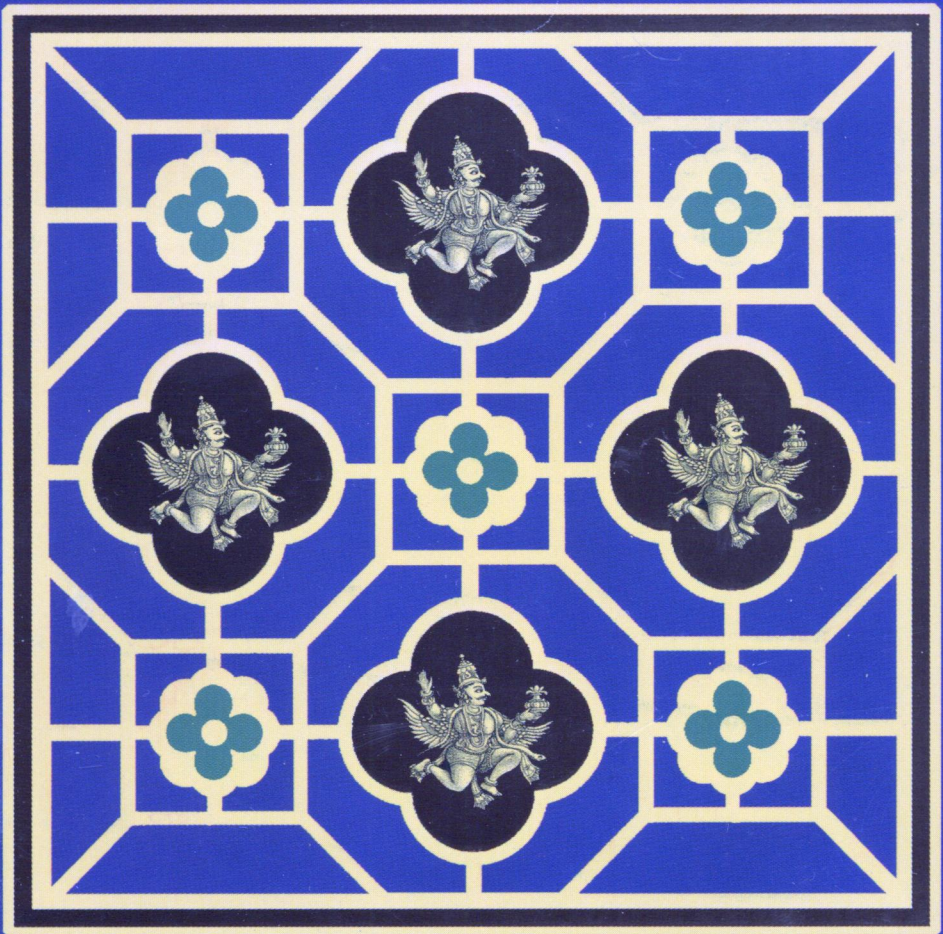


SUMMARY STUDY OF THE

GARUDA PURANA



GARUDA PURANA

A SUMMARY STUDY BY
PURNAPRAJNA DAS



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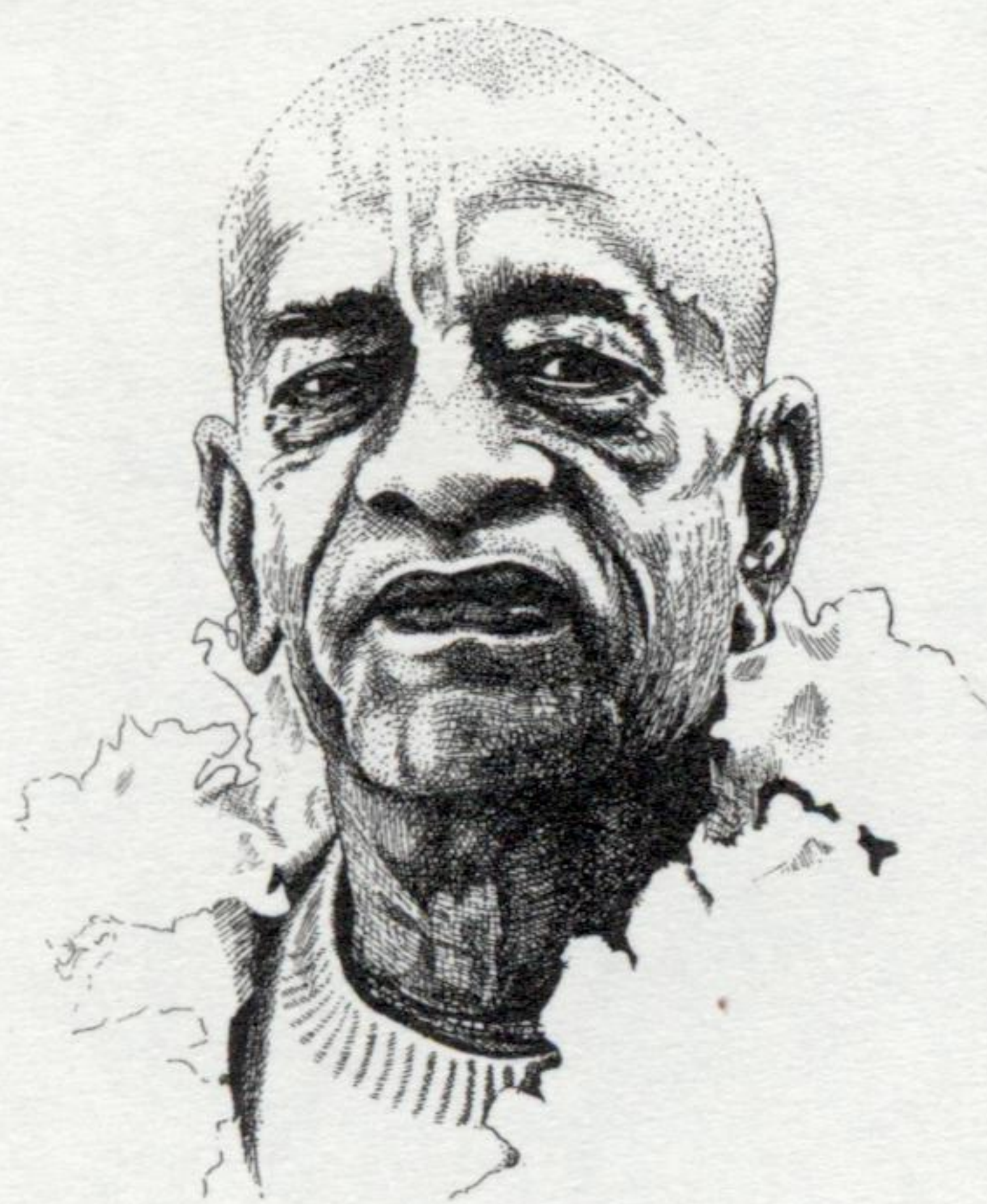
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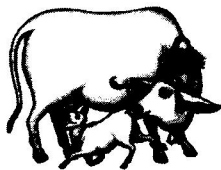


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INTRODUCTION

The Garuda Purana is one of the eighteen principal Puranas, as stated in the Shrimad-Bhagavatam (SB 12.7.23-24): The eighteen major Purāṇas are the Brahmā, Padma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Liṅga, Garuḍa, Nārada, Bhāgavata, Agni, Skanda, Bhaviṣya, Brahma-vaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vāmana, Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas.

In a Bhagavad-gita lecture given in Los Angeles on February 15, 1969, Shrila Prabhupada said, “There are eighteen Purāṇas. Men are conducted in three qualities: the modes of goodness, modes of passion, and modes of ignorance. To reclaim all these conditioned souls in different varieties of life, there are presentation of the Purāṇas. Six Purāṇas are meant for the person who is in the modes of goodness. And six Purāṇas are meant for the persons who are in the modes of passion. And six Purāṇas are for those who are in the modes of ignorance.”

The Garuda Purana confirms that it is one of the six Puranas that are meant for persons in the mode of goodness. It says that the Bhagavata Purana is the foremost, the Vishnu Purana is next, and the Garuda Purana is third in importance.

Srila Prabhupada often quoted this famous verse from the Garuda Purana that describes the sublime position of the Shrimad-Bhagavatam. This verse was also used by Krishnadasa Kaviraja in his Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita (Madhya 25.145):

artho 'yam brahma-sūtrāṇām

bhāratārtha-vinirmayaḥ

gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau

vedārtha-paribr̥mhitah

grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraḥ

śrīmad-bhāgavatābhīdhaḥ

“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.”

