in duel fighting had to carry the victorious members on their backs. They began playing,

and at the same time tended the cows as they proceeded through the Bhandīravana forest. The party of Balarāma, accompanied by Śrīdāma and Vṛṣabha, came out victorious, and Kṛṣṇa's party had to carry them on their backs through the Bhandīravana forest. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, being defeated, had to carry Śrīdāma on His back, and Bhadrāsena carried Vṛṣabha. Imitating their play, Pralambāsūra, who appeared there as a cowherd boy, carried Balarāma on his back. Pralambāsūra was the greatest of the demons, and he had calculated that Kṛṣṇa was the most powerful of the cowherd boys.

In order to avoid the company of Kṛṣṇa, Pralambāsūra carried Balarāma far away. The demon was undoubtedly very strong and powerful, but he was carrying Balarāma, who is compared to a mountain; therefore he began to feel the burden, and thus he assumed his real form. When he appeared in his real feature, he was decorated with a golden helmet and earrings and looked just like a cloud with lightning carrying the moon. Balarāma observed the demon's body expanding up to the limits of the clouds, his eyes dazzling like blazing fire and his mouth flashing with sharpened teeth. At first, Balarāma was surprised by the demon's appearance, and He began to wonder, "How is it that all of a sudden this carrier has changed in every way?" But with a clear mind He could quickly understand that He was being carried away from His friends by a demon who intended to kill Him. Immediately He struck the head of the demon with His strong fist, just as the king of the heavenly planets strikes a mountain with his thunderbolt. Being stricken by the fist of Balarāma, the demon fell down dead, just like a snake with a smashed head, and blood poured from his mouth. When the demon fell, he made a tremendous sound, and it sounded as if a great hill were falling upon being struck by the thunderbolt of King Indra. All the boys then rushed to the spot. Being astonished by the ghastly scene, they began to praise Balarāma with the words "Well done, well done." All of them then began to embrace Balarāma with great affection, thinking that He had returned from death, and they offered their blessings and congratulations. All the demigods in the heavenly planets became very satisfied and showered flowers on the transcendental body of Balarāma, and they also offered their blessings and congratulations for His having killed the great demon Pralambāsūra.

## THE SECOND FOREST FIRE

The second forest fire represents the attack of atheism and other antagonistic philosophies on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmi says that some people say that the forest fire was a friend of Pralambāsūra's.

### **The Story of The Second Forest Fire (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and Their friends were engaged in the pastimes described above, the cows, being unobserved, began to wander off on their own, entering farther and farther into the deepest part of the forest, allured by fresh grasses. The goats, cows and buffalo traveled from one forest to another and entered the forest known as Iṣikāṭavi. This forest was full of green grass, and therefore they were allured; but when they entered, they saw that there was a forest fire, and they began to cry. On the other side Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Their friends, could not find their animals, and they became very aggrieved. They began to trace the cows by following their footprints, as well as the path of eaten grass. All of the boys were fearing that their very means of livelihood, the cows, were now lost. When searching out the cows in the forest, they themselves were very much tired and thirsty. Soon, however, they heard the crying of their cows. Kṛṣṇa began to call the cows by their respective names, with great noise. Upon hearing Kṛṣṇa calling, the cows immediately replied with joy. But by this time the forest fire surrounded all of them, and the situation appeared to be very fearful.

The flames increased as the wind blew very quickly, and it appeared that everything movable and immovable would be devoured. All the cows and the boys became very frightened, and they looked towards Balarāma the way a dying man looks at the picture of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They said, "Dear Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, we are now burning from the heat of this blazing fire. Let us take shelter of Your lotus feet. We know You can protect us from this great danger. Our dear friend Kṛṣṇa, we are Your intimate friends. It is not right that we should suffer in this way. We are all completely dependent on You, and You are the knower of all religious life. We do not know anyone except You. The Personality of Godhead heard the appealing voices of His friends, and casting a pleasing glance over them, He began to answer. By speaking through His eyes, He impressed upon His friends that there was no cause for fear. Then Kṛṣṇa, the supreme mystic, the powerful Personality of Godhead, immediately swallowed up all the flames of the fire. The cows and

boys were thus saved from imminent danger. Out of fear, the boys were almost unconscious, but when they regained their consciousness and opened their eyes, they saw that they were again in the forest with Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the cows. They were astonished to see that they were completely free from the attack of the blazing fire and that the cows were saved.

