

Caitanya Reader Book Three

The Pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa A Children's Reader

Adapted from the writings of
His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

ISKCON Children's Press

©1975 by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.
All rights reserved.

Contents 1:2 C

Everyone likes to serve Kṛṣṇa in a different way. Kṛṣṇa likes to be served by everyone. There are nine different ways that we can serve and please Kṛṣṇa.

All day long you can speak about Kṛṣṇa and His friends.

Just chant:

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare

Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

Hearing

Once upon a time a great king was going to die. He had only seven days to live. He wanted to learn about the very best thing before he died. So he called all of the sages together and asked them, “What is the best thing for me to hear about before I die? Who will speak about the most important knowledge?”

All of the sages agreed. Śūkadēva Gosvāmī should speak about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. That would be the best thing for the great king to hear.

The king was not afraid. He sat down for seven days. He did not eat. He did not sleep. He just heard the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Because he heard about Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa was pleased with him. At the end of the king’s life, Kṛṣṇa took him back home.

We can be just like this great king. We can also hear about Kṛṣṇa. We can hear his name:

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa He!

We can hear about His pastimes, such as killing the demons.

Whatever we hear from Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa will make us all happy.

We can hear about His strengths, fame beauty and wealth or we can hear the truth from Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Questions

1. What is the most important thing you can hear?
2. What story do you like to hear best? Why?
3. What did Arjuna hear from Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield?

New Words

Śūkadeva important knowledge

Chanting

The king who died after seven days became perfect just by hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

Speaking about Kṛṣṇa is called Kṛṣṇa Kathā. Kṛṣṇa Kathā can make a sad day happy. It can turn a crow into a swan. And it can take us all back to Kṛṣṇaloka.

There is always something to say about Kṛṣṇa. Ananta Śeṣa, the great snake, talks about Kṛṣṇa with 1,000 tongues. He talks and talks but he never gets finished. There is always something new to say about Kṛṣṇa.

When the sun comes up in the morning you can say:

“The sun is Kṛṣṇa’s eye,
It’s lighting up the sky.
Now we can dance and play
For Kṛṣṇa all the day.”

When it’s time for prasādam you can say:

Yaśodā's in the house
But Kṛṣṇa's with the cows.
Come Kṛṣṇa take your seat.
Come home; it's time to eat.”

Or we can pray to Kṛṣṇa when we are sad. We can chant:

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare

Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

When Kṛṣṇa hears you chanting He blesses you and then you
become happier and happier.

Remembering

Remembering Kṛṣṇa means to think of Him within your mind. Prahlāda Mahārāja got to remember Kṛṣṇa all the time. Prahlāda's father was a great demon who always wanted to kill him. But because Prahlāda could remember Kṛṣṇa, he was saved from harm.

Once Prahlāda's father put him in a pot of boiling oil but Prahlāda just thought of Kṛṣṇa and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. The burning oil didn't hurt him.

Another time his father threw him off of a high cliff but Prahlāda remembered Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa appeared and caught Prahlāda in the air.

The demon father then tried to make Prahlāda eat poison but the young boy remembered to offer his prasādam to Kṛṣṇa and so he was not hurt by the poison.

Kṛṣṇa is always pleased when someone remembers Him.

Questions

1. What does “remembering Kṛṣṇa mean?”

New Words

Prahlāda Mahārāja
remembering

Remembering

Kṛṣṇa likes to be served. The devotees of Kṛṣṇa like to serve Him in hundreds of ways. Some devotees sew for Him. Some devotees clean His temple and some devotees preach.

The best servant of all is Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. She sits at Lord Viṣṇu's feet. She soothes His lotus feet and chants His glories. Kṛṣṇa is always pleased with her.

New Words

Lakṣmī
soothes

Worshiping the Deity

Kṛṣṇa comes in the Deity form so that we can serve Him. Sometimes the Deity comes in a form made of wood and sometimes He comes in a form made of stone. The Deity can hear, see, dance and play His flute. He can also talk to us. We can offer many nice things to the Deity.

Just think about āratika. Kṛṣṇa is standing on the altar with His servant, Rādhārāṇī. A devotee is there offering Him incense and camphor.

Kṛṣṇa sees the golden ghee burning and smells the sweet flowers. Pure water is offered in a conch shell and Kṛṣṇa allows His feet to be washed and dried. He then feels the cooling fans and hears the sweet conch blow.

New Words

āratika

Rādhārāṇī

camphor

Praying

Praying is a special way that we can worship Kṛṣṇa. All of the great devotees tell about Kṛṣṇa's glories in their prayers. One devotee named Akrūra became perfect by praying.

He said, “My dear Lord, the whole world is under Your control but you are above the control of material nature. My dear Lord, fire is Your mouth, the earth is Your feet, the sun is Your eye, the sky is Your navel, space is Your head, the directions are Your ears, the demigods are Your arms, the oceans are Your abdomen and the winds and air are Your strength. All the plants are the hair on Your body, the clouds are Your hair, the mountains are Your bones and nails and the days and nights are the twinkling of Your eyelids.”

With great love Akrūra said, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, there cannot be anything more wonderful than Your form. When I have seen Your form, there is nothing left to see.

Questions

1. Do you know another prayer to Kṛṣṇa?
Say it aloud.

New Words

directions

abdomen

Word Study

Read and Spell

milk	butter	potatoes
peas	rice	oranges
okra	curd	coconut
beans	apples	aubergine
sugar	mangoes	ghee
flour	tomatoes	raisins
dhal	grapes	ginger
chapattis	spinach	cauliflower

Read and Answer

1. Which of these are vegetables? Which are fruit?
2. Which of these come from the cow?

Carrying out Orders

Once upon a time there was a great monkey named Hanumān. He was a devotee of Lord Rāma. Hanumān was very powerful. He could make himself very big or he could make himself very small.

Lord Rāma said to Hanumān, “My dear wife, Sīta has been stolen by a great demon. This demon is keeping her on an island in the sea. I want you to build a bridge across the sea. I will then take my army to the island and kill the demon.”

Hanumān was so powerful that he carried huge stones and threw them in the ocean.

Because he carried out the orders of Lord Rāma, Hanumān is the best devotee of all.

New Words

Hanumān

Serving as Friend

Kṛṣṇa is your dearest friend. He stays in your heart and never leaves you. Wherever you go, Kṛṣṇa will go with you. He always wants to be your friend.

Once Arjuna had to fight a terrible war against some very powerful kings. He didn't want to fight. He just wanted to go off to the forest and live like a beggar.

Kṛṣṇa was Arjuna's best friend. Kṛṣṇa told him, "Dear Arjuna, please do not be foolish. I am always protecting my devotees. I want you to fight these kings."

Arjuna was thinking of Kṛṣṇa as his dear most friend. He wanted to serve Kṛṣṇa so he fought the greatest war of all.

Arjuna is the perfect friend and servant of Kṛṣṇa.

New Words

dear most

protecting

beggar

Opening Everything to Kṛṣṇa

Bali Mahārāja was a great king. He was very powerful and very rich. Everyone was afraid of him.

Lord Kṛṣṇa once took the form of a brāhmaṇa boy. He went to Bali Mahārāja and said, “My dear king, will you give a gift to me? I am just a poor brāhmaṇa boy.”

“I will give you whatever you ask,” said the king.

“Please give me just three steps of land,” said the little boy.

As soon as the king agreed to this, the little boy became very, very big. With one step He covered the whole material world. With the second step He covered the whole spiritual world.

Then Kṛṣṇa said to King Bali, “where shall I put my third step?”

“Please put your third step on my head, dear Lord Kṛṣṇa,” said Bali Mahārāja. “Then everything will be Yours.”

Because the king gave everything to Kṛṣṇa, he is the most perfect devotee of all.

Questions

2. What did Bali Mahārāja give to Lord Kṛṣṇa?
2. What do you have that you could give to Kṛṣṇa?

New Words

Bali Mahārāja

spiritual

Word Study

Read and Spell

Keśava	Gopīnātha
Govinda	Madana Mohana
Gopāla	Kālacandjī
Yogeśvara	Kiśor
Arisudana	Dvārakānātha
Yajneśvara	Madhusūdana

Read and Answer

1. Which name means “black moon-face”?
2. Which name means “Killer of the Madhu demon?”
3. Which name do you like best? Why?