The primary characteristic of a Purana in the mode of goodness is that it exclusively glorifies Lord Vishnu as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Shrila Prabhupada quoted many verses from the Garuda Purana. In his purport to the Shrimad-Bhagavatam (SB 2.9.36), Shrila Prabhupada wrote: The same truth is also indirectly described in the Garuda Purāṇa as follows:

*pāram gato 'pi vedānām
sarva-sāstrārtha-vedy api
yo na sarveṣvare bhaktas
tam vidyāt puruṣādhamam*

“Even though one may have gone to the other side of all the Vedas, and even though one is well versed in all the revealed scriptures, if one is not a devotee of the Supreme Lord, he must be considered the lowest of mankind.”

In another purport to Shrimad-Bhagavatam (SB 2.9.36), Shrila Prabhupada wrote: Therefore the devotional service of the Lord with perfect knowledge through the training of a bona fide spiritual master is advised for everyone, even if one happens not to be a human being. This is confirmed in the Garuda Purāṇa as follows:

*kīṭa-pakṣi-mṛgāṇām ca
harau sannyaṣṭa-cetasām
ūrdhvām eva gatiṁ manye
kiṁ punar jñāninām nṛṇām*

“Even the worms, birds and beasts are assured of elevation to the highest perfectional life if they are completely surrendered to the transcendental loving service of the Lord, so what to speak of the philosophers amongst the human beings?”

In his purport to Shrimad-Bhagavatam (SB 6.2.7), Srila Prabhupada quoted this verse:

*avaśenāpi yan-nāmnī
kīrtite sarva-pātakaiḥ
pumān vimucyate sadyaḥ
simha-trastair mṛgair iva*

“If one chants the holy name of the Lord, even in a helpless condition or without desiring to do so, all the reactions of his sinful life depart, just as when a lion roars, all the small animals flee in fear.” (Garuḍa Purāṇa)

In his purport to Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita (Madhya 2.46), Shrila Prabhupada wrote: The Garuḍa Purāṇa similarly states:

*brāhmaṇānām sahasrebhyaḥ satra-yājī viśiṣyate
satra-yājī-sahasrebhyaḥ sarva-vedānta-pāragah
sarva-vedānta-vit-koṭyā viṣṇu-bhakto viśiṣyate
vaiṣṇavānām sahasrebhya ekānty eko viśiṣyate*

“It is said that out of thousands of brāhmaṇas, one is qualified to perform sacrifices, and out of many thousands of such qualified brāhmaṇas expert in sacrificial offerings, one learned brāhmaṇa may have passed beyond all Vedic knowledge. He is considered the best among all these brāhmaṇas. And yet, out of thousands of such brāhmaṇas who have surpassed Vedic knowledge, one person may be a viṣṇu-bhakta, and he is most famous. Out of many thousands of such Vaiṣṇavas, one who is completely fixed in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa is most famous. Indeed, a person who is completely devoted to the service of the Lord certainly returns home, back to Godhead.”

Later in the Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita (Antya 4.197), the author quotes Lord Chaitanya as saying: “Sanātana Gosvāmī is one of the associates of Kṛṣṇa. There could not be any bad odor from his body. On the first day I embraced him, I smelled the aroma of catuḥsama [a mixture of sandalwood pulp, camphor, aguru and musk].”

PURPORT

An associate of the Lord is one whose body is fully engaged in the service of the Lord. A materialist might see Sanātana Gosvāmī's body as being full of itching sores that exuded foul moisture and a bad smell. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, however, said that actually the aroma of his body was the excellent scent of a mixture of sandalwood pulp, camphor, musk and aguru. In the Garuḍa Purāṇa this mixture, which is called catuḥsama, is described as follows:

*kastūrikāyā dvau bhāgau catvāraś candanasya tu
kūṅkumasya trayas caikaḥ śasiṅaḥ syāt catuḥ-samam*

“Two parts of musk, four parts of sandalwood, three parts of aguru or saffron and one part of camphor, when mixed together, form catuḥsama.”

In another purport of Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita (Antya 16.29), Shrila Prabhupada wrote: A brāhmaṇa must be a Vaiṣṇava and a learned scholar. Therefore in India it is customary to address a brāhmaṇa as paṇḍita. Without knowledge of Brahman, one cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore a Vaiṣṇava is already a brāhmaṇa, whereas a brāhmaṇa may become a Vaiṣṇava. In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is said:

*bhaktir aṣṭa-vidhā hy eṣā yasmin mlecche 'pi vartate
sa viprendro muni-śreṣṭhaḥ sa jñānī sa ca paṇḍitaḥ*

“Even if one is born a mleccha, if he becomes a devotee he is to be considered the best of the brāhmaṇas and a learned paṇḍita.”

In his Nectar of Devotion, Shrila Prabhupada wrote: In the Garuḍa Purāṇa the stress on hearing is expressed very nicely. It is said there, “The state of conditioned life in the material world is just like that of a man lying unconscious, having been bitten by a snake. This is because both such unconscious states can be ended by the sound of a mantra.”

There is no doubt that the Garuda Purana is an important Vaishnava literature. Not only did Shrila Prabhupada quote the Garuda Purana on numerous occasions, Sanatana Gosvami quoted many verses from the Garuda Purana in his famous book, Hari-bhakti-vilasa, which is a handbook for practicing devotees. I am confident that the readers of this small summary will be not only be entertained but astonished at the wisdom contained in the Garuda Purana.

Purnaprajna das

GARUDA PURANA

I offer my obeisances unto Lord Hari, the unborn, beginningless, eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is composed of pure transcendence. With my every thought, word and action, I offer my obeisances unto Lord Hari, as well as unto Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, Ganesha and Goddess Sarasvati.

Once, the great devotee of the Lord, Suta Gosvami, happened to come to Naimisharanya in the course of his wanderings to holy places of pilgrimage. There, an assembly of sages, headed by Shaunaka Rishi, welcomed him with great respect and offered him the vyasasana.

The sages asked, "O Suta, you are the knower of everything. Who among all the gods is supreme and therefore most worthy of our worship? Upon whom are we to always meditate? Who is the actual creator of the universe that we see before us? Who maintains it and in the end, who destroys it? Who is the actual originator of religion? Who is it that keeps the wicked from dominating the creation? Who is that Supreme Personality of Godhead and by what practice can He be attained? Kindly describe His incarnations. How were the various dynasties begun? Please tell us all this."

Suta Gosvami said, "In response to your inquiries, I shall now recite the Garuda Purana. Long ago, this great literature was recited to Kashyapa by Garuda. Formerly, I heard it from Shрила Vyasadeva."

"Lord Narayana is the supreme among all the gods. He is the almighty Personality of Godhead and the Supreme Soul of all living beings. He is the Supreme Brahman. Everything emanates from Him alone. For the welfare of the creation, He assumes various incarnations, beginning with the four Kumaras, who appeared as the sons of Brahma."

The sages asked, "How did Shrila Vyasadeva come to narrate the Garuda Purana to you?"

Suta Gosvami said, "Once, in the company of other sages, I came to Badarikashrama, where I saw Shrila Vyasadeva deep in meditation upon the Supreme Lord. After worshipping him with great respect, I sat down and then inquired from him as follows:"

Suta Gosvami said, "O great sage, Vyasa, please describe to me how Lord Hari creates the universe. You constantly meditate upon Him and so I think that you are competent to explain His activities in truth."

Shrila Vyasadeva said, "O Suta, I shall narrate to you the Garuda Purana, just as I had heard it from Lord Brahma, in the presence of Narada, Daksha and others."

Suta Gosvami said, "How was it that Brahma had narrated the Garuda Purana to you and others?"

Shrila Vyasadeva said, "Narada, Daksha, Bhrigu, myself, and others had gone to Brahmaloaka, where we had worshiped Lord Brahma. After doing so, we requested him to describe to us that which is the most essential understanding."

Lord Brahma said, "Once, I had gone to Mount Kailasa, along with Indra and other demigods. There, I saw Lord Rudra engaged in meditation upon the Absolute Truth. After offering him due respect, I spoke to him as follows."

Lord Brahma said, "O Shankara, upon whom do you contemplate? I do not know of any being superior to you and so I would like you to inform me of the most essential truth."

Lord Rudra said, "It is upon Lord Vishnu that I contemplate. He is the Supreme Soul and the Almighty Lord. He alone provides all necessities of life for the innumerable living beings. In His unmanifest form, He pervades the entire universe. While worshipping Lord Vishnu, I cover my entire body with ashes and keep matted hair. Let us go to Him and inquire about the

most essential knowledge. We shall go to see that Supreme Personality, who is the essence of everything. It is upon Him that I meditate.”

Lord Brahma said, “In this way, Lord Rudra came to inquire from Lord Vishnu, just as Vyasadeva had inquired from me.”

Lord Rudra said, “O Lord Vishnu, foremost of the gods, please tell me who is the supreme personality. Upon whom must we meditate and who is most worthy of our worship? By what rites is that Lord gratified?”

Lord Hari said, “O Rudra, listen, along with Brahma and the other demigods, as I declare to you that I am the Lord of all beings and the master of the three worlds. I am the Lord who is to be worshiped and meditated upon.”

“O Shiva, I am the original seed of all existence. I am the creator of this world and its maintainer as well. It is I who punish the wicked and protect religious principles. I am the knower of everything and I am the object of knowledge. I am the soul of the universe.”

“Long ago, Garuda satisfied Me by the performance of austerities and so I asked him to accept a benediction. At that time, he spoke as follows.”

Garuda said, “O Lord Hari, my mother, Vinata, has become the slave of the serpents. Kindly benedict me in such a way that I can conquer the serpents and bring nectar for securing my mother’s release. May I become supremely powerful and omniscient, and may I become Your carrier and the expounder of a Purana.”

Lord Vishnu said, “O Garuda, all that you have requested will come to be. You will secure the release of your mother. Conquering the demigods, you will procure divine nectar. You shall become very powerful and you will henceforth act as My carrier. By My mercy, you will become the knower of a great Purana that expounds My glories. It will become known in this

world as the Garuda Purana. Just as I am celebrated as the foremost of gods, the Garuda Purana will be known as one of the chief Puranas.”

Lord Vishnu addressed Rudra, “Being thus initiated by Me, Garuda taught this Purana to Kashyapa, when he was solicited by him. By the power gained by hearing this Purana, he later on resuscitated a burnt tree. Now, you should also hear this great Purana from Me.”

Suta Gosvami said, “This is how Rudra and Brahma heard the Garuda Purana from Lord Vishnu. I shall now narrate it to you in this sacred forest of Naimisha. This great literature, when heard with attention and respect, bestows all desirable objectives of life. Bowing down to Shrila Vyasadeva, I shall now begin my narration. O Shaunaka, kindly listen with rapt attention.”

Thereafter, Lord Shiva requested Lord Janardana to describe in detail the process of creation. A brief summary of the Lord’s explanation is herein given: The first creation is that of mahat, which is a transformation of Brahman. The second creation is called bhuta-sarga, or the creation of the material elements. The third creation is called aindriyaka-sarga, or the creation of the sense organs. All together, these three are called prakriti-sarga.

The fourth creation is called mukhya-sarga, wherein the non-moving entities are created. The fifth creation is that of the lower species of life and it is known as tiryaksrotas. The creation of super-human beings is the sixth, and it is known as urdhvasrotas. The creation of human beings is the seventh, and it is known as arvakstas. The eighth creation is known as anugraha-sarga. These five constitute the prakritya stage of creation. The ninth creation is called kaumara.

While engaged in creation, the demons came out from Lord Brahma’s genitals, infused with the mode of ignorance, or tamas. Lord Brahma then cast off that tamasic body and it became the night. The Yakshas and demons found pleasure in that body. Then, from the mouth of Brahma, the demigods were born,

infused with the mode of goodness, or sattva. When Brahma cast off that body, it became the day. Because of this, the demons become more powerful at night and the demigods are more powerful during the day. Thereafter, when the forefathers were created, the body that was cast off became the twilight. When human beings evolved, they became infused with the mode of passion, or rajas. When Brahma cast off that body, it became the dawn. From passion—hunger, darkness and anger evolved.

From Brahma's head came the brahmanas. From his arms—the kshatriyas. From his thighs were born the vaishyas and from his feet—the shudras. Brahmanas can attain Brahmaloaka, kshatriyas can attain Indra's planet, vaishyas can attain the world of the Maruts, and shudras can attain the realm of the Gandharvas.

Staunch brahmacharies can attain Brahmaloaka, householders who are steady in the performance of their duties can attain the realm of the Prajapatis. Vanaprasthas can attain the world of the seven rishis and sannyasis can attain liberation in Brahman.

After these creations, Lord Brahma begot his mental sons—Dharma, Rudra, Manu, Sanaka, Sanatana, Bhrigu, Sanat-kumara, Ruchi, Shraddha, Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Narada, and the seven classes of forefathers (Barhishads, Agnishvattas, Kravyadas, Ajyapas, Sukalins, Upahutas, and Dipyas).

From his right thumb, Lord Brahma created Daksha, and from his left thumb, he created Daksha's wife. Daksha begot many daughters who were given in marriage to Brahma's sons. Sati was given to Rudra. Rudra's sons were numerous and very powerful. He gave his daughter, Khyati, to Bhrigu Muni, who begot in her Dhatri, Vidhatri and Shri, the wife of Lord Narayana. From Shri, the Lord begot Bala and Unmada.

Manu's daughters, Ayati and Niyati, became the wives of Dhatri and Vidhatri, and their two sons were Prana and Mrikandu, whose son was Markandeya Rishi.

Anasuya, the wife of Atri Muni, gave birth to Soma, Durvasa, and Dattatreya. Sumati, the wife of Kratu, gave birth to the sixty thousand Valakhilyas, who were the size of a thumb.

Svayambhuva Manu and his wife, Shatarupa, had two sons—Priyavrata and Uttanapada—and three daughters—Prasuti, Akuti, and Devahuti. Prasuti was given in marriage to Daksha and they had twenty-four excellent daughters. They were Shraddha (faith), Lakshmi (wealth), Dhriti (fortitude), Tushti (satisfaction), Pushti (nourishment), Medha (intelligence), Kriya (action), Buddhi (intelligence), Lajja (bashfulness), Vapu (beauty), Shanti (peacefulness), Riddhi (prosperity), Kirti (fame), Khyati (praise), Sati (chastity), Sambhuti (production), Smriti (memory), Priti (affection), Kshama (forgiveness), Sannati (obeisances), Anasuya (non-jealousness), Urja (energy), Svaha and Svadha (exclamations uttered while offering oblations).

Shraddha gave birth to Kama (desire). Lakshmi gave birth to Darpa (pride). Dhriti gave birth to Niyama (restraint). Tushti gave birth to Santosha (contentment). Pushti gave birth to Lobha (greed). Medha gave birth to Shruta (knowledge). Kriya gave birth to three sons—Danda (punishment), Laya (adherence), and Vinaya (mild and humble). Buddhi gave birth to Bodha (enlightenment). Lajja gave birth to Vinaya (humility). Vapu gave birth to Vyavasaya (endeavor). Shanti gave birth to Kshema (welfare). Riddhi gave birth to Sukha (happiness) and Kirti gave birth to Yashas (fame).

Kama's wife was Rati (love) and their son was Harsha (joy). The Garuda Purana goes on to list innumerable descendents of Daksha's daughters.

Thereafter, during the course of a lengthy description of procedures for worshipping Lord Vishnu, Lord Rudra asked, "My dear Lord, what is to be recited by a man so that he can become liberated from the terrible ocean of material existence? O Janardana, please tell me the great recitation that brings all auspiciousness."

Lord Hari said, "By reciting Lord Vishnu's one thousand holy names, a man becomes freed from all sins. Kindly listen to them with full attention.

Om Vasudeva - the son of Vasudeva.

Maha-vishnu - the all-pervading Supreme Lord.

Vamana - the dwarf brahmana incarnation.

Vasava - Indra.

Vasu - eight minor demigods.

Balachandranibha - resembling a crescent moon.

Bala - appearing as a child.

Balabhadra - Balarama.

Baladhipa - very powerful.

Balibandhanakrit - He who imprisoned Bali.

Vedhas - the creator.

Varenya - the most excellent.

Vedavit - the foremost knower of the Vedas.

Kavi - poet.

Vedakartri - creator of the Vedas.

Vedarupa - the Vedas personified.

Vedya - worthy of being known.

Vedaparipluta - a reservoir of Vedic knowledge.

Vedangavettri - knower of the Vedangas.

Vedesha - Lord of the Vedas.

Baladhara - storehouse of strength.

Balardhana - He who curbs the strong.

Avikara - unchanging.

Varesha - Lord of benedictions.

Varada - the granter of benedictions.

Varunadhipa - the Lord of Varuna.

Viraha - killer of heroes.

Brihadvira - great hero.

Vandita - He who is adored by the best of prayers.

Parameshvara - the supreme controller.

Atman - the supreme soul.

- Paramatman** - the Lord of the heart.
- Pratyagatman** - the inner Self.
- Viyatpara** - beyond the limit of the sky.
- Padmanabha** - having a lotus-like navel.
- Padmanidhi** - the treasure of Padma.
- Padmahasta** - holding a lotus flower in His hand.
- Gadadhara** - the holder of the club.
- Parama** - the greatest.
- Parabhuta** - transcendental to the material elements.
- Purushottama** - the supreme person.
- Ishvara** - the supreme controller.
- Padmajangha** - having a lotus-like wrist.
- Pundarika** - white in complexion.
- Padmamaladhara** - wearing a garland of lotuses.
- Priya** - beloved of all.
- Padmaksha** - lotus-eyed.
- Padmagarbha** - having a womb like a lotus.
- Parjanya** - like a rain-bearing cloud.
- Padmasamsthita** - seated on a lotus.
- Apara** - beyond the range of mundane sense perception.
- Paramartha** - the greatest benefactor.
- Paranampara** - greater than the greatest.
- Prabhu** - the Lord.
- Panditebhyah Pandita** - the supreme scholar.
- Pavitra** - supremely pure.
- Papamardaka** - reliever of sins.
- Shuddha** - supremely pure.
- Prakasharupa** - He who manifests His transcendental form.
- Pavitra** - the supreme pure.
- Parirakshaka** - the protector of the devotees.
- Pipasha-varjita** - free from thirst.
- Padya** - the water offered at the lotus feet of the Lord.
- Purusha** - the supreme enjoyer.
- Prakriti** - divine nature.

- Pradhana** - the original and supremely intelligent person.
- Prithivipadma** - the lotus of the earth.
- Padmanabha** - having a lotus navel.
- Priyaprada** - the one who awards all desires.
- Sarvesha** - Lord of all creation.
- Sarvaga** - existing everywhere.
- Sarva** - the sum total of all existence.
- Sarvavid** - omniscient.
- Sarvada** - bestower of everything.
- Para** - transcendently situated.
- Jagato dhama** - the resort of the universe.
- Sarvadarshin** - the witness of all activities.
- Sarvabhrit** - maintainer of the world.
- Sarvanugrahakrid** - the benefactor of everyone.
- Sarvabhutahridisthita** - residing in the hearts of all.
- Sarvapa** - the protector of everyone.
- Sarvapujya** - worthy of everyone's worship.
- Sarvadevanamaskrita** - worshiped by the demigods.
- Sarvasya jagato mulam** - the root cause of the universe.
- Sakala** - the sum total of all existence.
- Nishkala** - undivided.
- Anala** - fire.
- Sarvagoptri** - the protector of all living entities.
- Sarvanishtha** - all-pervading.
- Sarva-karana-karanam** - the cause of all causes.
- Sarvadyeya** - worthy to be meditated upon.
- Sarvamitra** - the friend of all.
- Sarvadevasvarupadhrik** - maintainer of all the demigods.
- Sarvadyaya** - object of study by all.
- Sarvadyaksha** - presiding over all the demigods.
- Surasuranamaskrita** - adored by demigods and demons.
- Dushtanam asauranam ca sarvada ghataka** - demon-killer.
- Antaka** - the destroyer.
- Satyapala** - the protector of truth.

- Sannabha** - the cynosure of all good men.
- Siddhesha** - the Lord of the Siddhas.
- Siddhavandita** - worshiped by the Siddhas.
- Siddhasadhya** - one who has attained everything desirable.
- Siddhasidha** - obtained by Siddhas.
- Sadhyasiddha** - the perfection of the Sadhyas.
- Hridishvara** - the Lord of the heart.
- Jagatah-sharanam** - the refuge of the universe.
- Jagatah-shreya** - the real substance of the universe.
- Jagatah-kshema** - the protector of the universe.
- Shubhakrit** - performer of beneficial activities.
- Shobhana** - most beautiful.
- Saumya** - most gentle.
- Satya** - supreme reality.
- Satyaparakrama** - truly heroic.
- Satyastha** - situated in truth.
- Satyasankalpa** - determined to act in truth.
- Satyavid** - knower of the truth.
- Satyada** - giver of the truth.
- Dharma** - personality of religion.
- Dharmin** - the most virtuous.
- Karmin** - performer of wonderful deeds.
- Sarvakarmavivarjita** - He never performs material activities.
- Karmakartri** - ordainer of actions.
- Karman** - the original cause of action.
- Kriya** - the propounder of sacred rites.
- Karyam** - the giver of the results of actions.
- Shripati** - the husband of the goddess of fortune.
- Nripati** - the Lord of men.
- Shrimat** - most glorious.
- Sarvasya-pati** - the Lord of all.
- Urjita** - most powerful.
- Devanam-pati** - the Lord of the demigods.
- Vrishninam-pati** - the Lord of the Vrishni dynasty.

- Hiranyagarbhasya-pati** - Lord of Hiranyagarbha.
Tripurantahpati - the Lord of the slayer of Tripura.
Pashunam-pati - Lord of the animals.
Praya - giver of abundance.
Vasunam-pati - Lord of the Vasus.
Akhandalasya-pati - Lord of the pure devotees.
Varunasya-pati - the Lord of Varuna.
Vanaspatinam-pati - the Lord of the plants.
Anilasya-pati - the Lord of the wind.
Analasya-pati - the Lord of fire.
Yamasya-pati - the Lord of Yamaraja.
Kuverasya-pati - the Lord of Kuvera.
Nakshatranam-pati - the Lord of the stars.
Oshadinam-pati - the Lord of medicinal herbs.
Vrikshanam-pati - the Lord of the trees.
Naganam-pati - the Lord of the Nagas.
Arkasya-pati - the Lord of the sun.
Dakshasya-pati - the Lord of Daksha.
Suhridam-pati - the Lord of all well-wishers.
Nripanam-pati - the Lord of kings.
Gandharvanam-pati - the Lord of the Gandharvas.
Asunam uttamah pati - the Lord of the vital air.
Parvatanam-pati - the Lord of the mountains.
Nimnaganam-pati - Lord of the rivers.
Suranam-pati - Lord of the demigods.
Shreshtha - the most excellent.
Kapilasya-pati - the Lord of Kapiladeva.
Latanam-pati - Lord of the creepers.
Virudham-pati - Lord of vegetation.
Muninam-pati - the Lord of the sages.
Suryasya uttama pati - the Supreme master of the sun-god.
Chandramasa shreshtha pati - the master of the moon-god.
Shukrasya-pati - the Lord of Shukracharya.
Grahanam-pati - the Lord of the planets.

- Rakshashanam-pati** - the Lord of the Rakshashas.
- Kinnaranam-pati** - the Lord of the Kinnaras.
- Dvijanam uttama pati** - the Supreme Lord of the twice-born.
- Saritam-pati** - the Lord of the rivers.
- Samudranam-pati** - the Lord of the oceans.
- Sarasam-pati** - the Lord of the lakes.
- Bhutanam-pati** - the Lord of ghosts and spirits.
- Vetalanam-pati** - the Lord of the Vetals (a kind of ghost).
- Kushmandanam-pati** - the Lord evil spirits.
- Pakshinam-pati** - the Lord of the birds.
- Pashunam-pati** - the Lord of the animals.
- Mahatman** - great soul.
- Mangala** - most auspicious.
- Meya** - that which can be measured.
- Mandara** - Mount Mandara.
- Mandareshvvara** - the Lord of Mount Mandara.
- Meru** - Mount Meru.
- Matri** - He who measures.
- Pramana** - evidence.
- Madhava** - husband of the goddess of fortune.
- Manuvarjita** - not under the rule of Manu.
- Maladhara** - bedecked with flower garlands.
- Mahadeva** - the great Lord.
- Mahadevena pujita** - worshiped by Lord Shiva.
- Mahashanta** - supremely peaceful.
- Mahabhaga** - greatly fortunate.
- Madhusudana** - the killer of the Madhu demon.
- Mahavirya** - greatly heroic.
- Mahaprana** - the vital air.
- Markandeya pravandita** - worshiped by Markandeya Rishi.
- Mayatman** - the soul of Maya.
- Mayaya baddha** - bound by the love of His devotees.
- Mayaya vivarjita** - free from illusion.
- Munistuta** - glorified by great sages.

- Muni** - most thoughtful.
- Maitra** - the well-wishing friend.
- Mahanasa** - having an aristocratic nose
- Mahahanu** - attractive cheeks.
- Mahabahu** - mighty-armed one.
- Mahadanta** - fearful teeth.
- Maranena vivarjita** - freed from the clutches of death.
- Mahavaktra** - possessing a great mouth.
- Mahatma** - Supreme Soul.
- Mahakara** - assuming a huge body.
- Mahodara** - having a great belly.
- Mahapada** - whose lotus feet shelter the entire world.
- Mahagriva** - having a great neck.
- Mahamanin** - greatly respected.
- Mahamanas** - great-minded.
- Mahamati** - supremely intelligent.
- Mahakirti** - supremely famous.
- Maharupa** - possessing a great form.
- Mahasura** - the Lord of the great demons.
- Madhu** - like honey.
- Madhava** - the husband of the goddess of fortune.
- Mahadeva** - the great Lord.
- Maheshvara** - the supreme controller.
- