

Vasishtha then narrated this story: Long ago, in the Treta-yuga, there lived a brahmana named Dharma-vatsa in the city of Vaideha. He was learned, dutiful, and devoted to Lord Vishnu. He remained satisfied with whatever he could acquire without much endeavor.

Once, he went to the forest to collect kusha grass for the performance of a sacrifice. As he was thus engaged, four good-looking persons suddenly appeared and caught hold of him. Being perplexed, Dharma-vatsa was then carried into the sky by these four persons. Crossing over mountains, rivers, and forests, they came to a huge city that was filled with palaces and crowded with men and women.

Dharma-vatsa saw that some of the people were poor and some of the people were rich. Some people were poorly clothed and some were dressed like demigods. He thought, "Am I dreaming or is this some kind of illusion?"

The four men took the astonished brahmana to the king, who was seated upon a golden throne. The king appeared to be greatly effulgent and he was being praised by professional singers. Upon seeing the arrival of the brahmana, the king stood up with folded hands and then welcomed him with an offering of madhuparka and a nice seat.

The king said, "Today, my life has become successful and my family has been purified because I am seeing a devotee of Lord Vishnu."

The king assured the brahmana that he would be returned to where he had come from. The brahmana, Dharma-vatsa, inquired, "What is this place? Who are the people I see here—some of them noble, some of them mediocre, and some of them base? By what good deeds have you become the king of this region? Why was I brought here and why am I going to be carried away? I see many things here that I have never seen before and so it is like a dream!"

The king replied, "You are a devotee of Lord Vishnu who is not interested in anything mundane. You are truthful and

charitable and so you are worthy of this honor. Please excuse my rash act of bringing you here. I cannot speak more and so kindly listen to the words of my minister, Samanta.”

Samanta said, “This man was a vaishya named Vishvambhara in his previous birth and he lived in the city of Viradha. He faithfully served the cows and worshiped the brahmanas. He gave gifts to those who were deserving, and he honored guests.”

Samanata continued his narration: Once, as he was returning home from a tour of pilgrimage, along with his relatives, Vishvambhara met Lomasa Rishi. After bowing to the sage, he stood up with folded hands.

The pious sage, who is an ocean of mercy, said, “From where are you coming, with your relatives and brahmanas? Upon seeing you, a greatly pious person, my heart has melted.”

Vishvambhara replied, “After seeing my decaying body and death standing nearby, I went on a tour of pilgrimage, along with my wife. While returning home, I have met you.”

Lomasa Rishi said, “There are many holy places in this region. Which ones did you visit?”

Vishvambhara replied, “I visited the Ganga, and the river Sarasvati where Lord Brahma had performed ten horse sacrifices. I went to Kashi and indeed, I visited hundreds of holy places on the way.”

“Whenever a saintly person takes pity on someone, there dawns upon him many auspicious thoughts. If all of the holy places were placed on one side of a scale and saintly persons on the other side, they would balance. Considering this, I want to ask you—what should I do and who should I approach? I have no desire for liberation from material bondage because my mind is filled with attachment for the objects of the senses. Indeed, it cannot tolerate their separation for even a moment, nor can it consider them to be illusory. How can I attain peace? How can I become inclined toward that which is beneficial and how can I become pure? Please enlighten me on this subject.”

Lomasa Rishi replied, "The mind is very powerful and it is steeped in illusion. As an elephant trainer can bring an uncontrollable elephant under control, so the mind can be controlled by association with saintly persons, by constant engagement in spiritual activities, and by seeing how everything is in relation to the Supreme Lord. Now, listen to what Narada Muni had told me about his previous life."

Narada Muni had once informed Lomasa Rishni, "In my previous birth, I was the son of a maidservant who was working in the house of a brahmana. By good fortune, saintly persons came to stay there for the four months of the rainy season and so I was able to learn from them the science of Krishna consciousness, being constantly in their association."

One day, being very interested in their discussions, Narada humbly approached the saintly persons and said, "O noble sages, kindly instruct me in such a way that my mind will become purified so that I can see everything as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu's inconceivable energies."

The sages said, "My dear child, please listen carefully. We shall tell you something for your benefit that will give you happiness in this life and the next. All of the various species of life—be they men, animals, or demigods—are tightly tied by the noose of their karma. As a result, they experience various kinds of happiness and distress. By cultivating a mentality of goodness, they attain the heavenly planets. By cultivating passion, they once again attain a human birth. By cultivating ignorance, they glide down to the animal kingdom."

"A conditioned soul is led by his desires, which are all based on ignorance. If, by good fortune, while in the human form of life, one comes in contact with a saintly person, he can learn the truth about the Supreme Lord, the living entity, and the material nature, which binds him tightly. By such an understanding, under the direction of a saintly person, one can become liberated from material entanglement."

“This vast material ocean abounds in dangerous aquatics, such as crocodiles, and it is overspread by a network of illusion. Anyone who desires to cross this ocean has no other means than the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.”

“As butter is obtained by churning yogurt, as fire is kindled by rubbing two sticks, so by constant and concentrated meditation on the Lord, one can realize his eternal self. This eternal, fully cognizant, and blissful self is seated within the hearts of all living entities. While everything around him is changing, the eternal self remains unaffected and unchanging.”

“The Supreme Lord is also seated, along with the individual soul, within the heart of the living entity. He is very compassionate to His devotees and for their welfare, He sometimes assumes a human-like form, although the ignorant consider Him to be an ordinary human being. If a devotee meditates upon the Supreme Lord within his heart, the Lord becomes pleased and reveals Himself to His servant.”

“Therefore, my dear boy, you should leave aside your false ego and your attachment for this mortal body. While wandering alone throughout this dream world, do not attach yourself once again to any material desires.”

“Where is stability in a dream? Where is truth in magic? Where is eternity in the autumn cloud? Where is reality in the material body?”

“Knowing that the world is born of ignorance, you should restrain your senses and control your mind. In this way, you will attain peace.”

Narada Muni said, “After instructing me in this way, the sages departed and thereafter, I traversed the path that was shown by them. Soon, I saw within myself a wonderful, joyful soul, pure like the full moon in autumn. In due course of time, I gave up my temporary body and ascended to the eternal abode of Lord Hari. Then, by His desire, I appeared as the son of Brahma within this world, although I was completely devoid of

attachment. Playing my vina and singing the glories of the Lord, I constantly travel throughout the universe.”

Lomasa Rishi said, “After narrating the story of his life, Narada Muni departed. I felt exceedingly pleased to have had his association. Thus it is practically experienced by me that a person becomes pure and peaceful in mind by the association of exalted devotees of the Lord. The sins accumulated from numerous previous births immediately disappear in the association of saintly persons.”

Vishvambhara said, “By drinking the nectar of your words, my soul has obtained peace. Just by meeting you, I have received the fruit of all kinds of pilgrimage.”

Lomasa Rishi said, “You are a very pious person but in my opinion, whatever you have done has been rendered fruitless because you failed to perform the vrishotsarga. Know that these two can easily attain the status of a pious person—he who performs the vrishotsarga (a ritual where one gives a bull calf in charity), and he who performs a horse sacrifice. Therefore, you should go now to Pushkara and perform the vrishotsarga. After doing so, you can return home. Whatever should be done should be done immediately.”

The minister, Samanta, continued, “The vaishya, Vishvambhara, went to Pushkara and performed the vrishotsarga, as prescribed by Lomasa Rishi. In the company of Lomasa Rishi, he also visited many holy places of pilgrimage and his merit was greatly increased by the performance of vrishotsarga.”

“After death, Vishvambhara went to heaven, where he enjoyed celestial delights, and thereafter, he was again born on the earth in the royal family of Virasena. His name was Virapanchanana. Once again he performed the vrishotsarga, being assisted by many men. These assistants were sprinkled over by drops of water from the bull's tail and as a result, they attained divine forms. Indeed, these are the persons in the kingdom who look strong, healthy, and beautiful. Those who, out of jealousy, did not like

the performance of the vrishotsarga are the lean, dishevelled, and dirty person in this kingdom.”

“I have thus told you in brief the story of the king’s former life. I had heard this narration from Parashara Muni. Now that you have heard it, you can return home at once.”

Being very surprised and pleased with all that had happened, the brahmana, Dharma-vatsa, was escorted home by the king’s men.

Vasishtha continued speaking to the king, Viravahana, “You should now perform the vrishotsarga, which is the best of all pious acts.”

Lord Krishna continued speaking to Garuda, “After being instructed by the sage, Vasishtha, the king went to Madhupuri and performed the vrishotsarga so that he became highly gratified at heart. When, in due course of time, he quit his material body, the Yamadutas took him away.”

Lord Krishna continued the narration as follows: When King Viravahana inquired from the Yamadutas about the places where sinners are tormented, they informed him that they had already passed them by. Soon, they entered the city of Dharmaraja and came before the lord of death. The Yamadutas informed their master of the king’s former activities. Yamaraja then exhibited his divine form and King Viravahana bowed before him. He then stood up with folded hands and being delighted, he praised the lord of death in various ways.

Yamaraja responded by praising the king and then he ordered his servants to take him to Devaloka so that he could enjoy godly delights. Viravahana was certainly surprised and he asked Yamaraja to explain to him the pious acts he had performed so that now he was able to go to heaven.

Dharmaraja said, “You had performed several very pious acts, given gifts, performed sacrifices, and executed the vrishotsarga at Mathura, under the guidance of Vasishtha.”

“O king, even a little piety done properly multiplies in effect if it is done under the direction of a saintly person.”

After saying this, Dharmaraja suddenly disappeared. Viravahana then went to reside in heaven.

Garuda wanted to hear more on this subject and in response, Lord Krishna told the following story. There was a brahmana named Santapana whose sins had been nullified by the performance of austerities. Understanding very well the futility of material existence, he left home and went to the forest.

One morning, as he was bathing in a river, he looked around him and saw that the forest was full of a great variety of trees and bushes. He saw that the forest was teeming with lions, tigers, hyenas, wild oxen, bears, buffalo, elephants, deer, cobras, monkeys, and other animals, as well as demons and ghosts.

Santapana was terrified at heart and could not decide what to do. Then, while thinking, “Come what may—let it happen,” he proceed on into the forest. While listening to the sounds of crickets and owls, he proceeded only about five steps when he saw a corpse tied to a banyan tree and five fierce ghosts eating it.

The ghosts were rejoicing over their feast while relishing the head, stomach, brain, bones, and marrow. Upon seeing the ghosts, who were loudly cracking the bones with their powerful jaws, Santapana was astonished at heart and stopped in his tracks.

When the ghosts saw the brahmana in that lonely forest, they rushed at him, shouting, “Me first! Me first!”

Two ghosts caught hold of the brahmana’s arms, two caught hold of his legs, and the other one caught him by the head. Speaking in their own language, the ghosts said, “I shall eat first, I shall eat first,” while dragging him. Then, suddenly, they ascended into the sky. From there, the ghosts could see how much flesh was remaining on the corpse that was tied to the

banyan tree. They could see how the corpse had been torn by their jaws.

The ghosts descended to the earth, picked up the corpse, and once again went into the sky. When he saw himself being carried through the sky, the brahmana, Santapana, began to praise the Supreme Lord in his mind: "I bow down to Lord Vishnu, the holder of the chakra. He is the supremely conscious soul who released Gajendra by killing the crocodile. May the Lord release me from the noose of my former activities."

Being thought of by the brahmana, Lord Krishna immediately went to where he was being carried away by the ghosts. The Lord followed the ghosts for some time and simply due to His presence, the brahmana felt as if he were being carried on a palanquin.

While going, the Lord saw Manibhadra, a leader of the Yakshas, and so He requested him to vanquish the five ghosts. Being instructed by the Lord, Manibhadra assumed the form of a ghost that was fearful even to the five ghosts. Manibhadra attacked the ghosts, striking them with his arms, legs, and head. Holding onto the corpse, the ghosts fought back, attacking Manibhadra with their nails, feet, and jaws.

While avoiding their blows, Manibhadra snatched the corpse from them. At this, the five ghosts rushed at Manibhadra, but instantly, he vanished from view. Being very disappointed, the ghosts descended upon a mountain, thinking to kill the brahmana and eat him. However, just as they were going to do so, the ghosts remembered their previous births. This was the result of the brahmana's nobility, as well as the protection of the Lord.

Being enlightened, the ghosts surrounded the brahmana, Santapana, and said, "Please excuse us."

Their voices seemed like an echo in the mountain. Upon hearing their words, the brahmana asked, "Who are you? Is this all a dream, illusion, or fancy?"