Write

“Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa He!”

Back into a Mouse

One day an old sage in the forest saw a mouse. The mouse was being chased by a large cat. The kind sage thought, “I will help that poor mouse.”

So he changed the mouse into a cat. The mouse was no longer afraid since his body was strong and big. The forest cats never bothered him.

One day a big dog saw him. Dogs like to chase cats so the poor mouse had to run for his life.

He ran straight to the shelter of the sage and prayed, “My dear kind sir, you saved me from the cat by giving me a cat’s body. Now can you save me from this dog?”

The kind sage quickly changed the mouse into a dog. Feeling safe again, the mouse went back into the forest.

One day the frightened dog ran to the sage’s hut. He cried, “My dear sir, a great tiger is chasing me. Can you help me?”

The kind sage said, “In this life there will always be fear. You cannot get rid of it by changing your body.”

“Just one more time,” begged the mouse in a dog’s body.

“Please give me the body of a tiger.”

The kind sage changed the frightened dog into a tiger.

Feeling hungry, the tiger looked at the sage and said, “Now I am a tiger; I am going to eat you.”

The sage was not afraid. He looked sadly at the tiger and said, “Back into a mouse again!”

In an instant the tiger became a tiny mouse. He squeaked and ran away into the forest.

New Words

rid

instant

bother

The Two Thieves

One day baby Nimāi was playing in the courtyard of His house. He was all alone. Two thieves came by the house and saw Nimāi with His beautiful face and His shining jewels.

“Look at this child’s jewels,” said one thief to the other.

“Let’s steal them.”

Seeing the child all alone, the two thieves entered the courtyard and picked up Nimāi. “Where are we going?” asked Nimāi.

“We are going to have some sweets to eat,” said one thief as he put Nimāi on his shoulder.

“Oh, that is very good. Let’s go,” said the small child.

Quickly the thieves ran off into the forest.

Nimāi was not a normal child. He was really Kṛṣṇa, playing like a small boy. He knew everything in the minds of the thieves. The thieves thought that they were running away

from Nimāi’s house. By His diving power, Nimāi made the thieves run in a big circle which ended up right in the courtyard of His house.

While Nimāi was gone, many people came to the courtyard and cried, “Where is Nimāi? Who has taken the child?”

As they were calling in this way, Nimāi came into the courtyard, being carried by the two thieves. Very much surprised, the thieves put the child down and ran away without any jewels.

Questions

1. What did the thieves tell Nimāi they were going to give Him?
2. How did Nimāi trick the thieves?

New Words

courtyard

surprise

shoulder

divine

Nimāi and the Pots

When Nimāi was a little boy, He went to school everyday. Śacīmātā was Nimāi's mother. She didn't want her little boy to go to school.

“Please do not let Him go to school,” cried Śacīmātā to Nimāi's father. “If He goes to school He will learn about Bhagavad-gītā; then He'll go away from home like His brother. He will not want a wife. He will not want a home. He will not stay with us. He will just chant and dance all day.”

“You are right,” said Jagannātha Miśra, Nimāi's father. “We will keep Him here with us and He will never go to school. He will never read Bhagavad-gītā so He will never want to leave home.”

Nimāi said, “Yes, my dear mother and father, I will do what you want. I will never go to school.”

But Nimāi was very sad and He was very bad.

One day Nimāi went to a dirty place where pots were kept. The pots were dirty and the ground was dirty but Nimāi sat down on the pots.

Śacīmātā said, “Oh no! Oh no! Why are You sitting on those dirty pots? You must come down. You must come down. It is wrong for You to sit on the dirty pots.”

“Oh, are the pots dirty? Is this wrong?” asked Nimāi. “I do not go to school so I do not know what is right and what is wrong.”

“This is not good,” said Śacīmātā. “You must come down.”

“No,” said Nimāi. “I will not come down.”

“You must come down,” said Jagannātha Miśra.

“I will come down if you let Me go to school,” said Nimāi. “If I may not go to school and read the Bhagavad-gītā then I will never come down.”

“Yes, Nimāi. You may go to school. Now You must come down,” said Jagannātha Mīśra.

Jagannātha Mīśra and Śacīmātā took Nimāi back to school.

Questions

1. Was Nimāi happy that He didn’t have to go to school?
2. What made Nimāi agree to come down from the pile of pots?

New Words

Bhagavad-gītā

school

ground

Word Study

Read and Spell

In Dvārakā City

streets	meeting halls	horses
yards	gardens	elephants
trees	gates	birds
lawns	brāhmaṇas	temples
houses	chariots	fountains
palaces	chariots	merchants

Read and Answer

1. How many of these things do we find in our city?
2. What do we use instead of chariots, horses and elephants?
3. What kind of merchants would you see in Dvārakā City?

Write

1. Write three sentences. Put a word from the word list in each sentence.

Lord Viṣṇu's Trick

Once upon a time a demon named Vṛkāsura wanted a boon. He Met Nārada Muni and asked him, “What demigod should I worship to get a boon?” Since Vṛkāsura was a demon, Nārada Muni told him to worship Lord Śiva.

Vṛkāsura was pleased with Nārada Muni's order. He went to a holy place and lit a fire. He chanted prayers to Lord Śiva. At the same time, he cut flesh off of his body. He offered the flesh in the fire with his prayers. He wanted to see Lord Śiva very much.

Vṛkāsura cut up his body for six days. Each day he offered the flesh to Lord Śiva but Lord Śiva never came. The demon was very sad. He thought, “I will cut off my head and offer it to Lord Śiva, then I will get a boon.”

The next day the demon took a bath in the lake. When his hair and body were wet, he started to cut off his head. Lord Śiva felt sorry for Vṛkāsura and he saved him.

Lord Śiva came before Vṛkāsura and said, “Why are you doing this? Please do not cut off your head. I am happy when someone gives me water from the Ganges. I do not need your flesh. I feel sorry for you so I will give you a boon.”

The sinful demon Vṛkāsura said, “I want the boon that when I touch anyone’s head, it will crack. Then that person will die.”

Lord Śiva was very sorry. He didn’t want to give the boon to Vṛkāsura but he had to give it.

Vṛkāsura was very powerful. He wanted to use this boon on Lord Śiva. The demon thought, “I will touch Lord Śiva’s head. When his head cracks he will die. Then I will take away his wife.” He ran at Lord Śiva with his hand out. Lord Śiva was so afraid that he ran away.

They ran and ran. At last Lord Śiva ran to Lord Viṣṇu’s abode. Lord Viṣṇu knew what Vṛkāsura wanted. The Lord changed Himself into a beautiful young boy. He then stood before Vṛkāsura. Lord Viṣṇu spoke to him in very sweet words. “Please do not run after Lord Śiva. I do not think that

he has given you this boon. Just see; touch your hands to your head. You will see that Lord Śiva has not been able to give you a boon at all.”

The demon was pleased to hear Lord Viṣṇu’s words. He touched his hand to his head. As soon as he did that his head cracked and he died. Lord Śiva was saved from the demon Vṛkāsura by the trick of Lord Viṣṇu.

Questions

1. What did Vṛkāsura offer Lord Śiva?
2. What kind of offering does Lord Śiva like?
3. What was the boon Lord Śiva gave him?
4. What did Vṛkāsura decide to do once he had the boon?
4. How did Lord Viṣṇu trick the demon?

New Words

Vṛkāsura

The Burnt Finger

Once upon a time there was a very poor brāhmaṇa who lived in India. He was very peaceful because he always thought of Kṛṣṇa's kindness. He was very poor and he had no way to serve Kṛṣṇa nicely.

Once he heard the great saints talking about meditation. Meditation means to serve Kṛṣṇa in your mind. So the brāhmaṇa began to serve Kṛṣṇa with his mind.

First he dressed the Lord very nicely. Within his mind he decorated the Lord with jewels.

Then within his mind he offered prayers. He bowed down before the Lord.

After that, he cleaned the temple. He got many water jugs made of gold and silver and filled them with holy water. Within his mind he walked to all the holy rivers.

He got flowers, fruits, incense and sandalwood pulp. He gave all these to the Lord. In this way he worshipped the Lord within his mind.

One day, in his meditation, the brāhmaṇa made sweet rice for the Lord. He used milk, rice and sugar. He wanted to offer it to Kṛṣṇa but he thought that the sweet rice might be too hot. Within his mind he touched his finger to the pot of sweet rice. Suddenly his finger was burnt!

How did that happen? The brāhmaṇa was only meditating on touching the sweet rice. How did his finger get burnt?

Lord Narāyana in the spiritual sky began to smile. He sent an airplane to get the brāhmaṇa. When the brāhmaṇa came before Lord Narāyana, the Lord told everyone about the brāhmaṇa. He gave the brāhmaṇa a spiritual body in the spiritual sky. The Lord was pleased with the brāhmaṇa and his meditation.

New Words

meditate

airplane

sandalwood

decorate

Śakṣī Gopāla

Once upon a time a young brāhmaṇa boy going to Vṛndāvana. On the way he met an old brāhmaṇa and the young boy helped him as they walked. At last they reached Vṛndāvana. The old man said, “Thank you very much. I could not have come all this way without your help. I want to give you some reward.”

But the young boy said, “No, no. It was my duty to help you because you are old and I am young. I must not take any reward.”

At that time they were standing before the beautiful Gopāla Deity of Vṛndāvana. The old man said, “My dear brāhmaṇa boy, I want to give you my daughter. You may marry her.”

“Oh no,” said the boy. “Now you have made this vow in front of the Deity Gopāla. It is not good that you want to give me your daughter. Your son and wife will not like this marriage.”

“But now I have vowed in front of the Deity Gopāla, you shall have my daughter,” said the old man. “So you must marry her.”

Many months passed. The old brāhmaṇa went back to his home. One day the young boy went to the home of the old man. He spoke to the brāhmaṇa in a humble voice. “Once you vowed in front of the Deity Gopāla that I could have your daughter as my wife. Now you must keep that vow.”

“Yes,” said the old man. “You may have her.”

When the wife and son of the old brāhmaṇa heard that their father had given the daughter to a poor man they were very unhappy. The son became angry and the wife cried and cried. But the old man told them that he had vowed in front of the Deity Gopāla and he had to keep the vow.

At last the wife said, “If you give our daughter to this poor brāhmaṇa then I will kill myself.”

The old man didn't know what to do. He wanted to give his daughter to the young boy but he didn't want his wife to die.

Then the son said to the boy, "If my father has made this vow in front of the Deity, let the Deity come here and tell us."

So the young boy left. He went back to Vṛndāvana and saw the Deity Gopāla. "My dear Lord," prayed the boy. "I am asking You to come and witness my marriage. The old brāhmaṇa has vowed to give me his daughter. You must come and witness or he will not keep his vow."

The Deity spoke, "I cannot come with you. Do you think a stone Deity can walk?"

"Yes," said the boy. "If stone Deity can talk than a stone Deity can walk. Please come with me.

The Deity was very pleased with the boy and said, "Yes, I will come. You may take rice and milk to offer Me on the trip. You will walk first and I will come after you. But you must

not look back at Me. You will know I am coming by the sound of My ankle bells.

The boy and the Deity walked for a long time. As they came near the village of the brāhmaṇa, the boy could not hear the bells of Gopāla. Being afraid, he turned to see if the Deity was there. Just then Gopāla stopped. He would not walk any more.

The young boy ran to the home of the old man. He told everyone in the village that Gopāla had come to witness the marriage. No one in the village knew how Gopāla had walked so far. Only the brāhmaṇa boy knew.

The marriage of the poor brāhmaṇa boy and the daughter was held in front of the Deity. Then a large temple was built for Gopāla. After that day the Deity was called Śakṣī Gopāla – the Witness Gopāla.

Questions

1. Why did the young boy help the old man?
2. What was the vow that the old brāhmaṇa made in front of the Deity?
3. How did the boy know that Gopāla was following him?

New Words

witness

village

marriage