

Summary Description of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ After returning from the spiritual kingdom, which he was able to visit personally with Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna was very much astonished.
- ॐ He thought to himself that although he was only an ordinary living entity, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa it had been possible for him to see the spiritual world.
- ॐ Not only had he seen the spiritual world, but he had also personally seen the original Mahā-Viṣṇu, the cause of the material creation.

ॐ *It is said that Kṛṣṇa never goes out of Vṛndāvana: vṛndāvanaṁ parityajya pādamaṁ na gacchati. Kṛṣṇa is supreme in Mathurā, He is more supreme in Dvārakā, and He is most supreme in Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Dvārakā are displayed by His Vāsudeva portion, yet there is no difference between the Vāsudeva portion manifested in Mathurā and Dvārakā and the original manifestation of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. In the beginning of this book we have discussed that when Kṛṣṇa appears, all His incarnations, plenary portions and portions of the plenary portions come with Him. Thus some of His different pastimes are manifested not by the original Kṛṣṇa Himself but by His expansions.*

ॐ *Why Arjuna was puzzled by Kṛṣṇa’s going to see Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu in the spiritual world is fully discussed in the commentaries of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, as follows. It is understood from the speech of Mahā-Viṣṇu that He was very eager to see Kṛṣṇa. It may be said, however, that since Mahā-Viṣṇu took away the brāhmaṇa’s sons, He must certainly have gone to Dvārakā to do so. Therefore, why did He not see Kṛṣṇa there? A possible answer is that unless Kṛṣṇa gives His permission, He cannot be seen even by Mahā-Viṣṇu, lying in the Causal Ocean of the spiritual world. Thus Mahā-Viṣṇu took away the brāhmaṇa’s sons one after another just after their births so that Kṛṣṇa would come personally to the Casual Ocean to retrieve them, and then Mahā-Viṣṇu would be able to see Him there. If that is so, the next question is this: Why would Mahā-Viṣṇu come to Dvārakā personally if He were not able to see Kṛṣṇa? Why did He not send some of His associates to take away the sons of the brāhmaṇa? A possible answer is that it is very difficult to put any of the citizens of Dvārakā into trouble in the presence of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, because it was not possible for any of Mahā-Viṣṇu’s associates to take away the brāhmaṇa’s sons, He personally came to take them.*

ॐ *Another question may also be raised: The Lord is known as brahmaṇya-deva, the worshipable Deity of the brāhmaṇas, so why was He inclined to put a brāhmaṇa into such a terrible condition of lamentation over one son after another until the tenth son was taken away? The answer is that Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu was so eager to see Kṛṣṇa that He did not hesitate even to give trouble*

to a brāhmaṇa. Although giving trouble to a brāhmaṇa is a forbidden act, Lord Viṣṇu was prepared to do anything in order to see Kṛṣṇa—He was so eager to see Him. After losing each of his sons, the brāhmaṇa would come to the gate of the palace and accuse the King of not being able to give the brāhmaṇas protection and of thus being unfit to sit on the royal throne. It was Mahā-Viṣṇu’s plan that the brāhmaṇa would accuse the kṣatriyas and Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa would be obliged to come see Him to take back the brāhmaṇa’s sons.

ॐ Still another question may be raised: If Mahā-Viṣṇu cannot see Kṛṣṇa, then how was Kṛṣṇa obliged to come before Him after all to take back the sons of the brāhmaṇa? The answer is that Lord Kṛṣṇa went to see Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu not exactly to take away the sons of the brāhmaṇa but only for Arjuna’s sake. His friendship with Arjuna was so intimate that when Arjuna prepared himself to die by entering a fire, Kṛṣṇa wanted to give him complete protection. Arjuna, however, would not desist from entering the fire unless the sons of the brāhmaṇa were brought back. Therefore Kṛṣṇa promised him, “I shall bring back the brāhmaṇa’s sons. Do not try to commit suicide.”

ॐ If Lord Kṛṣṇa were going to see Lord Viṣṇu only to reclaim the sons of the brāhmaṇa, then He would not have waited until the tenth son was taken. But when the tenth son was taken away by Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, and Arjuna was therefore ready to enter the fire because his promise was going to prove false, that serious situation made Lord Kṛṣṇa decide to go with Arjuna to see Mahā-Viṣṇu. It is said that Arjuna is an empowered incarnation of Nara-Nārāyaṇa. He is even sometimes called Nara-Nārāyaṇa. The Nara-Nārāyaṇa incarnation is also one of Lord Viṣṇu’s plenary expansions. Therefore, when Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna went to see Lord Viṣṇu, it is to be understood that Arjuna visited in His Nara-Nārāyaṇa capacity, just as Kṛṣṇa, when He displayed His pastimes in Dvārakā, acted in His Vāsudeva capacity.

ॐ After visiting the spiritual world, Arjuna concluded that whatever opulence anyone can show within the material or spiritual worlds is all a gift of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is manifested in various forms, as viṣṇu-tattva and jīva-tattva, or, in other words, as svāmśa and vibhinnāmśa. Viṣṇu-tattva is known as svāmśa, and jīva-tattva is known as vibhinnāmśa. He can, therefore, display Himself by His different transcendental pastimes, in the portion of either svāmśa or vibhinnāmśa, as He likes, but still He remains the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

ॐ The concluding portion of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is found in the Ninetieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and in this chapter Śukadeva Gosvāmī wanted to explain how Kṛṣṇa lived happily at Dvārakā with all opulences.