## **CORRECTING THE BRĀHMAṆAS PERFORMING SACRIFICE**

This pastime illustrates the fault of indifference towards Kṛṣṇa arising out of pride due to high birth in the varnāśrāma system.

### **The Story of Kṛṣṇa Correcting The Brāhmaṇas Performing Sacrifice (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

The morning passed, and the cowherd boys were very hungry because they had not eaten breakfast. They immediately approached Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and said, "Dear Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, You are both all-powerful; You can kill many, many demons, but today we are much afflicted with hunger, and this is disturbing us. Please arrange for something that will mitigate our hunger."

Requested in this way by Their friends, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma immediately showed compassion on certain wives of brāhmaṇas who were performing sacrifices. These wives were great devotees of the Lord, and Kṛṣṇa took this opportunity to bless them. He said, "My dear friends, please go to the house of the brāhmaṇas nearby. They are now engaged in performing Vedic sacrifices known as angirasa, for they desire elevation to heavenly planets. All of you please go to them." Then Lord Kṛṣṇa warned His friends, "These brahmanas are not Vaiṣnavas. They cannot even chant Our names, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They are very busy in chanting the Vedic hymns, although the purpose of Vedic knowledge is to find Me. But because they are not attracted by the names of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, you had better not ask them for anything in My name. Better ask for some charity in the name of Balarāma."

Charity is generally given to high-class brāhmaṇas, but Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not appear in a brāhmaṇa family. Balarāma was known as the son of Vasudeva, a ksatriya, and Kṛṣṇa was known in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda Mahārāja, who was a vaisya. Neither belonged to the brāhmaṇa community. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa considered that the brāhmaṇas engaged in performing sacrifices might not be induced to give charity to a ksatriya and vaisya. "But at least if you utter the name of Balarāma, they may prefer to give in charity to a ksatriya, rather than to Me, because I am only a vaisya."

Being thus ordered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all the boys went to the brāhmaṇas and began to ask for some charity. They approached them with folded hands and fell down on the ground to offer respect. "O earthly gods, kindly hear us who are ordered by Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. We hope you know Them both very well, and we wish you all good fortune. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are tending cows nearby, and we have accompanied Them. We have come to ask for some food from you. You are all brāhmaṇas and knowers of religious principles, and if you think that you should give us charity, then give us some food, and we all shall eat along with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. You are the most respectable brāhmaṇas within the human society, and you are expected to know all the principles of religious procedure."

Although the boys were village boys and were not expected to be learned in all the Vedic principles of religious ritual, they hinted that because of their association with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they knew all those principles. By addressing the brāhmaṇas as "knowers of all religious principles," the boys expressed the point of view that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, were asking for food, the brāhmaṇas should immediately deliver some without hesitation, because, as stated in the Bhagavad Gītā, one should perform yajña (sacrifices) only for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu.

The boys continued, "Lord Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma is standing waiting, and you should immediately deliver whatever food you have in your stock." They also explained to the brāhmaṇas how foodstuffs are to be accepted. Generally, the Vaiṣṇavas, or pure devotees of the Lord, do not take part in ordinary sacrificial performances. But they know very well the ceremonials called dikṣa, paśu-saṁsthā and śautramāni. One is permitted to take food after the procedure of dikṣa and before the animal sacrificial ceremony and the śautramāni, or ceremony in which liquors are also offered. The boys said, "We can take your food at the present stage of your ceremony, for now it will not be prohibited. So you can deliver us the foodstuff."

Although the companions of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were simple cowherd boys, they were in a position to dictate even to the high-class brāhmaṇas engaged in the Vedic rituals of sacrifices. But the smarta-brāhmaṇas, who were simply sacrificial-minded, could not understand the dictation of the transcendental devotees of the Lord. They could not even appreciate the begging of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Although they heard all the arguments on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they did not care for them, and they refused to speak to the boys. Despite being highly elevated in the knowledge of Vedic sacrificial rites, all such nondevotee brāhmaṇas, although they think of themselves as very highly elevated, are ignorant, foolish persons. All their activities are useless because they do not know the purpose of the Vedas, as it is explained in the Bhagavad Gītā: to understand Kṛṣṇa. In spite of their advancement in Vedic knowledge and rituals, they do not understand Kṛṣṇa; therefore their knowledge of the Vedas is superficial. Lord Caitanya, therefore, gave His valuable opinion that a person does not have to be born in a brāhmaṇa family; if he knows Kṛṣṇa or the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is more than a brāhmaṇa, and he is quite fit to become a spiritual master.

There are various details to be observed in the performance of sacrifices. They are known as deśa, place; kāla, time; pṛthag-dravya, the different detailed paraphernalia; mantra, hymns; tantra, scriptural evidences; agni, fire; ṛtvij, learned performers of sacrifices; devatā, the

demigods; yajamāna, the performer of the sacrifices; kratu, the sacrifice itself; and dharma, the procedures. All these are for satisfying Kṛṣṇa. It is confirmed that He is the actual enjoyer of all sacrifices because He is directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supreme Absolute Truth, beyond the conception or speculation of material senses. He is present just like an ordinary human boy. But for persons who identify themselves with the body, it is very difficult to understand Him. The brāhmaṇas were very interested in the comforts of this material body and in elevation to the higher planetary residences called svarga-vāsa. They were therefore completely unable to understand the position of Kṛṣṇa.

When the boys saw that the brāhmaṇas would not speak to them, they became very disappointed. They then returned to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and explained everything that had happened. After hearing their statements, the Supreme Personality began to smile. He told them that they should not be sorry for being refused by the brāhmaṇas, because that is the way of begging. He convinced them that while one is engaged in collecting or begging, one should not think that he will be successful everywhere. He may be unsuccessful in some places, but that should not be cause for disappointment. Lord Kṛṣṇa then asked all the boys to go again, but this time to the wives of those brāhmaṇas engaged in sacrifices. He also informed them that these wives were great devotees. "They are always absorbed in thinking of Us. Go there and ask for some food in My name and the name of Balarāma, and I am sure that they will deliver you as much food as you desire."

Carrying out Kṛṣṇa's order, the boys immediately went to the wives of the brāhmaṇas. They found the wives sitting inside their house. They were very beautifully decorated with ornaments. After offering them all respectful obeisances, the boys said, "Dear mothers, please accept our humble obeisances and hear our statement. May we inform you that Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are nearby. They have come here with the cows, and you may know also that we have come here under Their instructions. All of us are very hungry; therefore, we have come to you for some food. Please give us something to eat for Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and ourselves."

Immediately upon hearing this, the wives of the brāhmaṇas became anxious for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. These reactions were spontaneous. They did not have to be convinced of the importance of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma; immediately upon hearing Their names, they became very anxious to see Them. Being advanced by thinking of Kṛṣṇa constantly, they were performing the greatest form of mystic meditation. All the wives then became very busily engaged in filling up different pots with nice foodstuff. Due to the performance of the sacrifice, the various food was all very palatable. After collecting a feast, they prepared to go to Kṛṣṇa, their most lovable object, exactly in the way rivers flow to the sea.

## **OVERCOMING THE PRIDE OF LORD INDRA**

This pastime illustrates the mistake of thinking that it is good to perform demigod worship. Also the fault of thinking that "I am Supreme. I am worshipable."