The leader of the ghosts replied, "O brahmana, we have become absolved of all our sins by seeing you. My name is Paryushita. This is Suchimukha, this is Shighra, this is Rodha, and the fifth is Lekhaka."

The brahmana said, "What are the meanings of these names? Were they given to you according to your activities?"

Paryushita replied, "Once, at the time of performing the shradha ceremony, I invited a brahmana to my house. When he arrived, I had already eaten some of the food, being hungry. I then gave the leftover food to the brahmana and because of that sin, when I died, I became a ghost. I received the name Paryushita because I had given the brahmana stale food."

Suchimukha said, "Once, an old brahmana woman went to the holy place, Bharadvaja, accompanied by her five-year-old son. Pretending to be a kshatriya, I stopped her in the wilderness, intending to steal her belongings. I took both of their clothes and was about to leave when I saw the boy drinking out of a jar. There was no water in the wilderness and I was very thirsty and so I frightened the boy and took the jar. Later on, the boy died of thirst and the mother, being aggrieved, also died by throwing herself into a dry well."

"O brahmana, because of that sin, I became a ghost with a mouth as small as the hole of a needle, although my body is as huge as a mountain. Because of this, even though I get food, I cannot eat it and so I burn with hunger. It is because my mouth is as small as the hole of a needle that I am called Suchimukha."

Shrighra said, "Formerly, I was a rich vaishya. Once, I traveled to a distant country on business. I was accompanied by a friend who was my business partner. He was also rich but he was very greedy. Due to misfortune, we lost all our money by making a bad business deal. We started for home by boat. As the sun was setting, we began to cross the river and being very tired, my friend slept with his head in my lap. At that time, a cruel thought entered my mind and it so happened that I threw my friend into the river. Because it was dark, no one in the boat

knew of this. I took all his possessions, including gold and jewels, and returned home.”

“I kept everything in my house and then told his wife that he had been killed by robbers, who stole everything. I explained to her that I had managed to escape. She became overwhelmed with grief and gave up her life by entering fire. Seeing that I was now free of the danger of being caught, I returned home, where I enjoyed my friend’s wealth to my heart’s content. Because I had returned home quickly after throwing my friend into the river, my name is Shighra.”

Rodha said, “Formerly, I was a shudra. Due to the king’s favor, I owned one hundred villages. My parents were old and I had a younger brother. Due to association with a greedy person, my brother stopped behaving respectfully toward me and so I stopped giving him food and clothes. Indeed, he suffered much on my account.”

“My parents began to give my brother things secretly. When I learned of this, I bound my parents in iron chains in a deserted temple. Being in such a miserable condition, they ended their lives by drinking poison. Being an orphan, my brother wandered about for some time and then died. Due to my sins, I became a ghost. Because I chained my parents, I am called Rodha.”

Lekhaka said, “Formerly, I was a brahmana, residing at Avanti. I was engaged in worshiping the king’s deities, of which there were many. Their bodies were decorated with gold and jewels and while worshiping them, an evil thought entered my mind. Using an iron rod, I took out the jewels from the deities’ eyes. When the king saw this, he became enraged and vowed that whoever had stolen the jewels would be killed.”

“Knowing of this, one night, I took a sword, entered the king’s chambers and killed him. I then took the gold and jewels and ran away. Thereafter, deep in the forest, a tiger pounced on me and killed me with his claws. Because I had defiled the deities with an iron rod, I am known as Lekhaka.”

The brahmana said, "Now, tell me how you live as ghosts and how you receive food."

The ghosts replied, "We stay where people do not follow the Vedic principles, where there is no feeling of shame due to falsehood, where there is no faith in God, and where there is no sense of discipline, no inclination for forgiveness, no patience, and no knowledge."

"We eat the flesh and suck the blood of those who do not follow religious principles. We eat and drink vomit, cough, urine, stool, and tears. O brahmana, do not ask us any more questions because we are ashamed of our eating habits. Suddenly, we have remembered our previous births."

Just then, Lord Vishnu appeared before the brahmana and the ghosts. The brahmana fell to the ground to offer his obeisances while the ghosts trembled, their eyes wide with astonishment. Six chariots then appeared in the sky overhead and took the brahmana and the ghosts to heaven. The ghosts ascended to heaven because of their association with the brahmana, as well as due to the appearance of the Lord.

Next, Lord Krishna related this story to Garuda: In the Krita-yuga, there lived a king named Babhruvahana in the Anga province. During the reign of this pious king, there were no sinners, and there was no fear of an epidemic or thieves.

Once, along with many soldiers, the king went to the forest to hunt. As he went along the forest path, the king was praised by brahmanas. The forest was full of flower-bearing trees and was surrounded by mountains on all sides. It was an uninhabited forest, devoid of water, and spread over an area of many miles. As he rode into the interior of the forest, the king killed many animals.

When he hit a deer in the stomach with an arrow, it ran away, and so the king followed it, leaving his entourage behind. After some time, he became very tired, hungry, and thirsty. After entering another forest, he began to search for water.

Finally, he heard the sound of geese and cranes and so he could understand that there must be a lake nearby.

At last, the king came to a lake and both he and his horse entered the water. Mixed with the filaments of many lotuses, the water was fragrant, clear, and cool. Being very tired, the king sat down by the side of the lake beneath a banyan tree to rest. He tied his horse to a branch of the tree, spread a blanket on the ground, and went to sleep.

There was a nice breeze and so King Babhruvahana slept well for awhile. A king of ghosts then arrived at that spot, in the company of hundreds of attendant ghosts. The ghosts had been wandering here and there, in search of food and drink. At that moment, the king woke up and upon seeing a deformed being that appeared just like a bag of skin and bones before him, he put an arrow to his bow.

The leader of the ghosts looked at the king for some time, standing before him like a branchless tree. The king then asked, "Who are you? How did you attain this deformed condition?"

The ghost replied, "A hope that I can give up my ghostly form has arisen in my heart upon seeing you. You can see that I have a very strange and emaciated form."

King Babhruvahana said, "In this terrible forest, I have seen many fearful creatures and deformed serpents. Dry winds are blowing and lightning is flashing. I have seen Nagas and Sarabhas. In some places, I hear strange sounds, and in other places, there is utter silence. At this sight of all this unnaturalness, my heart trembles."

The ghost said, "Those whose funeral rites were not properly performed, as well as those who were very ungrateful, who were drunkards, who died by accident, who stole gold, who were very envious, who performed no atonement, and who were attached to unchaste women, remain as ghosts after death and suffer greatly due to lack of food and water."

“O king, these ghosts had no relatives to perform their funeral rites and so I request you to perform them. If you do this good deed for their welfare, they will be released from their suffering.”

The king said, “With your emaciated form and fierce appearance, you seem to be a very strange kind of ghost. Please tell me about yourself so as to relieve my anxiety.”

The ghost replied, “O best of kings, I shall relate my life story from the very beginning. After hearing how I became a ghost, I am sure that you will have sympathy for me.”

“I had lived in the flourishing city of Vidisha. I was a vaishya and my name was Sudeva. I worshiped the demigods and performed the shraddha ceremony. I gave gifts to the brahmanas and charity to the poor. By misfortune, however, all this was in vain. I had no children, no friends, and no relatives who could perform my funeral rites. For that reason, I became a ghost.”

“O king, please perform the shraddha ceremony for me so that I can be released from this terrible condition. After all, the king is like a father to all the citizens. If you do me this favor, I will give you the best jewel that I possess. Please have mercy on me and act in a way that I can be released from this torment. It is due to constant hunger and thirst that I appear so lean and deformed.”

The king said, “Tell me exactly what I must do to release you from your torment.”

The ghost said, “People can understand the presence of a ghost in their home by various signs and by the troubles that ghosts give them. I shall now tell you about this. It is due to the influence of a ghost that a woman does not conceive, a person dies prematurely, there is a sudden loss of a job, a house is mysteriously set on fire, and one suffers from a terrible disease. When money is properly invested but then lost—this is due to the influence of a ghost. When crops are ruined even after sufficient

rain—this is due to a ghost. When business is unsuccessful or a wife creates tension, it is due to harassment by ghosts.”

“If the vrishotsarga is performed, one is released from being a ghost. Therefore, O king, please perform this ritual for my sake. Take this precious gem and with the money you receive, perform the vrishotsarga on the full moon day in the month of Karttika. Invite learned brahmanas, perform the sacrifice, and recite the prescribed mantras. Afterwards, feed the brahmanas sumptuously. When this is done, I will surely give up this form as a ghost.”

The king took the jewel, saying, “So be it.” Meanwhile, as the ghost and king were conversing, a resounding sound of bells and trumpets was heard, indicating that the king’s soldiers were approaching. At this, the ghost suddenly disappeared. Thereafter, the king left the forest and returned to his capital. Then, on the Karttika Purnima, with the money gotten from selling the jewel, the king performed the vrishotsarga ceremony for the ghost. As a result, Sudeva received a new body with a golden complexion. He then approached the king and glorified him for his kindness.

Garuda inquired, “O Lord, has anyone seen the forefathers descend from the other world and partake of food in the shraddha ceremony in this world?”

Lord Krishna replied, “I shall tell you how once, Sita saw within the body of a brahmana her deceased father-in-law, grandfather-in-law, and great-grandfather-in-law.”

At the behest of His father, Lord Rama went to the forest. When He came to Pushkara, along with Sita and Lakshmana, Sita performed the shraddha ceremony with ripe fruit that she gathered from the trees. At noon, the sages that Rama had invited arrived. Sita was highly delighted to see them. Being instructed by Rama, she fed them very nicely.

All of a sudden, Sita left that place and hid within the bushes. Not seeing her, Rama became anxious, thinking that she might

be feeling shy. Rama then finished serving the brahmanas and when they departed, Sita returned.

Rama asked, "Why did you leave while the forest sages were here? Tell me the reason for your abrupt departure."

Standing with her face bent downward, and tears streaming from her eyes, Sita replied, "O Lord, I saw something wonderful. I saw your father in front of one of the brahmanas, dressed in royal attire. I saw two others similarly dressed. Upon seeing Your father, I moved away from his presence. Dressed in tree bark and deerskin, how could I serve him food? How could I serve him food on a plate that even a slave would not touch? How could I, full of dirt and perspiration, come before Your father? I felt ashamed and so I hid myself."

Upon hearing this, Rama was astonished because He had never before heard of such a miraculous occurrence.

Garuda said, "O reservoir of mercy, please tell me how a jiva, even though full of sins, can attain You after crossing the ocean of material existence."

Lord Krishna said, "Man attains success by being engaged in performing his prescribed duties. By taking shelter of Me while controlling his mind and senses, leaving aside the objects of material enjoyment, being freed from attachment and envy, serving Me without expecting any reward, controlling his speech, practicing yoga in a mood of detachment, and giving up false pride and anger, a person attains the platform of self-realization."

Lord Krishna continued speaking to Garuda: There are eight million four hundred thousand species of creatures and they are divided into four main categories—*andajas* (born of eggs), *svedajas* (born of perspiration, such as some insects), *udbhijas* (born of seeds), and *jarayujas* (born from the womb).

A human birth is achieved with great difficulty. Human society is divided into four *varnas*—*brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas*, and *shudras*—as well as *antyajas* (below the four *varnas*)

The antyajās are of seven groups—washermen, cobblers, actors, Varudas, Kaivartas, Bhedas, and Bhillas. Adding the Mlecchas and Dumbas, there are thirteen groups of people.

In infancy, a person is obsessed with his parents. In youth, he is obsessed with his wife. Later, he becomes obsessed with his children and grand-children. Never is one obsessed with the soul or Supreme Soul. It is easy for one bound by iron chains to gain release but one who is bound by affection for his wife and children is never released.

It is impossible to escape death, whether one is learned or one is a fool, a child or an old man, happy or morose. Everyone comes into this world and then goes away. Man is born alone, man dies alone, he enjoys his merits by himself, and he reaps the bitter fruit of his sins by himself.

Even as everyone is watching, a man dies. Casting off the dead body, the kinsmen return home but the dead man's good and bad deeds definitely follow him. His body is burnt but the actions he performed keep him company as he departs. Whatever wealth one has, whether scanty or plenty, is due to one's previous activities.

Garuda inquired, "O Lord, please tell me more about ghosts. How does one become a ghost? How can they be freed from that condition? What do ghosts eat and where do they stay?"

In reply, Lord Krishna spoke at great length about ghosts, a summary of which is given here: Men of sinful actions, forced to act according to their previous misdeed, are those who become ghosts after death. One who desecrates a well, a lake, parks, temples, and groves of trees, as well as those who misdirect others while performing religious rites for money, are sinners. After death, they remain as ghosts.