- ॐ Kṛṣṇa’s opulence of strength has already been displayed in His different pastimes, and now it will be shown how His residence at Dvārakā displayed His opulences of wealth and beauty. In this material world the opulences of wealth and beauty are considered the highest of all opulences, yet they are only a perverted reflection of these opulences in the spiritual world.
- ॐ Therefore, while Kṛṣṇa stayed on this planet as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His opulences of wealth and beauty had no comparison within the three worlds.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa enjoyed sixteen thousand beautiful wives, and it is most significant that He lived at Dvārakā as the only husband of these thousands of beautiful women.
- ॐ *This is specifically stated—that He was the only husband of sixteen thousand wives. It is of course not unheard of in the history of the world that a powerful king would keep many hundreds of queens, but although such a king might be the only husband of so many wives, he could not enjoy all of them at one time. Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, enjoyed all of His sixteen thousand wives simultaneously.*
- ॐ *Although it may be said that yogīs also can expand their bodies into many forms, the yogī’s expansion and Lord Kṛṣṇa’s expansion are not the same. Kṛṣṇa is therefore sometimes called Yogeśvara, the master of all yogīs. In the Vedic literature we find that the yogī Saubhari Muni expanded himself into eight. But that expansion was like a television expansion. The television image is manifested in millions of expansions, but those expansions cannot act differently; they are simply reflections of the original and can only act exactly as the original does. Kṛṣṇa’s expansion is not material, like the expansion of the television or the yogī. When Nārada visited the different palaces of Kṛṣṇa, he saw that Kṛṣṇa, in His different expansions, was variously engaged in each and every palace of the queens.*
- ॐ It is also said that Kṛṣṇa lived in Dvārakā as the husband of the goddess of fortune.
- ॐ Queen Rukmiṇī is the goddess of fortune, and all the other queens are her expansions.
- ॐ So Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, enjoyed with the goddess of fortune in full opulence.
- ॐ The queens of Kṛṣṇa are described as permanently youthful and beautiful.
- ॐ Although Kṛṣṇa had grandchildren and great-grandchildren, neither Kṛṣṇa nor His queens looked older than sixteen or twenty years of age.
- ॐ The young queens were so beautiful that when they moved they appeared like lightning moving in the sky.
- ॐ They were always dressed with excellent ornaments and garments and were always engaged in sportive activities like dancing, singing or playing ball on the roofs of the palaces.

- ॐ The dancing and tennis playing of girls in the material world are perverted reflections of the original pastimes of the original Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His wives.
- ॐ The roads and streets of the city of Dvārakā were always crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and infantry soldiers.
- ॐ When elephants are engaged in service, they are given liquor to drink, and it is said that the elephants in Dvārakā were given so much liquor that they would sprinkle a great quantity of it on the road and still walk on the streets intoxicated.
- ॐ The infantry soldiers passing on the streets were profusely decorated with golden ornaments,
- ॐ and horses and golden chariots plied along the streets.
- ॐ In all directions of Dvārakā City, wherever one would turn his eyes he would find green parks and gardens, each of them filled with trees and plants laden with fruits and flowers.
- ॐ Because there were so many nice trees of fruits and flowers, all the sweetly chirping birds and buzzing bumblebees joined together to make sweet vibrations.
- ॐ The city of Dvārakā thus fully displayed all opulences.
- ॐ The heroes in the dynasty of Yadu used to think themselves the most fortunate residents of the city, and actually they enjoyed all transcendental facilities.
- ॐ All the sixteen thousand palaces of Kṛṣṇa’s queens were situated in this beautiful city of Dvārakā,
- ॐ and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme eternal enjoyer of all these facilities, expanded Himself into sixteen thousand forms and simultaneously engaged in different family affairs in those sixteen thousand palaces.
- ॐ In each and every one of the palaces there were nicely decorated gardens and lakes.
- ॐ The crystal-clear water of the lakes contained many blooming lotus flowers of different colors like blue, yellow, white and red, and the saffron powder from the lotus flowers was blown all around by the breeze.
- ॐ All the lakes were full of beautiful swans, ducks and cranes, crying occasionally with melodious sounds.
- ॐ Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa sometimes entered those lakes or the rivers with His wives and enjoyed swimming pastimes with them in full jubilation.
- ॐ Sometimes the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who were all goddesses of fortune, would embrace the Lord in the midst of the water while swimming or taking a bath, and the red vermilion of kuṅkuma decorating their beautiful breasts would adorn the chest of the Lord with a reddish color.
- ॐ *The impersonalists would not dare believe that in the spiritual world there are such varieties of enjoyment, but in order to demonstrate the factual, ever-blissful enjoyment in the spiritual world, Lord Kṛṣṇa descended to this planet and showed that the spiritual world is not devoid of such pleasurable facilities*

of life. The only difference is that in the spiritual world such facilities are eternal, never-ending occurrences, whereas in the material world they are simply impermanent perverted reflections.

- ॐ When Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged in such enjoyment, the Gandharvas and professional musicians would glorify Him with melodious musical concerts, accompanied by kettledrums, mṛdaṅgas and other drums, along with stringed instruments and brass bugles,
- ॐ and the whole atmosphere would change into a greatly festive celebration.
- ॐ In a festive mood, the wives of the Lord would sometimes sprinkle water on the His body with a syringelike instrument,
- ॐ and the Lord would similarly wet the bodies of the queens.
- ॐ When Kṛṣṇa and the queens engaged themselves in these pastimes, it seemed as if the heavenly king, Yakṣarāja, were engaged in pastimes with his many wives. (*Yakṣarāja is also known as Kuvera and is considered the treasurer of the heavenly kingdom.*)
- ॐ When the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa thus became wet, their breasts and thighs would increase in beauty a thousand times, and their long hair would fall down to decorate those parts of their bodies.
- ॐ The beautiful flowers placed in their hair would fall, and the queens, being seemingly harassed by the Lord’s throwing water at them, would approach Him on the plea of snatching the syringelike instrument.
- ॐ This attempt would create a situation wherein the Lord could embrace them as they willingly approached Him.
- ॐ Upon being embraced, the wives of the Lord would feel on their mouths a clear indication of conjugal love, and this would create an atmosphere of spiritual bliss.
- ॐ When the garland on the neck of the Lord then touched the breasts of the queens, their whole bodies became covered with saffron yellow.
- ॐ Being engaged in their celestial pastimes, the queens forgot themselves, and their loosened hair appeared like beautiful waves of a river.
- ॐ When the queens sprinkled water on the body of Kṛṣṇa or He sprinkled water on the bodies of the queens, the whole situation appeared just like that of an elephant enjoying in a lake with many she-elephants.
- ॐ After enjoying fully amongst themselves, the queens and Lord Kṛṣṇa would come out of the water,
- ॐ and they would give up their wet garments, which were very valuable, to be taken away by the professional singers and dancers.
- ॐ These singers and dancers had no means of subsistence other than the rewards of valuable garments and ornaments left by the queens and kings on such occasions.
- ॐ *The whole system of society was so well planned that all the members of society in their different positions as brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and*

sūdras had no difficulty in earning their livelihood. There was no competition among the divisions of society. The original conception of the caste system was so planned that a group of men engaged in a particular type of occupation would not compete with another group of men engaged in a different occupation.

- ॐ In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa used to enjoy the company of His sixteen thousand wives.
- ॐ Some devotees of the Lord who want to love the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the mellow of conjugal love are elevated to the position of becoming wives of Kṛṣṇa,
- ॐ and Kṛṣṇa keeps them always attached to Him by His kind behavior.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa’s behavior with His wives—His movements, His talking with them, His smiling, His embracing and similar other activities, which are just like those of a loving husband—kept them always very much attached to Him.
- ॐ *That is the highest perfection of life. If someone remains always attached to Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that he is liberated, and his life is successful. With any devotee who loves Kṛṣṇa with his heart and soul, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates in such a way that the devotee cannot but remain attached to Him. The reciprocal dealings of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are so attractive that a devotee cannot think of any subject matter other than Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ For all the queens, Kṛṣṇa was their only worshipable object.
- ॐ They were always absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, the lotus-eyed and beautifully blackish Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ Sometimes, in thought of Kṛṣṇa, they remained silent, and in great ecstasy of bhāva and anubhāva they sometimes spoke as if in delirium.
- ॐ Sometimes, even in the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they vividly described the pastimes they had enjoyed in the lake or river with Him.
- ॐ Some of such talk is described here.
- ॐ The queens said, “Dear kurārī bird, now it is very late at night.
- ॐ Everyone is sleeping. The whole world is now calm and peaceful.
- ॐ At this time, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sleeping, although His knowledge is undisturbed by any circumstances.
- ॐ Then why are you not sleeping?
- ॐ Why are you lamenting like this throughout the whole night?
- ॐ Dear friend, is it that you are also attracted by the lotus eyes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by His sweet smiling and attractive words, exactly as we are?
- ॐ Do those dealings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead pinch your heart as they do ours?
- ॐ “Hello, cakravākī.

- ॐ Why have you closed your eyes?
- ॐ Are you searching after your husband, who may have gone to foreign countries?
- ॐ Why are you lamenting so pitifully?
- ॐ Alas, it appears that you are very much aggrieved.
- ॐ Or is it a fact that you also are willing to become an eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
- ॐ We think that you are anxious to put a garland on the lotus feet of the Lord and then place it on your hair.
- ॐ “O dear ocean, why are you roaring all day and night?
- ॐ Don’t you like to sleep?
- ॐ We think you have been attacked by insomnia,
- ॐ or, if we are not wrong, our dear Śyāmasundara has tactfully taken away your gravity and power of forbearance, which are your natural qualifications.
- ॐ Is it a fact that for this reason you are suffering from insomnia like us?
- ॐ Yes, we admit that there is no remedy for this disease.
- ॐ “Dear moon-god, we think you have been attacked by a severe type of tuberculosis.
- ॐ For this reason, you are becoming thinner and thinner day by day.
- ॐ O lord, you are now so weak that your thin rays cannot dissipate the darkness of night.
- ॐ Or is it a fact that, just like us, you have been stunned by the mysteriously sweet words of our Lord Śyāmasundara?
- ॐ Is it a fact that it is because of this severe anxiety that you are so grave?
- ॐ “O breeze from the Himalayas, what have we done to you that you are so intent on teasing us by awakening our lust to meet Kṛṣṇa?
- ॐ Do you not know that we have already been injured by the crooked policy of the Personality of Godhead?
- ॐ Dear Himalayan breeze, please know that we have already been stricken.
- ॐ There is no need to injure us more and more.
- ॐ “Dear beautiful cloud, the color of your beautiful body exactly resembles the bodily hue of our dearest Śyāmasundara.
- ॐ We think, therefore, that you are very dear to our Lord, the chief of the dynasty of the Yadus, and because you are so dear to Him, you are absorbed in meditation, exactly as we are.
- ॐ We can appreciate that your heart is full of anxiety for Śyāmasundara.
- ॐ You appear excessively eager to see Him, and we see that for this reason only, drops of tears are gliding down from your eyes, just as they are from ours.

- ॐ Dear black cloud, we must admit frankly that to establish an intimate relationship with Śyāmasundara means to purchase unnecessary anxieties while we are otherwise comfortable at home.”
- ॐ Generally the cuckoo sounds its cooing vibration at the end of night or early in the morning.
- ॐ When the queens heard the cooing of the cuckoo at the end of night, they said,
- ॐ “Dear cuckoo, your voice is very sweet.
- ॐ As soon as you vibrate your sweet voice, we immediately remember Śyāmasundara because your voice exactly resembles His.
- ॐ We must frankly admit that your voice is imbued with nectar,
- ॐ and it is so invigorating that it is competent to bring back life to those who are almost dead in separation from their dearest friend.
- ॐ So we are very much obliged to you. Please let us know how we can welcome you or how we can do something for you.”
- ॐ The queens continued talking like that, and they addressed the mountain as follows:
- ॐ “Dear mountain, you are very generous.
- ॐ By your gravity only, the whole crust of this earth is properly maintained, although because you are discharging your duties very faithfully, you do not know how to move. Because you are so grave, you do not move hither and thither,
- ॐ nor do you say anything. Rather, you always appear in a thoughtful mood.
- ॐ It may be that you are always thinking of a very grave and important subject matter, but we can guess very clearly what you are thinking of.
- ॐ We are sure that you are thinking of placing the lotus feet of Śyāmasundara on your raised peaks, as we want to place His lotus feet on our raised breasts.
- ॐ “Dear dry rivers, we know that because this is the summer season, all your beds are dry, and you have no water.
- ॐ Because all your water has now been dried up, you are no longer beautified by blooming lotus flowers.
- ॐ At the present moment, you appear very lean and thin, so we can understand that your position is exactly like ours.
- ॐ We have lost everything due to being separated from Śyāmasundara, and we no longer hear His pleasing words.
- ॐ Our hearts no longer work properly, and therefore we also have become very lean and thin.
- ॐ We think, therefore, that you are just like us.

ॐ You have turned lean and thin because you are not getting any water from your husband, the ocean, through the clouds.”

ॐ *The example given herewith by the queens is very appropriate. The riverbeds become dry when the ocean no longer supplies water through the clouds. The ocean is supposed to be the husband of the river and therefore is supposed to support her. Unless a woman is supported by her husband with the necessities of life, she also becomes as dry as a dry river.*

ॐ One queen addressed a swan as follows:

ॐ “My dear swan, please come here, come here.

ॐ You are welcome.

ॐ Please sit down and take some milk.

ॐ My dear swan, can you tell me if you have any message from Śyāmasundara?

ॐ I take you to be a messenger from Him. If you have any such news, please tell me.

ॐ Our Śyāmasundara is always very independent.

ॐ He never comes under the control of anyone.

ॐ We have all failed to control Him, and therefore we ask you, Is He keeping Himself well?

ॐ I may inform you that Śyāmasundara is very fickle.

ॐ His friendship is always temporary; it breaks even by slight agitation.

ॐ But would you kindly explain why He is so unkind to me?

ॐ Formerly He said that I alone am His dearest wife.

ॐ Does He remember this assurance?

ॐ Anyway, you are welcome.

ॐ Please sit down.

ॐ But I cannot accept your entreaty to go to Śyāmasundara.

ॐ When He does not care for me, why should I be mad after Him?

ॐ I am very sorry to let you know that you have become the messenger of a poor-hearted soul.

ॐ You are asking me to go to Him, but I am not going.

ॐ What is that?

ॐ You talk of His coming to me?

ॐ Does He desire to come here to fulfill my long expectation for Him?

ॐ All right.

ॐ You may bring Him here.

ॐ But don’t bring with Him His most beloved goddess of fortune.

ॐ Do you think that He cannot be separated from the goddess of fortune even for a moment?

ॐ Could He not come here alone, without Lakṣmī?

- ॐ His behavior is very displeasing.
- ॐ Does it mean that without Lakṣmī, Śyāmasundara cannot be happy?
- ॐ Can’t He be happy with any other wife?
- ॐ Does it mean that the goddess of fortune has the ocean of love for Him and none of us can compare to her?”
- ॐ *All the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa were completely absorbed in thought of Him. Kṛṣṇa is known as Yogeśvara, the master of all yogīs, and all the wives of Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā used to keep this Yogeśvara within their hearts. Instead of trying to be master of all yogic mystic powers, it is better if one simply keeps the supreme Yogeśvara, Kṛṣṇa, within his heart. Thus one’s life can become perfect, and one can very easily be transferred to the kingdom of God. It is to be understood that all the queens of Kṛṣṇa who lived with Him at Dvārakā were in their previous lives very greatly exalted devotees who wanted to establish a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love. Thus they were given the chance to become His wives and enjoy a constant loving relationship with Him. Ultimately, they were all transferred to the Vaikuṅṭha planets.*
- ॐ *The Supreme Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead is never impersonal. All the Vedic scriptures glorify the transcendental performance of His various personal activities and pastimes. It is said that in the Vedas and in the Rāmāyaṇa, only the activities of the Lord are described. Everywhere in the Vedic literature, His glories are sung. As soon as soft-hearted people such as women hear those transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they immediately become attracted to Him. Soft-hearted women and girls are therefore very easily drawn to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. One who is thus drawn to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and tries to keep himself in constant touch with such consciousness certainly gets the supreme salvation, going back to Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. If simply by developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness one can be transferred to the spiritual world, one can simply imagine how blissful and blessed were the queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who talked with Him personally and saw Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face.*
- ॐ No one can properly describe the fortune of the wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ They took care of Him personally by rendering various transcendental services like bathing Him, feeding Him, pleasing Him and serving Him.
- ॐ Thus no one’s austerities can compare to the service of the queens at Dvārakā.
- ॐ *Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that for self-realization the austerities and penances performed by the queens at Dvārakā have no comparison. The objective of self-realization is one: Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, although the dealings of the queens with Kṛṣṇa appear just like ordinary dealings between husband and wife, the principal point to be observed is the queens’ attachment for Kṛṣṇa. The entire process of austerity and penance is*

meant to detach one from the material world and enhance one’s attachment to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of all persons advancing in self-realization. As an ideal householder, He lived with His wives and performed the Vedic rituals just to show less intelligent persons that the Supreme Lord is never impersonal. Kṛṣṇa lived with wives and children in all opulence, exactly like an ordinary conditioned soul, just to teach those souls who are actually conditioned that they must enter into the family circle of Kṛṣṇa, where He is the center. For example, the members of the Yadu dynasty lived in the family of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa was the center of all their activities.

ॐ Renunciation is not as important as enhancing one’s attachment to Kṛṣṇa. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is especially meant for this purpose. We are preaching the principle that it does not matter whether a man is a sannyāsī or grhastha (householder). One simply has to increase his attachment for Kṛṣṇa, and then his life is successful. Following in the footsteps of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one can live with his family members or within the society or nation, not for the purpose of indulging in sense gratification but to realize Kṛṣṇa by advancing in attachment for Him. There are four principles of elevation from conditioned life to the life of liberation, which are technically known as dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa (religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation). If one lives a family life following in the footsteps of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s family members, one can achieve all four of these principles of success simultaneously by making Kṛṣṇa the center of all activities.

ॐ It is already known to us that Kṛṣṇa had 16,108 wives.

ॐ All these wives were exalted liberated souls, and among them Queen Rukmiṇī was the chief.

ॐ After Rukmiṇī there were seven other principal wives, and the names of the sons of these eight principal queens have already been mentioned.

ॐ Besides the sons born of these eight queens, Lord Kṛṣṇa had ten sons by each of the other queens.

ॐ Thus altogether Kṛṣṇa’s sons numbered 16,108 times ten.

ॐ One should not be astonished to hear that Kṛṣṇa had so many sons. One should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that He has unlimited potencies. He claims all living entities as His sons, so the fact that He had 161,080 sons attached to Him personally should be no cause for astonishment.

ॐ Among Kṛṣṇa’s greatly powerful sons, eighteen sons were mahā-rathas.

ॐ The mahā-rathas could fight alone against many thousands of foot soldiers, charioteers, cavalry and elephants.

ॐ The reputations of these eighteen sons are very widespread and are described in almost all the Vedic scriptures.

ॐ The eighteen mahā-ratha sons are listed as

ॐ Pradyumna,

ॐ Bṛhadbhānu,

ॐ Śrutadeva,

ॐ Aniruddha,

ॐ Citrabhānu,

ॐ Sunandana,

ॐ Dīptimān,

ॐ Vṛka,

ॐ Citrabāhu,

ॐ Bhānu,

ॐ Aruṇa,

ॐ Virūpa,

ॐ Sāmba,

ॐ Puṣkara,

ॐ Kavi and

ॐ Madhu,

ॐ Vedabāhu,

ॐ Nyagrodha.

ॐ Of these eighteen mahā-ratha sons of Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna is considered the foremost.

ॐ Pradyumna happened to be the eldest son of Queen Rukmiṇī, and he inherited all the qualities of his great father, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

ॐ He married the daughter of his maternal uncle, Rukmī, and from that marriage Aniruddha was born.

ॐ Aniruddha was so powerful that he could fight against ten thousand elephants. He married the granddaughter of Rukmī, the brother of his grandmother Rukmiṇī.

ॐ Because the relationship between these cousins was distant, such a marriage was not uncommon. Aniruddha’s son was Vajra.

ॐ When the whole Yadu dynasty was destroyed by the curse of some brāhmaṇas, only Vajra survived.

ॐ Vajra had one son, whose name was Pratibāhu.

ॐ The son of Pratibāhu was named Subāhu, the son of Subāhu was named Śāntasena, and the son of Śāntasena was Śatasena.

ॐ *It is stated by Śukadeva Gosvāmī that all the members of the Yadu dynasty had many children. Just as Kṛṣṇa had many sons, grandsons and great-grandsons, each one of the kings named herewith also had similar family extensions. Not only did all of them have many children, but all were extraordinarily rich and opulent. None of them were weak or short-lived, and above all, all the members of the Yadu dynasty were staunch devotees of the brahminical culture. It is the duty of the kṣatriya kings to maintain the brahminical culture and protect the qualified brāhmaṇas, and all these kings discharged their duties rightly. The members of the Yadu dynasty were so numerous that it would be very difficult to describe them all, even if one had a duration of life of many thousands of years. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that he had heard from reliable sources that simply to teach the children of the Yadu dynasty there were as many as 38,800,000 tutors, or ācāryas. If so many teachers were needed to educate their children, one can simply imagine how vast was the number of family*

members. As for their military strength, it is said that King Ugrasena alone had ten quadrillion soldiers as personal bodyguards.

- ॐ Before the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa within this universe, there were many battles between the demons and the demigods.
- ॐ Many demons died in the fighting, and they all were given the chance to take birth in high royal families on this earth.
- ॐ Because of their royal exalted posts, all these demons became very much puffed up, and their only business was to harass their subjects.

ॐ *Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on this planet just at the end of Dvāpara-yuga to annihilate all these demoniac kings. As it is said in the Bhagavad-gītā, paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām: [Bg. 4.8] “The Lord comes to protect the devotees and annihilate the miscreants.” Some of the demigods were asked to appear on this earth to assist in the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa appeared, He came in the association of His eternal servitors, but some of the demigods also were requested to come down to assist Him, and thus they took their births in the Yadu dynasty. The Yadu dynasty had 101 clans in different parts of the country. All the members of these different clans respected Lord Kṛṣṇa in a manner befitting His divine position, and all of them were His devotees heart and soul. Thus all the members of the Yadu dynasty were very opulent, happy and prosperous, and they had no anxieties. Because of their implicit faith in and devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they were never defeated by any other kings. Their love for Kṛṣṇa was so intense that in their regular activities—in sitting, sleeping, traveling, talking, sporting, cleansing, bathing—they were simply absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and paid no attention to bodily necessities. That is the symptom of a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Just as when a man is fully absorbed in some particular thought he sometimes forgets his other bodily activities, the members of the Yadu dynasty acted automatically for their bodily necessities, but their actual attention was always fixed on Kṛṣṇa. Their bodily activities were performed mechanically, but their minds were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

- ॐ Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has concluded the Ninetieth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by pointing out five particular excellences of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ The **first excellence** is that before Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance in the Yadu family, the river Ganges was known as the purest of all things; even impure things could be purified simply by touching the water of the Ganges. This superexcellent power of the Ganges water was due to its having emanated from the toe of Lord Viṣṇu. But when Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Viṣṇu, appeared in the family of the Yadu dynasty, He traveled personally throughout the kingdom of the Yadus, and by His intimate association with the Yadu dynasty, the whole family not only became very famous but also became more effective in purifying others than the water of the Ganges.

- ॐ The **next excellence** of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance was that although He apparently gave protection to the devotees and annihilated the demons, both the devotees and the demons achieved the same result. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the bestower of five kinds of liberation, of which sāyujya-mukti, or the liberation of becoming one with the Supreme, was given to demons like Kāṁsa, whereas the gopīs were given the chance to associate with Him personally. The gopīs kept their individuality to enjoy the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but Kāṁsa was accepted into His impersonal brahmajyoti. In other words, both the demons and the gopīs were spiritually liberated, but because the demons were enemies and the gopīs were friends, the demons were killed and the gopīs protected.
- ॐ The **third excellence** of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance was that the goddess of fortune, who is worshiped by demigods like Lord Brahmā, Indra and Candra, remained always engaged in the service of the Lord, even though the Lord gave more preference to the gopīs. Lakṣmījī, the goddess of fortune, tried her best to be on an equal level with the gopīs, but she was not successful. Nevertheless, she remained faithful to Kṛṣṇa, although she generally does not remain in one place even if worshiped by demigods like Lord Brahmā.
- ॐ The **fourth excellence** of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance concerns the glories of His name. It is stated in the Vedic literature that by chanting the different names of Lord Viṣṇu a thousand times, one may be bestowed with the same benefits as by thrice chanting the holy name of Lord Rāma. And by chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa only once, one receives the same benefit. In other words, of all the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, including Viṣṇu and Rāma, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the most powerful. The Vedic literature therefore specifically stresses the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya introduced this chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in this age, thus making liberation much more easily obtainable than in other ages. In other words, Lord Kṛṣṇa is more excellent than His incarnations, although all of them are equally the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ The **fifth excellence** of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance is that He established the most excellent of all religious principles by His one statement in the Bhagavad-gītā that simply by surrendering unto Him one can discharge all the principles of religious rites. In the Vedic literature there are twenty kinds of religious principles mentioned, and each of them is described in different śāstras. But Lord Kṛṣṇa is so kind to the fallen conditioned souls of this age that He personally appeared and asked everyone to give up all kinds of religious rites and simply surrender unto Him. It is said that this Age of Kali is three-fourths devoid of religious principles. Hardly one fourth of the principles of religion are still observed in this age. But by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, not only has this void of Kali-yuga been completely filled, but the religious process has been made so easy that simply by rendering transcendental loving service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting His holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, one can achieve the highest result of religion, namely, being transferred to the highest planet within the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Considering all this, one can immediately appreciate the benefit of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance on the earth and understand that His giving relief to the people of the world by His appearance was not at all extraordinary.

ॐ Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī thus concludes his description of the superexalted position of Lord Kṛṣṇa by glorifying Him in the following way:

ॐ “O Lord Kṛṣṇa, all glories unto You.

ॐ You are present in everyone’s heart as Paramātmā.

ॐ Therefore You are known as Jananivāsa, one who lives in everyone’s heart.”

ॐ *As confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hṛd-deśe ’rjuna tiṣṭhati: [Bg. 18.61] “The Supreme Lord in His Paramātmā feature lives within everyone’s heart.” This does not mean, however, that Kṛṣṇa has no separate existence as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Māyāvādī philosophers accept the all-pervading feature of Parabrahman, but when Parabrahman, or the Supreme Lord, appears, they think that He appears under the control of material nature. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as the son of Devakī, the Māyāvādī philosophers accept Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary living entity who takes birth within this material world. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī warns them: devakī-janma-vāda, which means that although Kṛṣṇa is famous as the son of Devakī, actually He is the Supersoul, or the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead. The devotees, however, take this word devakī-janma-vāda in a different way. The devotees understand that actually Kṛṣṇa was the son of mother Yaśodā. Although Kṛṣṇa first appeared as the son of Devakī, He immediately transferred Himself to the lap of mother Yaśodā, and His childhood pastimes were blissfully enjoyed by mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. This fact was admitted by Vasudeva himself when he met Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā at Kurukṣetra. He admitted that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were actually the sons of mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. Vasudeva and Devakī were only Their official father and mother. Their actual father and mother were Nanda and Yaśodā. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes Lord Kṛṣṇa as devakī-janma-vāda.*

ॐ Śukadeva Gosvāmī then glorifies the Lord as one who is honored by the yadu-vara-parīṣat, the assembly house of the Yadu dynasty, and as the killer of different kinds of demons.

ॐ *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, could have killed all the demons by employing His different material energies, but He wanted to kill them personally, to give them salvation. There was no need of Kṛṣṇa’s coming to this material world to kill the demons; simply by His willing, many hundreds and thousands of demons could have been killed without His personal endeavor. But actually He descended for His pure devotees, to play as a child*

with mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja and to give pleasure to the inhabitants of Dvārakā. By killing the demons and giving protection to the devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇa established the real religious principle, which is simply love of God. By following the factual religious principle of love of God, even the living entities known as sthira-cara were also delivered of all material contamination and transferred to the spiritual kingdom. Sthira means the trees and plants, which cannot move, and cara means the moving animals, especially the cows. When Kṛṣṇa was present, He delivered all the trees, monkeys and other plants and animals who happened to see Him and serve Him, both in Vṛndāvana and in Dvārakā.

- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is especially glorified for giving pleasure to the gopīs and the queens of Dvārakā. Śukadeva Gosvāmī glorifies Lord Kṛṣṇa for His enchanting smile, by which He enchanted not only the gopīs of Vṛndāvana but also the queens of Dvārakā. The exact words used in this connection are vardhayan kāma-devam. In Vṛndāvana, as the boyfriend of many gopīs, and in Dvārakā, as the husband of many queens, Kṛṣṇa increased their lusty desires to enjoy with Him. For God realization or self-realization, one generally has to undergo severe austerities and penances for many, many thousands of years, and then it may be possible to realize God. But the gopīs and the queens of Dvārakā, simply by enhancing their lusty desires to enjoy Kṛṣṇa as their boyfriend or husband, received the highest type of salvation.
- ॐ This behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs and queens is unique in the history of self-realization. Usually people understand that for self-realization one has to go to the forest or mountains and undergo severe austerities and penances. But the gopīs and the queens, simply by being attached to Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love and enjoying His company in a so-called sensuous life full of luxury and opulence, achieved the highest salvation, which is impossible to achieve even for great sages and saintly persons. Similarly, demons such as Kamsa, Dantavakra and Śiśupāla, who all treated Kṛṣṇa as an enemy, also got the highest benefit of being transferred to the spiritual world.
- ॐ In the beginning of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Vyāsadeva offered his respectful obeisances to the Supreme Truth, Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. After that he taught his son, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, to preach Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. It is in this connection that Śukadeva Gosvāmī glorifies the Lord with the word jayati. Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and all the ācāryas in disciplic succession, the whole population of the world should glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa, and for their best interest they should take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The process is easy and helpful. It is simply to chant the mahā-mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya has therefore recommended that one be callous to the material ups and downs.

Material life is temporary, and so the ups and downs of life may come and go. When they come, one should be as tolerant as a tree and as humble and meek as the straw in the street, but certainly he must engage himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

- ॐ *The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all living entities, out of His causeless mercy comes down and manifests His different transcendental pastimes in different incarnations. Hearing the attractive pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s different incarnations is a chance for liberation for the conditioned soul, and the most fascinating and pleasing activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself are still more attractive because Lord Kṛṣṇa personally is all-attractive.*
- ॐ *Following in the holy footsteps of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, we have tried to present this book, Kṛṣṇa, for being read and heard by the conditioned souls of this age. By hearing the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one is sure and certain to get salvation and be transferred back home, back to Godhead. It is stated by Śukadeva Gosvāmī that as we hear the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, we gradually cut the knots of material contamination. Therefore, regardless of what one is, if one wants the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental kingdom of God for eternity in blissful existence, one must hear about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and chant the mahā-mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*
- ॐ *The transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, are so powerful that simply by hearing, reading and memorizing this book, Kṛṣṇa, one is sure to be transferred to the spiritual world, which is ordinarily very difficult to achieve. The description of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that it automatically gives us an impetus to study repeatedly, and the more we study the pastimes of the Lord, the more we become attached to Him. This very attachment to Kṛṣṇa makes one eligible to be transferred to His abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana. As we have learned from the previous chapter, to cross over the material world is to cross over the stringent laws of material nature. The stringent laws of material nature cannot check the progress of one who is attracted by the spiritual nature. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā by the Lord Himself: “Although the stringent laws of material nature are very difficult to overcome, one who surrenders unto the Lord can very easily cross over nescience.” There is no influence of material nature in the spiritual world. As we have learned from the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the ruling power of the demigods and the influence of material nature are conspicuous by their absence in the spiritual world.*

ॐ Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has therefore advised Mahārāja Parīkṣit in the beginning of the Second Canto that every conditioned soul should engage himself in hearing and chanting the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī also informed King Parīkṣit that previously many other kings and emperors went to the jungle to prosecute severe austerities and penances in order to go back home, back to Godhead. In India it is still a practice that many advanced transcendentalists give up their family lives and go to Vṛndāvana to live there alone and completely engage in hearing and chanting the holy pastimes of the Lord. This system is recommended in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana followed it, but at the present moment many karmīs and pseudo devotees have overcrowded the holy place of Vṛndāvana just to imitate this process recommended by Śukadeva Gosvāmī. It is said that many kings and emperors formerly went to the forest for this purpose, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura does not recommend that one take up this solitary life in Vṛndāvana prematurely.

ॐ One who prematurely goes to Vṛndāvana to live in pursuance of the instructions of Śukadeva Gosvāmī again falls victim to māyā, even while residing in Vṛndāvana. To check such unauthorized residence in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has sung a nice song in this connection, the purport of which is as follows: “My dear mind, why are you so proud of being a Vaiṣṇava? Your solitary chanting of the holy name of the Lord is based on a desire for cheap popularity, and therefore your chanting is only a pretension. Such an ambition for a cheap reputation may be compared to the stool of a hog because such popularity is another extension of the influence of māyā.” One may go to Vṛndāvana for cheap popularity, and instead of being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may always think of money and women, which are simply temporary sources of happiness. It is better that one engage whatever money and women he may have in his possession in the service of the Lord because sense enjoyment is not for the conditioned soul.

ॐ The master of the senses is Hṛṣīkeśa, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the senses should always be engaged in His service. As for material reputation, there were many demons like Rāvaṇa who wanted to go against the laws of material nature, but they all failed. One should therefore not take to the demoniac activity of claiming to be a Vaiṣṇava just for false prestige, without performing service to the Lord. But when one engages oneself in the devotional service of the Lord, automatically the Vaiṣṇava reputation comes to him. There is no need to be envious of the devotees who are engaged in preaching the glories of the Lord. We have practical experience of being advised by the so-called bābājīs in Vṛndāvana that there is no need to preach and that it is better to live in Vṛndāvana in a solitary place and chant the holy

name. Such bābājīs do not know that if one is engaged in preaching or in glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the good reputation of a preacher automatically follows one. One should not, therefore, prematurely give up the honest life of a householder to lead a life of debauchery in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s recommendation to leave home and go to the forest in search of Kṛṣṇa is not for immature persons. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was mature. Even in his householder life, or from the very beginning of his life, he worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mūrti. In his childhood he worshiped the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and later, although he was a householder, he was always detached, and therefore when he got the notice of his death, he immediately gave up all connection with household life and sat down on the bank of the Ganges to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the association of devotees.