### **The Story of Lord Kṛṣṇa Overcoming Indra's Pride (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

When Indra understood that the sacrifice offered by the cowherd men in Vṛndāvana was stopped by Kṛṣṇa, he became angry, and he vented his anger upon the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, who were headed by Nanda Mahārāja, although Indra knew perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa was personally protecting them. As the director of different kinds of clouds, Indra called for the samvartaka. This cloud is invited when there is a need to devastate the whole cosmic manifestation. The samvartaka was ordered by Indra to go over Vṛndāvana and inundate the whole area with an extensive flood. Demonically, Indra thought himself to be the all-powerful supreme personality. When demons become very powerful, they defy the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead. Indra, though not a demon, was puffed up by his material position, and he wanted to challenge the supreme controller. He thought himself, at least for the time being, as powerful as Kṛṣṇa. Indra said, "Just see the impudence of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana! They are simply inhabitants of the forest, but being infatuated with their friend Kṛṣṇa, who is nothing but an ordinary human being, they have dared to defy the demigods."

Kṛṣṇa has declared in the Bhagavad Gītā that the worshipers of the demigods are not very intelligent. He has also declared that one has to give up all kinds of worship and simply concentrate on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa's invoking the anger of Indra and later on chastising him is a clear indication to His devotee that those who are engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness have no need to worship any demigod, even if it is found that the demigod has become angry. Kṛṣṇa gives His devotees all protection, and they should completely depend on His mercy.

Indra cursed the action of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana and said, "By defying the authority of the demigods, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana will suffer in material existence. Having

neglected the sacrifice to the demigods, they cannot cross over the impediments of the ocean of material misery." Indra further declared, "These cowherd men in Vṛndāvana have neglected my authority on the advice of this talkative boy who is known as Kṛṣṇa. He is nothing but a child, and by believing this child, they have enraged me." Thus he ordered the samvartaka cloud to go and destroy the prosperity of Vṛndāvana. "The men of Vṛndāvana," said Indra, "have become too puffed up over their material opulence and their confidence in the presence of their tiny friend, Kṛṣṇa. He is simply talkative, childish, and unaware of the complete cosmic situation, although He is thinking Himself very advanced in knowledge. Because they have taken Kṛṣṇa so seriously, they must be punished, and so I have ordered the samvartaka cloud to go there and inundate the place. They should be destroyed with their cows."

It is indicated here that in the villages or outside the towns, the inhabitants must depend on the cows for their prosperity. When the cows are destroyed, the people are destitute of all kinds of opulences. When King Indra ordered the samvartaka and companion clouds to go to Vṛndāvana, the clouds were afraid of the assignment. But King Indra assured them, "You go ahead, and I will also go, riding on my elephant, accompanied by great storms. And I shall apply all my strength to punish the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana."

Ordered by King Indra, all the dangerous clouds appeared above Vṛndāvana and began to pour water incessantly, with all their strength and power. There was constant lightning and thunder, blowing of severe wind and incessant falling of rain. The rainfall seemed to fall like piercing sharp arrows. By pouring water as thick as pillars, without cessation, the clouds gradually filled all the lands in Vṛndāvana with water, and there was no visible distinction between higher and lower land. The situation was very dangerous, especially for the animals. The rainfall was accompanied by great winds, and every living creature in Vṛndāvana began to tremble from the severe cold. Unable to find any other source of deliverance, they all approached Govinda to take shelter at His lotus feet. The cows especially, being much aggrieved from the heavy rain, bowed down their heads, and taking their calves underneath their bodies, they approached the Supreme Personality of Godhead to take shelter of His lotus feet. At that time all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana began to pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa. "Dear Kṛṣṇa," they prayed, "You are all-powerful, and You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Now please protect us, who have been much harassed by angry Indra."

Upon hearing their prayer, Kṛṣṇa could also understand that Indra, being bereft of his sacrificial honor, was pouring down rain that was accompanied by heavy pieces of ice and strong winds, although all this was out of season. Kṛṣṇa understood that this was a deliberate exhibition of anger by Indra. He therefore concluded, "This demigod who thinks himself supreme has shown his great power, but I shall answer him according to My position, and I shall teach him that he is not autonomous in managing universal affairs. I am the Supreme Lord over all, and I shall thus take away his false prestige, which has risen from his power. The demigods are My devotees, and therefore it is not possible for them to forget My supremacy, but somehow or other he has become puffed up with material power and thus is now maddened. I shall act in such a way to relieve him of this false prestige. I shall give protection to My pure devotees in Vṛndāvana, who are at present completely at My mercy and whom I have taken completely under My protection. I will save them by My mystic power."



Thinking in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand, exactly as a child picks up a mushroom from the ground. Thus He exhibited His transcendental pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. Lord Kṛṣṇa then began to address His devotees, "My dear brothers, My dear father, My dear inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, you can now safely enter under the umbrella of Govardhana Hill, which I have just lifted. Do not be afraid of the hill and think that it will fall from My hand. You have been too much afflicted from the heavy rain and strong wind; therefore I have lifted this hill, which will protect you exactly like a huge umbrella. I think this is a proper arrangement to relieve you of your immediate distress. Be happy along with your animals underneath this great umbrella." Being assured by Lord Kṛṣṇa, all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana entered beneath the great hill and appeared to be safe along with their property and animals.

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana and their animals remained there for one week without being disturbed by hunger, thirst or any other discomforts. They were simply astonished to see how Kṛṣṇa was holding up the mountain with the little finger of His left hand. Seeing the extraordinary mystic power of Kṛṣṇa, Indra, the King of heaven, was thunderstruck and baffled in his determination. He immediately called for all the clouds and asked them to desist. When the sky became completely cleared of all clouds and there was sunrise again, the strong wind stopped. At that time Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, known now as the lifter of Govardhana Hill, said, "My dear cowherd men, now you can leave and take your wives, children, cows and valuables, because everything is ended. The inundation has gone down, along with the swelling waters of the river."

When Kṛṣṇa saved the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana from the wrath of Indra by lifting Govardhana Hill, a surabhi cow from Goloka Vṛndāvana, as well as King Indra from the heavenly planet, appeared before Him. Indra, the King of heaven, was conscious of his offense before Kṛṣṇa; therefore he stealthily appeared before Him from a secluded place. He immediately fell down at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, although his own crown was dazzling like sunshine. Indra knew about the exalted position of Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa is the master of Indra, but he could not believe that Kṛṣṇa could come down and live in Vṛndāvana among the cowherd men. When Kṛṣṇa defied the authority of Indra, Indra became angry because he thought that he was all in all within this universe and that no one was as powerful as he. But after this incident, his false puffed-up prestige was destroyed. Being conscious of his subordinate position, he appeared before Kṛṣṇa with folded hands and began to offer the following prayers.

## **NANDA MAHĀRĀJA STOLEN BY VARUṆA**

This pastime represents the misconception that the bliss of devotional service can be enhanced by indulging in wine and other intoxicants.

### **The Story of Nanda Mahārāja Being Stolen by Varuṇa (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

Mahārāja Nanda observed fasting for the whole day, and just early in the morning of the Dvādaśī, the day after Ekadaśī, he went to take bath in the River Yamunā. He entered deep into the water of the river, but he was arrested immediately by one of the servants of Varuṇadeva. These servants brought Nanda Mahārāja before the demigod Varuṇa and accused him of taking a bath in the river at the wrong time. According to astronomical calculations, the time in which he took bath was considered demoniac. The fact was that Nanda Mahārāja wanted to take a bath in the River Yamunā early in the morning before the sunrise, but somehow or other he was a little too early, and he bathed at an inauspicious time. Consequently he was arrested.