Those who meet with death at the hands of chandalas, infuriated brahmanas, serpents, and animals with fangs—or by drowning, or by being struck by lightning—and who commit suicide by hanging themselves from a tree, by consuming



poison, or by means of a weapon—as well as those who die from a loathsome disease, or at the hands of robbers—as well as those who are burnt to death, who were not cremated after death, who died when a wall or building collapsed, who died of a dog bite, or in any other foul manner, become ghosts after death and roam the earth.

One who rejects his mother, sister, wife, daughter, or daughter-in-law without having found any fault in her, surely becomes a ghost. One who deceives his brother, kills a brahmana or a cow, drinks liquor, has sexual relations with his guru's wife, or steals gold or silk, becomes a ghost.

In this connection, Maharaja Yudhisthira once inquired from his grandfather, Bhishma, "Please tell me what evil deeds result in one becoming a ghost after death. By what means can a ghost be released from his torment?"

Bhishma's reply is summarized as follows: There was once a brahmana named Santaptaka who was very kind and compassionate by nature. He was celibate and he was truthful, soft-hearted, and pure. He delighted in serving guests and he strictly followed the instructions of his spiritual master.

Once, for the purpose of practicing austerities, he went to the forest. Thereafter, while practicing yoga in the hopes of conquering material existence, the brahmana gained complete control over his senses. Following the path of impeccable conduct, he eagerly desired liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

In this way, the brahmana spent many years in the forest. Then, the desire to visit holy places of pilgrimage entered his mind. He thought, "I shall stay immersed within the water of a holy river until I leave aside my material body."

After bathing at sunrise, the brahmana started his journey. One day, he lost his way and came to a land that was full of thorny shrubs and devoid of tall trees. Then, while hurrying to

pass through this place, the brahmana came upon five terrible-looking ghosts, having deformed features.

At first, the brahmana closed his eyes due to fright but then, after summoning his courage, he inquired from them, "O ghosts, how is it that you have become so deformed? What sinful acts did you commit? Where are you going?"

The leader of the ghosts replied, "O excellent brahmana, we have become ghosts as a result of our own misdeeds. Now, we are simply engaged in harassing others. As ghosts, we are always oppressed by hunger and thirst. We are exceedingly distressed and do not know where to go or what to do. We have neither mothers nor fathers."

"However, we are delighted to see you. Please stay here awhile and I shall narrate everything to you, from the very beginning. My name is Paryushita and my associates are Suchimukha, Shighraha, Rohaka, and Lekhaka."

The brahmana asked, "How can ghosts have names like these. There must be some meaning to them and so please tell me."

The leader of the ghosts replied, "I used to eat all the delicious food and leave the stale remnants for the brahmanas. In my last life as a human being, I used to show hungry brahmanas the door when they happened to come to my house. For this reason, my name is Paryushita."

"In this ghost's last life as a human being, whenever a hungry brahmana would beg him for food, he would run away. It is for this reason that his name is Shighrha."

"This one irritated many brahmanas with his sharp tongue when they came to beg food from him. It is for this reason that he is called Suchimukha."

"In his former life as a human being, this ghost sumptuously ate the offerings made to the Deities while the brahmanas were absent. For this reason, he is called Rohaka."

“Whenever someone would ask this one for something, in his last life, he would remain silent and simply scratch the ground with his toes. That is why he is called Lekhaka.”

“O brahmana, we have gained some relief by seeing you. If you wish to hear more, you can ask what you like.”

The brahmana asked, “The creatures of the earth subsist upon food. I would like to know what you eat.”

The ghost replied, “O brahmana, our food is extremely disgusting. When you hear about it, you will surely hate us. Mucus, stool, urine, other bodily secretions, leftover food, and other filthy things constitute our diet. We eat, drink, and revel in the houses where people have no care for cleanliness and thus throw things here and there. We haunt such unclean persons. We reside in houses where the people are not truthful and where robbers come to have their meals. We delight in haunting the houses where no mantras are chanted, no food is offered to the Deities, and where people do not recite the Vedic literature.”

“We hover around the houses of those who are without shame and decency, and where the poor husband is controlled by his dominating wife. We delight in the houses where anger, sleep, sorrow, fear, arrogance, quarrels, and deception reign supreme.”

“Dear brahmana, I feel ashamed to tell you about the food we enjoy. We lick up the urine mixed with semen from the vagina of a widow indulging in illicit sex with her lover. We lick up the menstrual fluid from women’s vaginas.”

“O noble brahmana, who prefers austerity to riches, I ask you—what are the means for insuring that one will not become a ghost in his next life?”

The brahmana said, “One who fasts and performs religious rituals never becomes a ghost. One who performs sacrifices; gives liberally in charity; and builds temples, parks, or cowsheds, never becomes a ghost. One who serves the brahmanas, gives his

virgin daughters in charity, encourages education, and provides food and shelter to the needy, never becomes a ghost."

"If a person eats food offered by a fallen man and dies while it is undigested in his stomach, he becomes a ghost. If a priest officiates at a sacrifice of an unworthy person and neglects that of a worthy person, he becomes a ghost. If one lives with despicable people, he becomes a ghost. One who associates with drunkards or has sexual intercourse with a woman who is a drunkard, becomes a ghost. One who steals from a brahmana, a temple, or his preceptor, and one who takes money from his son-in-law before giving his daughter in marriage, becomes a ghost. One who forsakes a guiltless mother, sister, wife, daughter, or daughter-in-law becomes a ghost."

"These men are sure to become ghosts—those who misappropriate trust property, kill a cow, deceive a friend, are fond of another man's wife, hate their brother, steal gold, are fond of telling lies, and are addicted to wine."

As the brahmana was speaking, drums could be heard in the sky as the demigods showered flowers on his head. Five celestial chariots then arrived and took away the ghosts, after they had bid farewell to the brahmana. The ghosts had become freed from all sins by listening to the brahmana's talks and as a result, they attained the highest destination.

Garuda was very pleased to hear this narration. He asked, "O Lord, what do ghosts do? What are their activities? How can the presence of a ghost be known?"

In reply, Lord Krishna further discoursed on the subject of ghosts: Being oppressed by hunger and thirst, ghosts enter their former homes. Although their forms are subtle, they give signs to their sleeping descendents. They visit the places where their sons, wives, and other relatives are sleeping.

If someone dreams of a horse, an elephant, a bull, or a man with a deformed face—if a person is suddenly awakened from sleep and sees himself on the other side of the bed—this is the

doing of a ghost. If one is bound up by chains in a dream, if his dead ancestors demand food in a dream, if someone snatches food from one while he is dreaming, if one rides a bull in a dream—this is due to the influence of a ghost.

Indeed, there are many indications that ghosts are influencing one in a dream. If one see his wife, son, husband, or other relative dead in a dream, or begs food in a dream due to hunger—this is due to a ghost.

Garuda asked, "In shastra, it is stated that no one dies prematurely. Everyone enjoys his allotted duration of life. It is also said that in the Kali-yuga, men will live for one hundred years. However, it is seen that sometimes a king or a child dies prematurely. Very few people live to be one hundred years old. Why is this? It appears that shastra is not a perfect authority."

Lord Krishna said, "My dear Garuda, you are My staunch devotee. You have spoken most intelligently. I shall now tell you how the god of death is induced by Lord Brahma to take away a person prematurely."

"It is true, as stated in shastra, that a man lives for one hundred years in the age of Kali. However, due to a person's misdeeds, he dies prematurely. In the age of Kali, people do not take to a systematic study of the Vedas, they do not follow the traditional modes of conduct, they commit numerous sinful activities, and they forsake their prescribed duties. They eat food in any house that they visit and they are fond of other men's wives. All of these things reduce their duration of life."

"Evil deeds take men quickly to the abode of Yamaraja, especially if they are impure, if they do not possess faith, and if they do not practice the Vedic principles. People who practice deception and frequently indulge in lying are soon taken to Yamaraja's abode. One who forsakes his duties and indulges in forbidden activities dies soon."

"I affirm that the material body, which evolves from food, is not permanent or steady or rooted in firm ground. The food that

is cooked in the morning becomes stale by evening. How can one expect permanence in the body that is sustained by such food? Realizing that the body is doomed to destruction, people should strive to eradicate their sinful reactions. The body belongs to the one who nourishes it or to those who begot it. After death, it is burned, eaten by dogs, or consumed by worms. What sanctity can there be with regards to such a body?"

"Within the womb, the embryo realizes the miserable condition of material existence. While remembering his past sinful acts, he becomes regretful. However, as soon as he is born, ignorance envelops him. As an infant, one is completely ignorant. In youth, one is blinded by sexual desires. One who can realize the futility of material existence can attain liberation from material entanglement."

"From the very moment of conception, death awaits everyone, whether he is beautiful or ugly, rich or poor, illiterate or a scholar, or a brahmana or any other caste. One who is truly wise will devote himself to penance and the practice of yoga."

"The mentality of the father at the time of conception, when the semen fertilizes the mother's ovum, is reflected in the child produced by that union. It is for this reason that a boy often takes after his father. A child may differ in character from his parents but not in his bodily features."

Garuda asked, "How does life come into being? How are the skin, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, bones, hands, feet, tongue, genitals, anus, hair, nails, joints, and various lines on the body formed? What causes lust, anger, fear, shame, the mind, joy, and complexions of various hues? I consider the human body to be a wonderful piece of workmanship. O almighty Lord, who is the guiding hand behind this miraculous creation? Kindly tell me all of these things."

The Lord said, "O Garuda, you have inquired very nicely into the formation of life. Now, please hear attentively. A woman should be avoided during the first four days of her menstrual period. Lord Brahma had removed the sin from Indra and

then deposited one-fourth of it in women. For this reason, even glancing at her face during this period should be avoided."

"A woman in her period is an outcaste on the first day, the killer of a brahmana on the second day, and a washer-woman on the third. She starts to become pure on the fourth day. After seven days, she becomes pure enough to worship the Deities. If conception takes place within the period of these first seven days, the progeny is considered impure."

"Whatever are the thoughts of the parents during sexual intercourse—like that will be the mentality of the child. There is no doubt of this. If the conception takes place on an even night, a boy will be born. If the conception takes place on an odd night, a girl will develop. For this reason, it is better to have sexual intercourse on even nights of the month, leaving aside the first seven nights after the beginning of the woman's menstrual period."

"The sixteen days from the beginning of the menstrual period are generally considered to be the days of heat for a woman. If conception takes place on the fourteenth night, the son will be virtuous and endowed with all good qualities. Ordinary people will never obtain such a birth."

"A woman is like a field wherein the man plants his seed. A man depositing his semen within the vagina of a woman is actually sowing a seed. For the proper growth of the child, a pregnant woman should avoid excessive sunshine."

"On the night selected for sexual intercourse, the man and woman should chew betel leaves and apply perfume and sandalwood paste over their bodies. The thoughts that hover in the mind of a man during sexual intercourse have a lasting influence on moulding the character of the child that is conceived."

"The semen mixing with the ovum causes the fetus to develop. It develops like the moon in the sky. Consciousness (the soul) is present in the semen in a seed form. When love, mind,

and semen act in harmony, a secretion is created in the woman's womb. If that secretion is predominant during conception, the child will be a girl. If the semen is predominant, the child will be a boy. In other words, if the man feels very strong, sexually, at the time of intercourse, the child will be a boy, and if the woman feels very sexually stimulated, the child will be a girl. If the semen and secretion are of equal strength, the child will be a eunuch."

"Within a day, the essence of the foetus is formed. It becomes like a frothy bubble in five days. Within fourteen days, it becomes a mushy lump of flesh, and within twenty days, it becomes solid flesh. Thereafter, it gradually develops. After two months, the skin and fat have developed. The bones and marrow are formed within three months. The hair and heels are formed in the fourth month. The ears, nose, and stomach are formed in the fifth month. The throat, back, and reproductive organs are formed in the seventh month. By the eighth month, all of the limbs are properly formed. In the beginning of the ninth month, the child is fully developed."

"At the end of nine months, being pushed by air within the womb and agitated due to pain, the child is born. The body is simply a product of the combination of material elements. The parts of the body where earth is predominant are the skin, bones, nerves, hair, and flesh. The parts of the body where water is predominant are saliva, urine, semen, marrow, and blood. Fire is predominant in hunger, sleep, thirst, lethargy, and brilliance. Love, hatred, bashfulness, fear, and delusion are derived from air. Running, breathing, contracting, stretching, and thwarting are also qualities of air. Resonant sound, gravity, hearing, and supporting are qualities derived from ether."

"The ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose are the five senses of perception (jnana-indriya). The hands, legs, rectum, genital, and tongue are the five organs of action (karma-indriya). There are ten principal nerves in the body—ida, pingala, sushumna,



gandhari, gajajihva, pusha, yasha, alambusha, kuhu, and shankhini. The ten vital airs within the body are prana, apana, samana, udana, vyana, naga, kurma, kikara, devadatta, and dhananjaya."

"The prana blows on the gastric fire, from below, and this fire separates food into two parts—the nutritive portion and waste. Waste matter goes out of the body in twelve forms. The ears, eyes, nose, tongue, teeth, navel, rectum, pores, nails, and kidneys are the passages through which waste leaves the body."

"There are thirty-five million hair on the body and thirty-two teeth. The nails are twenty and hair growing on the face and head are seven hundred thousand. Thus, I have described the physical body."

"Pleasure, pain, fear, and welfare—these come to a person as a result of his previous actions and for no other reason. In the womb, the embryo eats and drinks whatever the mother eats and drinks. From the mother's food, the embryo receives nourishment and thus develops his form. While in the womb, he remembers his past actions from hundreds of births and being tormented on all sides, he feels great distress. He thinks, 'When I leave the womb, I will be very cautious. I shall not repeat the same mistakes. Indeed, I shall act in a way that I shall never again have to enter a mother's womb.' Then, at the scheduled time, after nine months, the embryo emerges from the womb, head first."

"While leaving the womb, the living entity suffers so much that he loses consciousness. After coming out of the womb, he cries in anguish. With the touch of the air, he gains a little relief and regains consciousness. Thereafter, Lord Vishnu's maya overpowers him so that he loses all power of discrimination."

"In childhood, he remains in that state. After passing through childhood and youth, he finally arrives at old age. At last, he succumbs to death, and then again is born. Thus one rotates on a wheel of birth and death. Sometimes, he goes to

heaven and sometimes, to hell. Whether in heaven or in hell, he reaps the fruit of his activities. Sometimes, after exhausting the merit of his activities, he descends to the earth, along with the residue of his past pious activities. Heaven and hell are not permanent abodes for the living entities."

"People in hell suffer extreme torture as a result of their past hellish activities. Their torture increases when they see their companions enjoying in heaven. Even the residents of heaven suffer greatly because the fear haunts them from the very start that after exhausting their merit, they will again have to suffer in hell. While observing the torments of the residents of hell, the people in heaven feel that the same fate awaits them after the expiry of their pious merit."

"In childhood, the living entity suffers due to his inability. In old age, he suffers from disease. In youth, he suffers the ill effects of vicious desires, jealousy, and rage. He is afflicted by bad dreams. Old age ends in death, which is extremely painful."

"Being dragged by the Yamadutas, he is thrust into hell. After suffering in hell, he again comes to the earth to suffer the pangs of birth and death once more. Thus, on the wheel of this universe, the living beings are made to rotate as if on a potter's wheel, and they are tortured incessantly, entangled by the network of their actions."

"O Garuda, there is no pleasure whatsoever in this world abounding in a multitude of sorrows. After carefully considering this, one should aspire for liberation."

"Knowing that a person is about to die, he should be bathed in cow's urine, cow dung, sanctified clay, water from a sacred river, and other water that has been purified by kusha grass. He should be dressed in clean clothes and laid on the ground that has been smeared with cow dung, and strewn over with darbha grass, with the tips pointing south."

"The dying man's head should face east or north, and gold should be placed in his mouth. The shalagrama-shila and tulasi

leaves should be kept nearby. A ghee lamp in a clay cup should be lit, and he should chant om namo bhagavate vasudevaya. Om should be drawn on the ground, and that symbol should be worshiped.”

“The dying man should worship Lord Vishnu with offerings of flowers, incense, and other articles. While worshiping the Lord, his mind should be concentrated in a mood of devotion. He should then offer charity to the brahmanas and the needy.”

“The dying man should give up attachment for his wife, sons, friends, land, home, and wealth, and fix his heart on Lord Vishnu as his ultimate goal. He should then recite the Purushasukta mantra, if he is feeling distress. If he is dying and unable to recite the mantra, his sons or other relations may do so.”

“O Garuda, I have told you what should be done when a man is dying. Now, I shall tell you the merit of these activities. Bathing purifies a man by removing impurities. Meditation upon Lord Vishnu yields all kinds of good results. A blade of darbha grass can take a man to heaven. A circle should be drawn around a dying man because it is said that Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Lakshmi, and fire reside within a circle.”

“In this shadowy world of insurmountable difficulties, the following six inspire devotion—meditation on Lord Vishnu, observance of Ekadashi, study of the Bhagavad-gita, worship of Tulasi-devi, brahmanas, and cows. By chanting the mantra, om namo bhagavate vasudevaya, one becomes completely absorbed in Brahman.”

“O Garuda, simply by worshiping Me, one can attain my imperishable abode. Thus, I have informed you of the benefit of performing activities for the sake of a dying man.”

“The various features of the universe are present in the human body. The planets, mountains, seas, and the sun and moon are all present in the body. Atala is located on the soles of the feet. Vitala is on the top of the feet, Sutala on the knees, Talatala on the calves, Rasatala on the thighs, Mahatala on the genitals, and Patala on the hips.”

“The Bhu-loka planetary system is situated in the navel, and Bhuvar-loka is situated above the navel. Svargaloka is situated in the heart. Maharloka is in the throat. Janaloka is in the mouth. Tapaloka is on the forehead, and Satyaloka is situated in the head. These are the fourteen planetary systems.”

“Mount Meru is situated on the shoulder blades, Mount Mandara is situated on the hips, Mount Kailash is on the right side of the ribs and the Himalayas are on the left side.”

“Jambhudvipa is situated in the bones, Shakadvipa is in the marrow, Kushadvipa is in the flesh, Kraunchadvipa is in the head, Shalmalidvipa is in the skin, Plakshadvipa is in the hair, and Pushkaradvipa is in the nails. The salt ocean is situated in urine, the milk ocean is in milky secretions of the body, the ocean of liquor is in mucus, the ocean of ghee is in bone marrow, the ocean of yogurt is in the blood, the sweet water ocean is in stool, and the ocean of sugar cane juice is in the semen.”

“Similarly, the sun, moon, and all the planets are stationed within the body. Hunger, thirst, and unconsciousness due to the bite of a snake or scorpion—these have their origin in Rudra.”

Next, Garuda inquired about the abode of Yamaraja. In reply, Lord Krishna revealed the following information: the distance between the earth and the abode of Yamaraja is eighty-six thousand yojanas (one million thirty-two thousand kilometers). The pathway to hell is as hot as red-hot copper. The city of Yamaraja is toward the southwest and it is inaccessible to both demigods and demons. It is square in shape and has four entrances and seven outer walls. The city extends for over a thousand yojanas (twelve hundred kilometers), and is inlaid with innumerable gems that blaze like the sun.

Yamaraja's palace is vast. It is twenty-five yojanas high. It is decorated with jewels and supported by thousands of pillars. Hundreds of flags and banners hang from the windows. Yamaraja is seated on his judgement seat, which is ten yojanas wide and resembles a bluish cloud. Yamaraja is the knower of virtue, he

practices virtue, and he is benevolent to those who are virtuous. He is terrifying to the sinners and pleasing to the virtuous.

In Yamaraja's city, the breezes blow gently. Many festivals are celebrated. There are many learned sages conducting discourses on the shastra. Musical performances are heard throughout the city. In the center of the city, near Yamaraja's palace, is Chitrugupta's palace. It is twenty-five yojanas long, ten yojanas high, and surrounded by an iron wall.

Yamaraja's city has hundreds of streets that are filled with its residents (it appears that there are no cars, motorcycles, or bicycles). Chitrugupta's palace appears to be a place of merriment with hundreds of lamps burning and hundreds of musical notes reverberating, here and there. It is beautifully painted by expert artists.

Chitrugupta keeps track of everyone's pious and sinful activities, and he never makes a mistake. Everything a person does is written down by Chitrugupta (it seems that he doesn't like to use a computer).

To the east of Chitrugupta's palace is the residence of Fever, to the south is the residence of Pain, to the west are the houses of Noose, Kala, Indigestion, and Loss of Appetite. To the north is the abode of Cholera, to the northeast, the abode of Headache, to the southeast, the abode of Unconsciousness, and to the northwest, the abode of Typhoid.

Chitrugupta is always surrounded by these personalities. Whatever work they perform is written down by him. The Yamadutas stay in various palaces near Yamaraja. Their job is to torture the human beings who are evil-minded wretches, in accordance with their sinful activities.

Some men are seen to be bound by nooses and thrashed with iron clubs by the Yamadutas. Others are beaten with a variety of weapons and mechanical devices. Some are cut with saws and scissors, as if they were pieces of wood or paper. Some sinful people are seen being burned or baked with fiery coal.

Others are being dragged, here and there, while being pierced by sharp knives.

All of the sinners are wailing and shouting. All this is the result of their past sinful activities. Some are fried in oil and others are bound in various ways. These are all seen in the hells in the abode of Yamaraja.

Garuda said, "O Lord, please explain to me how a person is liberated from material existence. How can a man reach the heavenly planets and remain there for a long period of time? What causes a person to fall from heaven? Kindly speak about these subjects, for my proper understanding."

Lord Krishna spoke on these subjects as follows: After attaining a human birth in the land of Bharata-varsha, if one dies at a holy place, he is not born again in this world. The seven cities—Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Mayapur), Kanchi, Avantika, Kashi, and Dvaravati (Dvaraka)—confer liberation. If, at the time when the vital air reaches the throat (when death is imminent), a man says, "I have renounced everything," he attains the abode of the Lord in the spiritual sky.

If, at the time of death, one chants the holy name of the Lord, Hari, it is as if he has already packed his suitcase for his journey to the spiritual world.

Lord Krishna said, "Anyone who remembers Me, saying, 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna' is lifted up from this world by Me, just as a lotus flower springs up, breaking the surface of the water."

If one dies in the vicinity of a shalagram-shila, or Dvaraka-shila, which are powerful destroyers of sinful reactions, he undoubtedly attains liberation.

By growing a tulasi plant and by watering her, offering obeisances to her, and glorifying her, one's accumulated sinful reactions are wiped away. One who bathes in the Manasa-sarovara, whose waves are wisdom and whose water is truth, which removes the dirt of attachment and hatred, is never again

tarnished by sins.

God is not present in wood, stone, or earth—He is present in everyone's heart. Therefore, one should purify his heart, which plays the prominent role in devotion. Fishermen go to the Narmada River every day and yet, their minds do not become pure. Men reap the fruit of their actions in accordance with their feelings (or attitude).

One who gives up his life for the sake of a brahmana, his guru, a woman, or a child attains liberation. By thwarting the theft of cows, by helping to quell a communal disturbance, and by giving aid during a natural disaster, one attains great merit, whether he is killed or survives.

One who gives a virgin girl in marriage to a brahmana that is well-versed in the Vedas will reside in Indraloka, along with his family members. One who renovates an artificial lake, wells, parks, and temples receives twice the credit awarded the original builder.

One who gives in charity to a scholarly brahmana who is burdened with a family—earrings, a furnished house, or a cow—is honored in heaven for thirty-five million years.

If a woman leaves her sons, grandsons, and other relatives and follows her husband in death—both husband and wife ascend to heaven. If one helps a brahmana celebrate the marriage of his daughter, he will be freed of all sins—whether past, present, or future.

Garuda said, "Heavenly enjoyment, worldly pleasure, strength, health, and bravery are acquired by men on the strength of their pious activities. These are the gifts awarded to virtuous persons. Virtue triumphs, not evil. Truth triumphs, not falsehood. Forgiveness is victorious, not anger. Lord Vishnu conquers, not the demons."

"I have understood that everything auspicious results from virtue. When our pious credits are at the peak, we become

devoted to Lord Krishna. O Lord, I now want to know—by what actions do persons attain sinful births?

Lord Krishna said, "O Garuda, listen carefully as I explain how men derive their particular traits from their previous activities. After being punished in hell, sinful persons again attain a human birth with the characteristic traits of their sins. In other words, sinful men who were punished in hell, after once again attaining a human birth on earth, are marked with characteristic signs of their past sins."

"One who was a habitual liar is born with a speech defect so that he stammers, or perhaps he is born dumb. One who had killed a brahmana is born as a leper, or with tuberculosis. A drunkard is born as a person with black teeth. One who had stolen gold has bad nails. One who had intimate relations with his preceptor's wife has a skin disease. One who had associated with sinful people is born in a low family."

"One who took meals at another's house as an uninvited guest is born as a crow. A brahmana who performed sacrifices for low-class people is born as a village pig. One who had performed many such sacrifices is born as a donkey. One who had eaten indiscriminately becomes a tiger in the jungle. One who had scolded others without cause becomes a cat. One who imparts knowledge to undeserving people becomes a bull. One who offered stale food to a brahmana becomes a hunchback. One who was malicious to others is born blind, and a book thief is also born blind. One who habitually stole fruit is born as a monkey."

"One who accepted food that was offered unwillingly is born impotent. One who was averse to self-realization is born as a stupid businessman. A thief of gold may be born as an alligator. One who had poisoned others becomes a snake. One who had sex with an ascetic woman becomes a ghost. One who stole water becomes a chataka bird. One who stole chickpeas becomes a mouse."



“One who raped an immature girl becomes a serpent. One who coveted his preceptor’s wife becomes a lizard. One who interfered with the flow of water becomes a fish. One who deceived a woman becomes an owl. One who did not make a promised donation to a brahmana becomes a jackal. One who had blasphemed brahmanas becomes a tortoise. One who maintained himself by worshiping deities becomes a chandala.”

“One who kept a shudra woman becomes a bull. One who kicked the sacred fire becomes a cat. One who indulged in sex at an improper time becomes a eunuch. One who had stolen perfume becomes a person with a foul odor.”

“O Garuda, these are the signs whereby a person’s past sins can be ascertained.”

Next, when Garuda inquired about the Vaitarani river, Lord Krishna described it as follows: The Vaitarani river is at the threshold of Yamaraja’s city. It is one hundred yojanas wide, foul-smelling, and terrifying for sinners. It is full of flesh, pus, and blood, and it is infested with worms, crocodiles, and fish with tails as sharp as razors. Sinful persons are thrown into that river as they cry out in agony. Although they try to swim, they sink down into the water. Everyone must see the Vaitarani river. Those who had given in charity, or who had performed other pious activities, are able to cross it while sinful persons sink down into its water.

Garuda said, “O Lord, O ocean of mercy, I have heard about the cycle of repeated birth and death in this material world. I have heard how pious acts carry one to heaven, and how sinful acts pay for the passage to hell. There are so many varieties of living entities, rotating in the cycle of birth and death. How can this vicious cycle of birth and death be stopped? How can one gain total release from material entanglement?”

Lord Krishna said, “Listen now as I tell you about how the soul is liberated from material bondage. Indeed, simply by hearing this description, one can become freed from the repetition of birth and death.”

"I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, and all living entities are My eternal fragmental parts and parcels. I am like a great fire, and all living entities are like sparks emanating from that fire. Of the eighty-four lakhs species of life, only the human form affords one the opportunity of acquiring knowledge of self-realization. It is only after thousands of millions of births that a fortunate soul attains the human form of life. Having thus received the rarely-achieved human form of life, a person should endeavor for liberation from material bondage. There is no more unfortunate person than a human being who does not endeavor for freedom from material entanglement. One who does not aspire for self-realization is considered to be on the level of a killer of a brahmana."

"Without the human body, it is impossible to attain the supreme destination. Therefore, after attaining a human birth, one should very carefully guard his wealth, in the form of a human body, and endeavor for that which is beneficial."

"Old age is like a tigress. Age runs away like water from a leaking pot. Disease kills one like an enemy. Therefore, a person should only be concerned with acting virtuously. As long as sorrow does not overwhelm one, calamities do not approach, and one's bodily organs do not dysfunction—one should practice virtue. As long as the body is strong and healthy—one should practice virtue. One is a perfect fool who begins to dig a well only when his house is on fire."

"Time flees while one is engrossed in the work that maintains his family and prestige. Being so absorbed, people are blind to their own self-interest. Even after seeing the distressed, the dead, the fallen, and the aggrieved—people have no fear of drinking the wine of infatuation. Wealth is fleeting, like a dream. Youth fades like a flower. Age is flickering, like lightning in the sky. Knowing this, who can place his confidence in materialistic life?"

"Alas! Is a man not dead who remains idle when the time for action has arrived, who sleeps during the time of awakening,

or who is confident when there is cause for fear? When the soul enters a body that is like foam on the water, when the association of one's beloved kinsmen is but temporary—how can a person remain fearless? A person who has no knowledge of reality considers as useful that which is useless, as permanent that which is impermanent, and as meaningful that which is meaningless. Being infatuated due to the influence of maya, a man misunderstands, even while hearing, and misses the point, even while reading. Such a person does not observe that his time is running out, just as water leaks out of a pot of unbaked clay, even when there is no hole."

"It may be possible to tie the waves of the ocean into knots but it is not possible to remain in the material body eternally. Since even the earth will one day be burnt, Mount Meru shattered, and the ocean dried up—what then can be said of one's insignificant body? 'I have a wife, sons, other relatives, my house, land and wealth.' While thinking in this way, the goat of a man is carried away by the wolf of time. While thinking, 'this has been done, this has not been done, and this is half-completed,' one is dragged to the abode of Yamaraja. Death does not wait, whether one has completed his tasks or not."

"Death is waiting. Old age is the signal. Diseases are death's soldiers. When a man is attacked, he sees no means of protection. Pierced by the needle of greed, soaked with the oil of passion, cooked in the fire of anger and envy, a man is eaten up by death. Death takes away even children, young people, and embryos within the womb—such is the nature of this world. What to speak of wife, children, parents and other relatives—the soul has to leave his body at the time of death and go to the abode of Yamaraja."

"This world has sorrow as its root. Whoever possesses something in this world will meet with sorrow. Giving up of attachment is the start of the journey to happiness. One should give up attachment for this world, which is full of sorrows. A man can somehow free himself from shackles of iron but not

the fetters that are in the form of his wife and children. When one makes relationships of affection, seeds of sorrow are sown in the heart."

"Conditioned souls are robbed by the thieves of their senses, which feed on the objects of pleasure. While doing so, they take away one's wealth by means of deception. Just as a fish is tempted by a worm, not seeing the hook of destruction, a person is tempted by enjoyment, not seeing the tortures of the Yamadutas."

"Misguided persons who are on the wrong path do not discern between good and evil. O Garuda, such persons, who are simply engaged in filling up their bellies, deserve the punishments of hell."

"Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending are common to all creatures. One who possesses genuine knowledge is a true human being and one who does not is a two-legged animal. Foolish people are troubled by nature's call in the morning (passing stool and urine), by hunger and thirst at noon, and by the urge for sex and sleep at night. People love their bodies, their wives, and their wealth. Alas! Being infatuated by ignorance, they are born and then die."

"One should shun the association of others. If this is not possible, one should associate with those who are spiritually inclined. Association with devotees and clear intelligence are look two good eyes. Whoever lacks these two is blind and thus strays from the right path."

"Why should preachers of various disciplines who are blind to the truth of self-realization move about, here and there? Some deluded persons perform religious rituals and sacrifices, accompanied by the chanting of mantras and the offering of oblations. Some people deluded by My maya who desire liberation torture their bodies by fasting and other austerities. Can an ignorant fool gain release from material bondage by torturing his body? Can a serpent gain freedom simply by beating with his head the hole wherein he resides?"

' "There are many imposters who disguise themselves by keeping matted hair and wearing a deerskin. Pretending to be pious, they move about, deceiving people. Those who delight in the pleasures of this world and pretend to know Brahman enjoy neither material nor spiritual happiness. Can a man achieve liberation simply by smearing dirt and ashes over his body? Deer, jackals, and mice live in the forest, consuming grass, leaves and water. Are they also ascetics? From their birth up to their death, fish and frogs stay in the Ganga. Are they great yogis?"

"Men are busy performing their duties and earning money but that does not help them to progress on the path of liberation. It is transcendental knowledge of matter and spirit that will give them an opportunity to gain release from material bondage. While floating on the surface of the ocean of Vedic literature, false logicians suffer miserably, being tossed by the waves of false arguments. A person well-versed in the Vedic literature but ignorant of the truth is no better than a magician who imitates the cawing of a crow."

"There are many who study the shastra day and night and yet remain far away from ultimate truth. There are those who do not take advantage of the traditional understanding, received in the disciplic succession, and interpret the Vedic literature in their own way, while misunderstanding the actual truth. They study the Vedic literature and discuss the topics among themselves but they do not understand the truth, just as a spoon cannot taste the food it holds. The head may carry a bundle of flowers but it is the nose that perceives the scent. People study the Vedas but very few know the real meaning."

"Without having realized the eternal self (the soul), foolish people become infatuated with the Vedic literature. When a goat is standing in the shed, the shepherd searches for it in the fields in vain. Mere knowledge of the shastra cannot free one from attachment for worldly affairs. The wick of a lamp cannot remove darkness—it is only the flame that can do so. For an ignorant person, independent study of the shastra is useless, just

as a mirror is of no value for a blind person. However, one who studies the shastra under the guidance of a bona-fide spiritual master derives great benefit.”

“Shastra is the source of all kinds of knowledge but the cultivation of genuine knowledge is an arduous affair. Indeed, by study of the shastra, one may not realize the self even after thousands of years. Vedic literatures are many but life is short. Obstacles come in battalions.”

“No particular stage of life (ashram) is conducive to liberation, nor is any system of philosophy, nor any kind of ritual combined with knowledge of the shastra. The instructions of a bona-fide spiritual master alone can grant one release from material entanglement. Right action is that which does not put one into bondage. Right knowledge is that which leads one to liberation. Action that binds one is useless labor only and knowledge that binds one is mere craftsmanship.”

“As long as there is pride in the body, as long as there is affection for worldly objects, as long as one endeavors for increasing his wealth, as long as the mind is not steady, as long as one is not absorbed in meditation upon the shastra, as long as the guru’s blessings are not there—there is little chance of realizing the self.”

“Performance of austerity, going on pilgrimage, the chanting of mantras, worship of the Deity, and discussions of the Vedic literature are only meaningful for those who know the self. For this reason, anyone who desires liberation from material existence must concentrate all his efforts on realizing the self. Human life is meant for self-realization. A true understanding of the science of self-realization can only be had from a bona-fide spiritual master who is coming in disciplic succession. By surrendering to the spiritual master, one can easily gain release from the shackles of maya.”

“O Garuda, foremost of birds, listen now as I describe to you the final step on the path of liberation. When the hour of death

arrives, one should fearlessly cut off all material attachment. When death is approaching, a wise man should leave home and go to a place of pilgrimage and bathe in the holy river there. After bathing, he should sit down firmly on a sanctified seat with a mood of detachment. With a pure mind, he should begin meditation on the sacred syllable, om, which represents the Absolute Truth."

"While meditating on om, the dying man should control his breathing and mind. He should withdraw his senses from their objects by means of pure intelligence. He should be convinced that, as a part and parcel of the Supreme Brahman, he is also Brahman and therefore eternal, full of knowledge, and blissful by nature."

"O Garuda, anyone who chants om and remembers Me at the time of death, attains the supreme destination, where the hypocrites devoid of knowledge cannot reach. Those who are free from false ego and material infatuation, who contemplate the eternal nature, and who have left aside attachment and aversion and are thus freed from exultation in happiness and disturbance in distress, attain that eternal abode."

Garuda felt that his doubts had been sufficiently cleared and so he bade farewell to Lord Krishna after bowing down to offer his obeisances. Thereafter, he went to the ashram of Kashyapa, his father. There, he related all that he had heard from Lord Krishna. Maricha, who was present there, was delighted to hear the conversations between Lord Krishna and Garuda.

There were twenty-six thousand sages gathered at Naimisharanya, and they were accompanied by their disciples and grand-disciples, who were too numerous to count. The leader of these sages was Shaunaka Rishi At Naimisha forest, they carefully controlled their senses, regulated their diet, and devoted themselves to understanding the truth. They worshiped Lord Vishnu, the primeval Lord and original spiritual master of the universe. Some sages performed sacrifices, some cultivated knowledge of Brahman, and some executed severe austerities.



One day, the sages gathered with a view of ascertaining the truth of dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Actually, they desired to understand the truth of religion for the welfare of all human beings. They eagerly inquired from Shaunaka Rishi, "How can people's faith in Lord Hari be fostered? How can people's activities bear the fruit of ultimate welfare for the people of the world?"

Shaunaka Rishi replied, "In the holy hermitage of Siddhas, there lives Suta Gosvami, who is well-versed in the Puranas. He is a disciple of Shrila Vyasadeva and he is the best of self-controlled ascetics. He will be able to answer your questions to your full satisfaction. Let us go and inquire from him."

Thus Shaunaka Rishi and the sages went to the hermitage of the Siddhas. After approaching Suta Gosvami, the sages said, "We wish to know by what means Lord Vishnu becomes very satisfied with His worshiper. By what means can a devotee achieve ultimate liberation from the vicious cycle of repeated birth and death?"

Suta Gosvami said, "O sages, I shall give you conclusive answers to your inquiries. After offering obeisances to Lord Vishnu, Lakshmi, Vayu, Bharati, Shesha, Vyasa, and Lord Krishna, I shall answer your questions as far as my understanding extends. There is no one equal to, or superior to Lord Narayana, nor in the future will anyone be equal to or superior to Him. With this faith, I begin my discussions."

Shaunaka Rishi said, "Why did you offer obeisances to Lord Vishnu first and thereafter, to Lakshmi, Vayu, Bharati (Sarasvati), and Vyasa? Why is there this order of homage?"

Suta Gosvami said, "Lord Vishnu should always be worshiped before beginning any recitation of Vedic literature. He alone is the original source of all energy and illumination. He alone is worthy of our praise. He is the master of the demigods and so it is He who is worthy of our praise—not Lord Shiva or Lord Brahma or any other demigod."



“Arrogant people who bypass Lord Vishnu to worship Lord Shiva, Ganesha, Surya, Sarasvati, Parvati, and Lakshmi are non-Vaishnavas, and thus should be considered as averse to the worship of Lord Vishnu. None of these gods and goddesses should be worshiped separately. Whatever worship they receive, they dedicate to their master, Lord Vishnu. Those who do not worship, even in adversity, any other Deity but Lord Vishnu, are the true devotees of the Lord. Those whose minds are diverted to the demigods cannot be considered as genuine devotees.”

“The Puranas, which are very sacred texts, preach devotion to Lord Vishnu, from beginning to end. In the dark age of Kali, it is the Puranas that can greatly benefit the masses of people. However, the Puranas teach the duties that should be performed by all classes of men. Envious rascals accept only the statements regarding their caste and feel jealous of others.”

“The Puranas that preach devotion to Lord Vishnu are called *sattvika*. These should be preached to the people in general and not the others, which only cause suffering. In the age of Kali, only three principal Puranas are purely devoted to Lord Vishnu and among them, the best is the *Bhagavata Purana*. Indeed, it renders the best service to the masses of people.”

“The meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is present in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The full purport of the *Mahābhārata* is also there. The commentary of the *Brahma-gāyatrī* is also there and fully expanded with all Vedic knowledge. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the supreme *Purāṇa*, and it was compiled by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnation as *Vyāsadeva*. There are twelve cantos, 335 chapters and eighteen thousand verses.”

“Whatever knowledge is deemed beneficial is found in the *Bhagavata Purana*. The *Vishnu Purana* comes next, and third is the *Garuda Purana*. These three are the principal Puranas in the age of Kali.”

“The first part of the *Garuda Purana* is referred to as *karma-kanda*. The second part is called *dharma-kanda*, and the last part, which I shall narrate to you, is referred to as *brahma-kanda*.

This brahma-kanda is the best part and is equal in merit to the Bhagavata Purana.”

“Next, in order of merit, is the Matsya Purana, and then the Kurma Purana and the Vayu Purana. These three are also sattvika Puranas. The Skanda, Padma, Vamana, Varaha, Agni, and Bhavishya are rajasic Puranas. Each contains sections of a rajasic or tamasic nature, although rajas is prominent in them. One who seeks liberation should not listen to these portions. If only the sattvika portions of these Puranas are heard, their merit is equal to that of the Garuda Purana.”

“The Brahma, Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Linga, Markandeya, and Aditya Puranas are tamasic Puranas, although sections are sattvika and rajasic. If one listens to the sattvika portions of these Puranas, avoiding the other parts—that is as good as hearing the Garuda Purana.”

“The Upa-Puranas are smaller and some of them, such as the Nrisimha Purana, are sattvika. In the age of Kali, the Puranas are more beneficial than the Vedas, as far as meaning is concerned.”

(It appears that Garuda once again came to hear from His master, Lord Krishna.) After much discussion of the creation of the universe and various sub-creations, Lord Krishna said, “O Garuda, hear now as I tell you about six of My principal queens.”

There was a princess who, in the previous creation, was the daughter of Agni. As a young girl, she always desired to have Me as her husband. Her father, Agni, however, wanted her to marry one of the Pitris. The girl did not agree and so her father said, “Silly girl, why don’t you marry, according to my choice?”

The girl replied, “My dear father, I can only think of marrying Lord Hari. There can be no other. Lord Hari is eternal—without birth and without death. In this world, a woman may become a widow. Indeed, I see all women as widows because their husbands are destined to die. I consider any woman who does not think of Lord Hari as her husband to be a widow.”

“Father, except for Krishna, I shall not accept any husband, even if forced by misfortune. Anyone with a material body that produces bad odors from its nine gates is not a suitable husband for me. For such a repulsive man, I can have no love.”

“Those women whose husbands are devotees of Lord Vishnu have received them as a result of pious activities performed for many births. Those whose husbands are not devotees of Lord Vishnu should give up their lives at once. If, while giving up their bodies, they remember Lord Vishnu in His form as Lord Krishna, they do not incur the sin of committing suicide. This is the statement of shastra.”

“Women should desert their husbands if they are not devotees of Lord Vishnu. Rare are the devotees of Lord Vishnu in the age of Kali. Rarely heard in this world are narrations of the Lord’s qualities and pastimes. Initiation into the worship of Lord Vishnu is very rarely achieved. Rarely attained is the association of devotees. Rare is the opportunity of circumambulating the Deity of Lord Vishnu in the temple. Rarely attained is the inclination to chant the holy names of the Lord. Rarely achieved is the opportunity to touch the shalarama-shila. Rarely achieved is the chance to see a pure devotee of the Lord. Rarely seen is the man with a faithful wife and noble sons. Rare is the sight of the Ganga.”

“My dear father, after considering all this, I do not wish for any husband other than Lord Krishna.”

After saying this, Agni’s daughter went to the Shesha mountain. After climbing the mountain, she saw Lord Shrinivasa. She offered her obeisances to the Lord and then fasted for three days. Thereafter, she went to a secluded spot where she could engage in meditation for the purpose of acquiring her desired husband. There, she began the performance of a great penance, meditating on Lord Narayana for one thousand years.

She prayed, “O Krishna, You are my mother, father, husband, friend, son, preceptor, brother, sister, and darling. In

this vast material world, I have been trying to understand reality but have not succeeded in my attempt. In this world, so-called father, mother, husband, and wife are artificial relationships. You are my true relation, my Lord. For this reason, I wish to be Your wife. Indeed, this is my vow. I pray to You that I may not be united with anyone else.”

“O Lord, please keep far from my sight those people who have offended You, who have tried to frustrate my desire to become Your unalloyed devotee, and who bear malice toward their preceptors and Your devotees. Please place me as an insignificant servant at Your lotus feet.”

“O Lord, how can I, a contaminated soul, see You, face to face? I am Your devotee and the servant of Your devotees. Kindly be pleased with me.”

The Lord was very pleased by the devotion of Agni's daughter. He appeared before her and said, “O good lady, express your desire. I have come here to fulfill your wish.”

Upon hearing this, the girl's face brightened with a smile. She said, “O Lord, may I become Your wife?”

In a gentle voice, the Lord replied, “O blessed maiden, I shall become your husband when I incarnate in My original form as Krishna upon the earth.”

Being exceedingly pleased, Agni's daughter said, “Although I am fully satisfied that You will accept me as Your wife, I wish that, before Your incarnation as Lord Krishna, You will enjoy me, so that I may be the first to be loved by You.”

Lord Krishna replied, “O beautiful maiden, I will fulfill your cherished desire.”

After saying this, Lord Krishna suddenly disappeared from view. Agni's daughter then gave up her material body and was born as the daughter of Kumbhaka, named Nila.

Lord Krishna said, “Kumbhaka had received benedictions from Lord Shiva so that he was unconquerable. Still, I went to

his abode and killed him. After doing so, I married his daughter, Nila."

"In her next birth, Nila was born as the daughter of King Nagnajit. During her svayamvara, I controlled seven powerful bulls that were uncontrollable, by the favor of Lord Shiva. I then defeated the other kings present there and married Nila for the second time. As the daughter of King Nagnajit, she was known as Nagnajiti, as well as Satya."

There was a girl named Bhadra, the daughter of Nala, who desired to have Lord Vishnu as her husband. As she always engaged in worshiping the Lord, her father one day said to her, "My dear daughter, why do you trouble your body with such austere worship? Please tell me—what will be the fruit of all this suffering?"

Bhadra said, "Dear father, no one can properly say what is the benefit of worshiping Lord Vishnu. Still, I will tell you something of what I understand. The compassionate Lord Vishnu is alone my master. I am the servant of His servants. I bow down to His lotus feet and pray that He may always protect me."

While saying this, Bhadra bowed down to offer her obeisances. Bhadra continued, "O father, Lord Vishnu is not so much pleased by worship as He is when His devotees chant His holy names. What is the use of residing at Kashi, dying at Prayaga or on the battlefield, performing sacrifices, or studying the Vedas if the holy name of Lord Vishnu is not chanted with devotion? The activities of those who do not circumambulate the Lord amount to nothing."

"My dear father, the human form of life is very rarely achieved. Do not trust your mortal body, thinking that it will remain forever. So far, I have not seen you chant the holy name of Lord Vishnu. Carefully consider how the hour of death could come at any time."

Lord Krishna said, "Nala was very impressed with his daughter's words and so, together, they worshiped the Lord

and engaged in chanting His holy name. As a result of thinking of Me at the time of her death, Bhadra was born as the sister of My father, Vasudeva. She was named Kaikeyi, and was also called Bhadra. Her five brothers, the Kekayas, gave her to Me in marriage.”

In the previous creation, Mitravinda performed various sacrifices for the purpose of gaining Lord Hari as her friend. While considering the matter deeply, Mitravinda concluded that the hearing of the sattvika Puranas was the best means of attaining her goal.

The wise have declared that one who has never heard the Shrimad-Bhagavatam, or the Brahma-kanda of the Garuda Purana, in the assembly of devotees, lives in vain. Indeed, one should not linger for even a moment where there is no narration of the Lord’s pastimes, no surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord, and no chanting of His holy names. One should not live in a village for even a moment where there are no discussions of Shrimad-Bhagavatam, no devotees who relish the transcendental taste of the verses of Shrimad-Bhagavatam, and no devotees who can explain the true essence of the shastra. That day is wasted where there is no talk of Lord Vishnu’s transcendental form, qualities, or pastimes. The ear decorated with flowers does not look as attractive as the ear that is engaged in hearing the topics of Lord Vishnu.

Those who recite the Shrimad-Bhagavatam out of greed for money and those who know the true meaning of Shrimad-Bhagavatam but do not teach it to others are dispatched to the abode of Yamaraja. Those who are satisfied with whatever is given them are the only ones fit to recite Shrimad-Bhagavatam.

Thinking in this way, Mitravinda remained absorbed in hearing the Shrimad-Bhagavatam and chanting the holy name of the Lord for as long as she lived. After death, she was born on the earth as the daughter of Sumitra, the sister of Vasudeva. Because she obtained Lord Krishna as her friend (mitra), she was called Mitravinda. At her svayamvara, Mitravinda neglected

all others and placed the garland around the neck of Lord Krishna. Krishna then defeated all of the rival kings present and returned home with Mitravinda.

There was a daughter of the sun-god, Vivasvan, named Kalindi, or Yamuna. She practiced austerities for obtaining Lord Krishna as her husband. Penance has its root in remorse. While practicing penance, Kalindi thought as follows: "O Lord, I have not chanted Your holy name with devotion. Instead, I have thrown myself into the forest fire of material existence, in the form of three-fold miseries."

"I have not utilized my time in glorifying the Lord. Instead, I have simply found fault with Him. I have not passed my days by narrating the Lord's pastimes but have spent my time gossiping with ordinary people. I did not worship the lotus feet of Lord Hari but I carefully worshiped my children and friends. I did not gaze at the face of the Lord in the temple but instead passed my time fondling my little brother."

"I dressed myself very nicely but failed to decorate the Lord in the temple. I did not partake of the remnants of the Lord's food but instead ate at the houses of my friends. I did not offer the Lord flowers and perfume but lavished the same on my body. I am now tired of my friends and relatives. When will I see Your face, my Lord?"

"I have polluted myself by eating food that was not offered to You. My feet are useless because they have not traversed the paths to Your temples and holy places of pilgrimage. My eyes are useless because they have not seen Your smiling face. My hands are useless because they did not perform Your worship. Instead of worshipping You, I have engaged in sinful activities."

"O Lord, please excuse my faults. Have mercy on me. Now, I have sincerely sought to engage myself in Your devotional service. As many hairs as there are on my body, I have engaged in that many sinful activities. Kindly excuse me."

“Giving up Your worship, I did not experience even the slightest pleasure, even though, in my previous lives, I had my husband, sons, friends, servants, buildings, cattle, and wealth. From this time onward, I will not visit my friends and relatives. I shall ever remain Your devotee and servant.”

“I consider those who regard their friends and family members as their sources of happiness to have stool and urine on their face. Money spent on friends is simply wasted. Money offered to the devotees of the Lord becomes a cause of good fortune.”

“Up to this time, I have simply suffered. Now, by Your grace, give me the association of Your devotees, and not the association of the wicked by Your indifference.”

In this way, the daughter of Surya repented while fixing her mind on Lord Hari, as she sat on the shore of the River Yamuna. At that time, Lord Krishna had gone hunting with Arjuna and they came to where Kalindi was performing penance.

Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, “My friend, approach that maiden and ask her the purpose of her penance.”

Arjuna went and inquired from Kalindi. After hearing her talk, he returned and informed Lord Krishna of what had been said. Thereafter, at an auspicious hour, Lord Krishna married Kalindi.

In her previous birth, Lakshmana was the daughter of a brahmana named Vahnideva. At that time, she was called Sulakshmana because of her auspicious bodily characteristics. Once, as her father distributed food to his friends and relatives, she told him, “O father, gifts should be given only to those who have realized the presence of the Supreme Lord within themselves and others. If food and drink are offered to unworthy persons who have not realized the self and Supreme Self, they are wasted.”

“My dear father, I shall now tell you about Lord Hari—where He resides, what He eats, and what He drinks. Please listen



attentively. Lord Hari, in the form of child Krishna, drinks milk, eats butter, and wears nice clothes and jewelry. Krishna eats and drinks in the company of His friends. A householder should offer nice food and drinks for the satisfaction of the Lord and pray for His mercy. The devotee should be conscious that the Lord accepts his offerings with pleasure."

"Lord Govinda resides in the houses of His devotees. Lord Aniruddha resides in public rest houses. Lord Narayana resides in the houses of brahmanas. Lord Hari resides in cowpens. Lord Vamana resides in stables. Lord Sankarshana resides in the houses of shudras, Lord Pradyumna resides in the houses of vaishyas, and Lord Janardana resides in the houses of kshatriyas. Lord Upendra resides in the earth. Lord Chakrapani resides in elephants."

While instructing her father in this way, Sulakshmana went about satisfying Lord Krishna with her worship. She prayed, "May the Lord be pleased with my worship and become my husband."

Desiring in this way, Sulakshmana gave up her mortal body and in her next life, she was born in the country of Madras.

Lord Krishna said, "At Lakshmana's svayamvara, I hit the target, conquered My rivals, and then brought her home and married her, just as she desired."

"In her previous birth, Jambavati was the daughter of Soma. She became the most beloved of all My wives. When I feel deep affection for Lakshmi, my love for Jambavati subsides. When I am distracted from My affection for Lakshmi then I feel equally attracted to all My consorts but among them, I have greater affection for Jambavati."

Garuda said, "O Lord, what kind of worship did Jambavati perform so that she became superior to Your other wives?"

Lord Krishna then narrated her story as follows: Jambavati, in her previous life as the daughter of Soma, purified her existence by worshipping Lord Vishnu with determination.

By hearing the Puranas, Jambavati and her father became detached from worldly affairs. Wealth, friendship, and possessions—she regarded them as no more than bubbles in the ocean.

She thought, "All of my wealth, my friends, and whatever else I possess are given by Lord Hari and taken back by Him as well."

Jambavati became averse to endeavoring for her own subsistence and so she accepted whatever came of its own accord. She placed all her wealth at the lotus feet of the Lord. She utilized her tongue in chanting His glories. She engaged her hands in sweeping the Lord's temple. She engaged her mind and ears in hearing the pastimes of the Lord. She fixed her eyes on seeing the Deity in the temple. She engaged her body in pious embraces of the Vaishnavas and she kept herself always in their association. She smelled the tulasi leaves that had been offered at the lotus feet of the Lord and she partook of the remnants of food offered to Him. She utilized her feet by walking to the temple and she bowed her head at the Lord's lotus feet. Her mouth continually sang the praises of the Lord, her heart was filled with love for Him, and her intelligence was used to distinguish matter from spirit.

In this way, Jambavati placed her very life at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu and then started on a pilgrim's journey, along with her father. Before departing, Jambavati worshiped the brahmanas and Vaishnavas, while giving them gifts of clothes and ornaments.

She then prayed, "O Lord, so long as I remain on pilgrimage, please favor me with the association of devotees and not the company of atheists. Let me always hear the narration of Your glories. Let me not go on pilgrimage with friends, sons, relatives, and others who set out with some material motive in mind."

"Fruitless is the pilgrimage of those who do not carry the shalagrama-shila with them. If, while traveling on pilgrimage,

one wears shoes, his merit is decreased by one-fourth. If one goes on pilgrimage, riding upon a vehicle or a horse, his merit is reduced by one-half. If one goes while riding on a bull, his merit is decreased by one-fourth."

"If one subsists upon food provided by another, his pilgrimage is in vain. He receives no benefit. However, if one receives food from an ascetic, a Vedic scholar, or any other exalted personality, there is no loss of his merit."

Having spoken like this, Jambavati set out. While going, she listened to the discourses of the brahmanas, and she fed them sufficiently. Along with her father, Jambavati traveled to the Shesha mountain to see the Lord of Lakshmi.

While walking, Jambavati thought to herself, "When shall I see Lord Vishnu, whose broad chest is adorned with the mark of Shrivatsa? When shall I see the Lord, whose lovely belly is decorated with three lines? When shall I see the Lord, whose neck resembles a conch shell, and which is the resting place of Maharloka? When shall I see the deep navel of the Lord, which is the resting place of outer space? When shall I see the lotus face of the Lord, the resting place of Janaloka? When shall I see the head of the Lord, the resting place of Satyaloka? When shall I see the hips of the Lord, the resort of Bhumandala? When shall I see the thighs of the Lord, the resort of Talatala? When shall I see the knees of the Lord, the resort of Sutala? When shall I see the soles of the Lord's lotus feet, the resort of Patala?"

When she reached the Shesha mountain, Jambavati saw Lord Shesha, with His one thousand heads. She said, "I am able to see this mountain as a result of the piety accumulated from many births."

Upon seeing Lord Shesha, Jambavati's eyes filled with tears. She immediately stood up and then bowed down to the Lord, placing the shalagrama-shila in front of her. The Supreme Lord resides at the peak of this mountain, worshiped by Lakshmi, Brahma, and others.

Jambavati bathed and then gave cows, land, gold, and other articles in charity before ascending the mountain. After going one hundred steps, Jambavati found herself in front of the Lord, who was seated comfortably. She could hear the recitation of the portions of the Puranas that glorifies the Vyenkata Hill, spoken by the great preceptor, Jaigishavya.

Jaigishavya said, "O maiden, just listen to the merit one obtains by ascending Vyenkata Hill. While climbing the mountain, people should recite Shrimad-Bhagavatam and remember Lord Shrinivasa. There is nothing inaccessible to a person who has pleased the Supreme Lord."

Jambavati asked, "Please tell me how Lord Shrinivasa appears to various classes of people."

Jaigishavya said, "Lord Brahma and others can see the Deity in His eternal, effulgent form. This is how Lord Vyenkatesha is seen by Rudra and his associates. However, to ordinary people, the Deity simply appears to be a stone. Such people cannot see the form of the Lord, being under the sway of passion and ignorance."

"Sattvika persons are rarely seen in the age of Kali. Those who dress themselves as devotees are not actually devotees. Rather, they are busy filling their bellies and endeavoring to gratify their sexual desires. Indeed, they embark on pilgrimage for those purposes. Rarely seen in Kali-yuga is genuine devotion for the Lord. Those who are devotees but are not detached from worldly pleasures cannot easily see the transcendental form of the Lord."

"A true devotee is devoid of hatred and full of compassion for the suffering conditioned souls. He possesses keen insight and devotion. To think of Brahma and Shiva as being on the level of Lord Vishnu is a great offense. To think that the Lord possesses a material body is equal to hating Him. One should never consider the various incarnations of the Lord to be separate, distinct personalities."

“It is a great sin to hate a devotee of Lord Vishnu. To find fault with the Lord’s instructions is a manifestation of enviousness. Those who are full of hate can never be considered true devotees. Those who go on pilgrimage with a desire to realize the Lord are true devotees—not others.”

After hearing the glories of climbing the mountain, Jambavati set out, along with Jaigishavya. Those who are not devotees of the Lord feel no pleasure while climbing Vyenkata Hill. While ascending the mountain, step by step, the group chanted, danced, and sang the glories of the Lord in great happiness.

They prayed, “O Lord, grant us Your eternal protection.” While chanting the holy names of the Lord, they reached their goal, where they sought the darshana of the Lord. In front of the gate of the temple, there is a bathing pool called Svamipushkarini. Jambavati and her companions bathed in that pool and then entered the temple of Lord Shrinivasa. At that time, the Lord in His transcendental form appeared before Jambavati. Thus, she saw the beautiful form of Lord Shrinivasa and was exceedingly delighted.

The Lord looked like a transcendental Cupid with His lotus-like eyes and long arms. Jambavati’s hair stood on end, her heart overflowed with love, and tears filled her eyes as she danced before the Lord. By this display of transcendental ecstasy, Jambavati became cleansed of all impurities.

In a voice laden with emotion, she said, “O lotus-eyed Lord, save me from worldly affection. Grant me eternal bliss by releasing me from the shackles of karma. Save me by Your charming glance, which is full of compassion. O Lord, I am exceedingly distressed and so save me by bestowing upon me genuine wisdom.”

“O Lord, save me from all kinds of bad association. Save me from my enemies—lust, anger, and greed. O Lord of Lakshmi, please protect me. O Lord, if You are pleased with me then bestow upon me Your unalloyed devotional service. I do not want material wealth, which makes one proud and blind to self-

realization. Please grant me the association of Your devotees so that I can advance on the path of devotional service.”

“My dear Lord, please extinguish my desire for sons and other material assets. Grant me devotion at Your lotus feet. O Lord, please impart to me the mantra that will enable to see You again, face to face, in Your eternal transcendental form. I ask for nothing more than eternal service at Your lotus feet. Please grant me this if You are pleased with me.”

Being thus addressed, Lord Shrinivasa became very pleased with Jambavati. Like a stream of nectar, the Lord replied, “O maiden, I will give you a confidential mantra that you should continually chant with devotion. The mantra is—om vyenkateshya namah. By chanting this mantra, you will achieve the fulfillment of your desire.”

After saying this, the Lord transformed Himself into a Deity. Jambavati bowed down to the Lord and thereafter, she remained in the vicinity of the lake known as Swamisaras. That day, she prepared a feast and served it to all classes of men. In the evening, she worshiped the Deity. After circumambulating the Deity, she danced without reservation while fixing her gaze upon the Lord.

She said, “Today, my existence has become purified. My eyes have born fruit by seeing You, my Lord. My feet have served their purpose by circumambulating You. My hands have proved fruitful because they have clapped while glorifying You.”

In this way, Jambavati pleased the Lord by her faculty of speech. Indeed, the demigods sounded drums in heaven while showering flowers upon her head. In fact, the demigods descended to earth and danced around Jambavati while clapping their hands and glorifying her, along with their consorts.

After returning to Jaigavishya’s hermitage, Jambavati inquired from him about the Vyenkatesha mantra. After hearing the glories of Lord Vyenkatesha, Jambavati passed the night in Jaigavishya’s ashram, along with her father. After arising early the

next morning, Jambavati fixed her mind on Lord Shrinivasa and along with her father, she went to bathe in the Svamipushkarini lake. After bathing, she sat down to seriously chant the mantra given to her by the Lord.

Later on, when Jambavati inquired about the origin of the Vyenkatesha Deity, Jaigishavya narrated the following history: Long ago, there was a demon named Hiranyaksha, who was the son of Kashyapa and Diti. Formerly, he was a gatekeeper named Vijaya at the palace of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha but was cursed by Sanaka-kumara to become a daitya and give trouble to the devotees of the Lord.

Being influenced by his former nature as Vijaya, Hiranyaksha thought of performing austerities. However, his mother, Diti, said to him, "My dear son, do not practice penance. After all, you are only eight years old and I cannot remain even a moment without you. Do not go and practice penance if you want me to remain alive."

Although spoken to in this way by his mother, because he was under the spiritual influence of Vijaya, Hiranyaksha replied, "Dear mother, get rid of these material attachments. Direct your mind toward the service of Lord Vishnu. The very fact that you love me as your son has caused you to come under the influence of the duality of pleasure and pain."

"O mother, as long as you have love for me, you will suffer material pangs. You regard me as your son, I regard you as my mother, and you regard my father as your husband. All this is just an illusory appearance and not reality because Lord Vishnu alone is the creator and the protector. This fact cannot be denied. Therefore, Lord Vishnu is our real mother and father. The mother who gives birth is only an instrument in the hands of the Lord. If the generating mother and father are the principal cause of a child then who protects and preserves the child within the womb?"

"O mother, neither I, your son, nor your husband, nor your parents, nor your brothers can be considered your real

protectors. No one other than Lord Vishnu is the protector of everyone.”

“O mother, cut off this illusion with the weapon of knowledge and fix your mind on Lord Vishnu. The devotional remembrance of the Lord’s holy name alone can destroy all sinful reactions. He who remembers Lord Vishnu with devotion is purified. In this land of karma, Bharata-varsha, the human form is rarely achieved and rarer still is devotion for the Lord.”

“My dear mother, you should not let your life be wasted in vain. Begin the worship of Lord Shrinivasa.”

After instructing his mother in this way, the pious son adopted a life of asceticism. By means of his sincere devotion, Hiranyaksha pleased Lord Brahma, who awarded him benedictions. Thereafter, Hiranyaksha took the earth and placed her beneath the water of the ocean, in the region of Patala. The Lord then assumed the Boar incarnation. After entering the water, He found the earth in the region of Patala. After placing the earth on the tip of His tusks, the Lord lifted her up from the depths of the water. At this, Hiranyaksha challenged the Lord but in the fight that ensued, he was stuck by a blow below the ear and killed. Lord Vishnu then re-established the earth in her orbit.

Thereafter, Lord Boar thought, “Where should the people of the earth go to worship Me now that they have attained the human form of life? Where shall I favor them with My blessings?”

The Lord then descended from Vaikuntha, riding on the back of Garuda, bringing with Him the mountain, Shesha. This mountain, when placed on the earth, became known as Vyenkata Mountain.

After hearing from Jaigishavya, Jambavati bathed in the Svamipushkarini lake and then fasted. She remained there for twenty-one days. Thereafter, she went to other places of pilgrimage, accompanied by Jaigishavya. After doing so, she



returned to Lord Shrinivasa at Vyenkata and worshiped Him in great happiness.

Lord Krishna said, "In this way, Jambavati practiced penance until she at last gave up her mortal body. At that time, I had descended on the earth in My original form as Lord Krishna. She appeared as the daughter of Jambavan. Later on, she was given by her father to Me in marriage."

In response to Garuda's inquiries, Lord Krishna next described the fourteen Indras. The seventh Indra is called Purandara, and the sixth was Mantradyumna. He was given this name because he explained the Vedic mantras. Arjuna, the son of Kunti, was an incarnation of Mantradyumna, the sixth Indra, as well as Lord Vishnu, Vayu, and Ananta. King Gadhi, the father of Vishvamitra, was also an incarnation of Mantradyumna. He incarnated on the earth for the purpose of preserving the Vedas.

Vikukshi, the son of Ikshvaku, was an incarnation of Indra and he realized the presence of Lord Vishnu within his heart.

Kusha, the son of Lord Rama, was also an incarnation of Indra. Because he was created by Valmiki with the use of kusha grass, he was named Kusha, the son of Sita.

Indradyumna, Puranadara, Gadhi, Bali, Arjuna, Vikukshi, and Kusha—these seven are incarnations of Indra.

Pradyumna, the son of Krishna, was an incarnation of Kamadeva (Cupid). Bharata, the younger brother of Rama, was also an incarnation of Kama. Kamadeva incarnated as Sudarshana, the son of Krishna and Jambavati. Samba, the son of Krishna, was also an incarnation of Kamadeva. Skanda, the son of Rudra, was also an incarnation of Kamadeva. Sanat-kumara, the son of Brahma, is also an incarnation of Kamadeva.

When Lord Krishna appeared on the earth, Brihaspati appeared as Drona. Brihaspati also incarnated as Uddhava.

Sachi, the wife of Indra, incarnated to become Tara, the wife of Vali, during the advent of Lord Rama. When Krishna killed

Vali, she became the wife of Sugriva. Because of this sinful act, she could not attain heaven. She remained unmanifest until the appearance of Lord Krishna. At that time, she appeared on the earth as Chitrangada and became the wife of Arjuna and the mother of Babhruvahana.

Lord Krishna said, "Vishnu is the best of all Lords. Brahma and the other demigods are dependent upon Him. Whatever I state is the truth. I take hold of this infuriated serpent. If anything that I have said is untrue then let this king of snakes bite Me."

So saying, Lord Krishna caught hold of an infuriated snake but the serpent did not bite Him. He said, "The primeval Lord Vishnu is alone the eternal reality. I declare this truth with upraised arms. If this proves to be false then let this lord of snakes bite Me."

"The Supreme Soul is eternal and so is the individual soul. The distinction between the two is also eternal. The distinction between one individual soul and another is also eternal. If any of this proves to be false then let this king of snakes bite Me."

Garuda said, "My Lord, I would like You to speak about the duality of material existence. Also, tell me about the bliss that is derived from renunciation."

Lord Krishna said, "In the body, two organs are the strongest—the ears and the eyes—and they are inter-related. Materialistic ears are inclined to hear gossip and enjoy it. They are naturally averse to hearing the nectarean glories of the Lord. Materialistic eyes are inclined to gaze at men and women. They are averse to seeing the devotees and their worship of the Supreme Lord."

"Even the most stupid person is aware of the duality of material nature. He accepts indulgence in sense gratification as the natural course of affairs. In his ignorance, he takes delight in sticking his penis into any woman's vagina. Neither men and women, nor ascetics have any shame in this regard. Men can

copulate with their sisters, and that too, in the daytime, just as priests do with the women at a soma sacrifice. One should not be attached to the vagina of a woman. If a man gives up his thoughts of vaginas, he becomes detached and eligible for liberation. ”

“It is the nature of the materialistic tongue to eat anything and everything, without a thought of offering it to the Lord.”

“Intelligence is considered to be the wife of the conditioned soul. She has a two-fold nature—one is wicked and one is pious. The younger one is wicked and the elder one is pious. Through the younger one, the soul succumbs to destruction. Through the elder one, he attains auspiciousness. I shall now tell you about the nature of the younger one—listen carefully.”

“The younger wife encourages the soul (her husband) to indulge in activities that fulfill his material desires. She disregards the brahmanas, Lord Vishnu, discussions of the Lord, cows, sacrifices, the holy banyan tree, and purity. She misdirects her stupid husband to perform the worship of Mayadevi.”

“The young wife (intelligence) encourages her stupid husband to worship Goddess Durga in one of her myriad forms. She assures him that if he performs the countless rituals at the proper times, he will be rewarded with prestige and riches. She warns her husband not to honor the devotees of Lord Vishnu and threatens him with dire consequences if he expresses a desire to do so. In this way, the conditioned soul comes under the control of contaminated intelligence.”

“One should not associate with such a misdirected, materialistic intelligence (wife). The second wife, noble intelligence, encourages the soul (her husband) not to worship any god but Lord Vishnu. She advises her husband, ‘Do not come under the sway of your younger wife. If you try to satisfy a wife who is deceitful and against the Vedic principles, you will become distressed and diseased and after death, you will journey to hell. Such a bad wife cannot help you at all. Do not follow the advice of such a wretched lady. If you worship some

goddess during your lifetime, at the time of death, when the Yamadutas bind you with their nooses, she will not be present to help you.' ”

“ ‘Do not worship the insignificant demigods and hear of their useless pastimes. Put all these minor deities in a basket and throw them in a distant place. Put aside your family traditions that are likely to cause your fall into hell. Worship the Supreme Lord, Narayana, for He can help you cross over the ocean of suffering. Cast off all images of ignorance that have entered your heart and fill it with the images of Lord Vishnu and His associates. Think of Lord Vishnu as your spiritual master and the support of your existence. Take shelter of me, your noble wife, for I foster beneficial thoughts within your mind.’ In this way, the elder wife, noble intelligence, addresses her bewildered husband.”

Lord Krishna continued, “I shall now tell you about the obstacles to one’s devotion for the Lord. One should keep them aside or throw them away, just as one leaves stool after excreting it, discards clothes that were burnt, abandons an argument that is futile, or dismisses a physician whose treatment only gives one pain.”

“Devotees of Lord Vishnu should not associate with those who are not devotees of the Lord. The following people are not dear to Me (Lord Krishna) but are dear to the personality of Kali and his consort—those who are averse to the recitation of the Puranas, a pond that is not properly maintained, a worn-out garment, an old and dirty sacred thread, a house whose residents are always engaged in quarrel, and a run-down house.”

“An ugly face, criticism of the noble, disrespect for those who are good, the torture of children, theft of rice and other commodities, a woman who keeps her hair loose, addiction to gambling, and quarrels—all of these are dear to Kali and his consort, Shyamala.”

“Now, I shall tell you about those activities that please the Lord. A person should rise early in the morning and immediately

remember Lord Narayana. He should bow down to Tulasi-devi and remember Lord Narayana and His consort, Lakshmi. While evacuating, one should remember Lord Keshava, in the form of the apana air. At the time of purification, he should remember Lord Trivikrama while sipping the water of the Ganga. At the time of brushing one's teeth, one should remember Lord Hari, pervading the moon. After rinsing his mouth, one should remember Lord Madhava."

"While scratching the neck of a cow, one should remember Govardhana Hill. At the time of milking the cows, one should remember Lord Gopala-vallabha (the beloved of the cowherd, Lord Krishna)."

"One should never stay, even for a moment, at that house where there is no cow or tulasi plant, where the people do not celebrate the Lord's festivals, or where there is no narration of the Lord's pastimes and transcendental qualities. Association with the people of that house will only result in misery."

"One who does not keep a cow, is unaware of how to milk a cow, and is averse to taking care of a cow, passes his life in vain. One who does not feed a cow and care for it can never pass his life comfortably. When one sees a calf drinking milk from its mother, he should remember child Krishna. When milk is being churned into butter, one should remember how the Lord sucked the breast of His mother. When one bathes in a sacred place, he should remember Lord Hari. When one puts on tilaka, he should remember twelve names of the Lord, beginning with Keshava."

"In the evening, when one performs his sandhya rituals, he should remember Lord Rama. While performing the shraddha ceremony, one should remember Lord Achyuta, Lord Ananta, and Lord Govinda. When one offers oblations into the sacred fire, he should remember Lord Vasudeva. When one is fasting, he should remember Lord Hari as He pervades Vayu. While dressing, one should remember Lord Upendra. When one puts on a new sacred thread, he should remember Lord Vamana.

While waving a ghee lamp before the Deity, one should remember Lord Parashurama. While pouring water from a conch shell, one should remember Lord Mukunda. While offering food to the Deity, one should remember Lord Govinda. While taking prasada, one should remember Lord Achyuta."

"When one eats vegetables, he should remember Lord Dhanvantari. When one eats food offered by another, he should remember Lord Panduranga. While eating butter, one should remember dancing Krishna. When one drinks milk, he should remember Gopala Krishna, Lord Shrinivasa, and Lord Vishnu. When one eats food that was fried in oil or ghee, he should remember Lord Vyenkatesha. When one eats fruit, he should remember Bala-Krishna. When he drinks a tasty beverage, one should remember Lord Nrisimhadeva."

"When one drinks the ambrosial water of the Ganga, he should remember Lord Vishnu, the source of the Ganga. When one is on the verge of death, he should remember Lord Narayana and His carrier, Garuda. When one kisses his son or other boys, he should remember Krishna with His flute to His mouth. While indulging in sexual intercourse with one's consort, one should remember that Krishna is the supreme enjoyer. While going to sleep, one should remember Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Shrila Vyasadeva."

"One should always chant the holy names of the Lord. While picking tulasi leaves, one should chant, 'Rama, Rama.' When a king is in council with his ministers, he should remember Lord Nrisimhadeva. When an undertaking is accomplished, one should remember Lord Vasudeva."

"One who hears this Garuda Purana with faith and devotion will become attracted to a life of piety and will find that his devotion for the Lord has been enhanced."

Thus ends this summary study of the Garuda Purana by Purnaprajna das.



ISBN 81-87812-88-5



7 88187 812883 5 0