When Nanda Mahārāja was taken away by Varuṇa's servants, his companions began to call loudly for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Immediately Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could understand that Nanda Mahārāja had been taken by Varuṇa, and thus They went to the abode of Varuṇa, for They were pledged to give protection. The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, the unalloyed devotees of the Lord, having no shelter other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, naturally cried to Him for help, exactly like children who do not know anything but the protection of their parents. Demigod Varuṇa received Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great respect and said, "My dear Lord, actually at this very moment, because of Your presence, my life as the demigod Varuṇa has become successful. Although I am the proprietor of all the treasures in the water, I know that such possessions do not make for a successful life. But this moment, as I look at You, my life is made completely successful because by seeing

You I no longer have to accept a material body. Therefore, O Lord, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Supreme Brahman and Supersoul of everything, let me offer my respectful obeisances unto You. You are the supreme transcendental personality; there is no possibility of imposing the influence of material nature upon You. I am very sorry that my men, being foolish, by not knowing what to do or what not to do, have mistakenly arrested Your father, Nanda Mahārāja. So I beg Your pardon for the offense of my servants. I think that it was Your plan to show me Your mercy by Your personal presence here. My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, be merciful upon me — here is Your father. You can take him back immediately."

## **NANDA MAHĀRĀJA DELIVERED FROM THE SNAKE**

This pastime represents how Kṛṣṇa saves the truth of devotional service from being swallowed by the Māyāvādīs and other atheists. It illustrates how devotees must avoid the company of such snake-like people.

In his previous life (as described in the Kṛṣṇa Books), he was the demigod Vidyādhara.

### **The Story of Nanda Mahārāja's Deliverance from the Snake (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)**

The cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, spent that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī. They fasted all day and drank a little water at night. But while they were taking rest, a great serpent from the nearby forest appeared before them and hungrily began to swallow up Nanda Mahārāja, Nanda began to cry helplessly, "My dear son, Kṛṣṇa, please come and save me from this danger! This serpent is swallowing me!" When Nanda Mahārāja cried for help, all the cowherd men got up and saw what was happening. They immediately took up burning logs and began to beat the snake to kill it. But in spite of being beaten with burning logs, the serpent was not about to give up swallowing Nanda Mahārāja.

At that time Kṛṣṇa appeared on the scene and touched the serpent with His lotus feet. Immediately upon being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the serpent shed its reptilian body and appeared as a very beautiful demigod named Vidyādhara. His bodily features were so beautiful that he appeared to be worshipable. There was a luster and effulgence emanating from his body, and he was garlanded with a gold necklace. He offered

obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa and stood before Him with great humility. Kṛṣṇa then asked the demigod, "You appear to be a very nice demigod and to be favored by the goddess of fortune. How is it that you performed such abominable activities, and how did you get the body of a serpent?" The demigod then began to narrate the story of his previous life.

"My dear Lord," he said, "in my previous life I was named Vidyādhara and was known all over the world for my beauty. Because I was a celebrated personality, I used to travel all over in my airplane. While traveling, I saw a great sage named Āṅgirā. He was very ugly, and because I was very proud of my beauty, I laughed at him. Due to this sinful action, I was condemned by the great sage to assume the form of a serpent."

## ŚAṅKĀSURA

The killing of this demon represents Kṛṣṇa's killing the desire for name and fame and the association of the opposite sex.

### **The Story of Śaṅkāsura** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

After this incident, on a very pleasant night, both Kṛṣṇa and His elder brother Balarāma, who are inconceivably powerful, went into the forest of Vṛndāvana. They were accompanied by the damsels of Vrajabhumi, and they began to enjoy each other's company. The young damsels of Vraja were very nicely dressed and anointed with pulp of sandalwood and decorated with flowers. The moon was shining in the sky, surrounded by glittering stars. The breeze was blowing, bearing the aroma of mallika flowers, and the bumblebees were mad after the aroma. Taking advantage of the pleasing atmosphere, both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to sing very melodiously. The damsels became so absorbed in Their rhythmical song that they almost forgot themselves; their hair loosened, their dresses slackened, and their garlands began to fall to the ground.

At that time, while they were so much absorbed, almost in madness, a demon associate of Kuvera (the treasurer of the heavenly planets) appeared on the scene. The demon's name was Śaṅkhāsura because on his head there was a valuable jewel resembling a conchshell. Just as the two sons of Kuvera were puffed up over their wealth and opulence and did not care for Nārada Muni's presence, this Śaṅkhāsura was also puffed up over material opulence. He thought that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were two ordinary cowherd boys enjoying the company of many beautiful girls. Generally, in the material world, a person with riches thinks that all beautiful women should be enjoyed by him. Śaṅkhāsura also thought that

since he belonged to the rich community of Kuvera, he, not Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, should enjoy the company of so many beautiful girls. He therefore decided to take charge of them.

He appeared before Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and the damsels of Vraja and began to lead the girls away to the north. He commanded them as if he were their proprietor and husband, despite the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Being forcibly taken away by Śaṅkhāsura, the damsels of Vraja began to call the names of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for protection. The two brothers immediately began to follow them, taking up big logs in Their hands. "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid," They called to the gopis. "We are coming at once to chastise this demon." Very quickly They reached Śaṅkhāsura. Thinking the brothers too powerful, Śaṅkhāsura left the company of the gopis and ran for fear of his life. But Kṛṣṇa would not let him go. He entrusted the gopis to the care of Balarāma and followed Śaṅkhāsura wherever he fled. Kṛṣṇa wanted to take the valuable jewel resembling a conchshell from the head of the demon. After following him a very short distance, Kṛṣṇa caught him, struck his head with His fist and killed him. He then took the valuable jewel and returned. In the presence of all the damsels of Vraja, He presented the valuable jewel to His elder brother Balarāma.

## ARIṢṬĀSURA

Ariṣṭāsura represents the pride of fraudulent religionists whose practices have been concocted by cheaters. Due to their contaminated condition they show disrespect to the process of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta in his past life he had been a brāhmaṇa 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.

### **The Story of Ariṣṭāsura** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

One demon named Ariṣṭāsura entered the village like a great bull with a gigantic body and horns, digging up the earth with his hooves. 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. Its body was so big, stout and strong that a cloud hovered over its body just as clouds hover over mountains. 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!" Kṛṣṇa also saw that the cows were running away, and He immediately replied, "Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid." He then appeared before Ariṣṭāsura and said, "You are the lowest of living entities. Why are you frightening the inhabitants of Gokula? What will you gain by this action? 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 Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa stood before the bull, resting His hand on the shoulder of a friend. The bull began to proceed towards Kṛṣṇa in anger. Digging the earth with his hooves, Ariṣṭāsura lifted his tail, and it appeared that clouds were hovering about the tail. His eyes were reddish and moving in anger. Pointing his horns at Kṛṣṇa, he began to charge Him, just like the thunderbolt of Indra. But Kṛṣṇa immediately caught his horns and tossed him away, just as a gigantic elephant repels a small inimical elephant. Although the demon appeared very tired and although he was perspiring, he took courage and got up. Again he charged Kṛṣṇa with great force and anger. While rushing towards Kṛṣṇa, he breathed very heavily. Kṛṣṇa again caught his horns and immediately threw him on the ground, breaking his horns. Kṛṣṇa then began to kick his body, just as one squeezes a wet cloth on the ground. Being thus kicked by Kṛṣṇa, Ariṣṭāsura rolled over and began to move his legs violently. Bleeding and passing stool and urine, his eyes starting from their sockets, he passed to the kingdom of death.

## **KEŚI**

Keśi represents the vanity of thinking "I am a great devotee and guru." Also the false ego arising from attachment from wealth and material accomplishments.

According to the Brahmā-vaivarta Purāna in his last life he was Suparśvaka, one of the brothers of the Gandharvas who became Pralamba and Bakāsura.

### **The Story of Keśi** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

After being instructed by Kaṁsa, the demon Keśi assumed the form of a terrible horse. He entered the area of Vṛndāvana, his great mane flying and his hooves digging up the earth. He began to whinny and terrify the whole world. Kṛṣṇa saw that the demon was terrifying all the residents of Vṛndāvana with his whinnying and his tail wheeling in the sky like a big cloud. Kṛṣṇa could understand that the horse was challenging Him to fight. The Lord accepted his challenge and stood before the Keśi demon. As He called him to fight, the horse began to proceed towards Kṛṣṇa, making a horrible sound like a roaring lion. Keśi rushed toward the Lord with great speed and tried to trample Him with his legs, which were strong, forceful, and as hard as stone. Kṛṣṇa, however, immediately caught hold of his legs and thus baffled him.

Being somewhat angry, Kṛṣṇa began to move around the horse dexterously. After a few rounds, He threw him a hundred yards away, just as Garuda throws a big snake. Thrown by

Kṛṣṇa, the horse immediately passed out, but after a little while he regained consciousness and with great anger and force rushed toward Kṛṣṇa again, this time with his mouth open. As soon as Keśi reached Him, Kṛṣṇa pushed His left hand within the horse's mouth. The horse felt great pain because the hand of Kṛṣṇa felt to him like a hot iron rod. Immediately his teeth fell out. Kṛṣṇa's hand within the mouth of the horse at once began to inflate, and Keśi's throat choked up. As the great horse began to suffocate, perspiration appeared on his body, and he began to throw his legs hither and thither. As his last breath came, his eyeballs bulged in their sockets, and he passed stool and urine simultaneously. Thus the vital force of his life expired. When the horse was dead, his mouth became loose, and Kṛṣṇa could extract His hand without difficulty. He did not feel any surprise that the Keśi demon was killed so easily, but the demigods were amazed, and out of their great appreciation they offered Kṛṣṇa greetings by showering flowers.

## VYOMĀSURA

The killing of Vyomāsura illustrates the need to give up the company of thieves and other rascals, as well as cheating impostors who disguise themselves as devotees.

According to the Garga Saṁhīta in his previous life he was a great devotee king named Bhīmaratha from Vārāṇasi. After some time he renounced his kingdom and went to the Malaya Hills to perform austerities. One day the sage Pulastya came to his hermitage with many disciples, but Bhīmaratha neglected to welcome them properly, so Pulastya cursed him to become a demon. But he then blessed him that he would be liberated by Kṛṣṇa. Bhīmaratha then took birth as Vyomāsura, the son of Māyāsura.

### **The Story of Vyomāsura** (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Books)

Later that morning, Kṛṣṇa went to play with His cowherd boyfriends on the top of the Govardhana Hill. They were imitating the play of thieves and police. Some of the boys became police constables, and some became thieves, and some took the role of lambs. While they were thus enjoying their childhood pastimes, a demon known by the name of Vyomāsura, "the demon who flies in the sky," appeared on the scene. He was the son of another great demon, named Māyā. These demons can perform wonderful magic. Vyomāsura took the part of a cowherd boy playing as thief and stole many boys who were playing the parts of lambs. One after another he took away almost all the boys and put them

in the caves of the mountain and sealed the mouths of the caves with stones. Kṛṣṇa could understand the trick the demon was playing; therefore He caught hold of him exactly as a lion catches hold of a lamb. The demon tried to expand himself like a hill to escape arrest, but Kṛṣṇa did not allow him to get out of His clutches. He was immediately thrown on the ground with great force and killed, just as an animal is killed in the slaughterhouse. After killing the Vyoma demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa released all His friends from the caves of the mountain. He was then praised by His friends and by the demigods for these wonderful acts. He again returned to Vṛndāvana with His cows and friends.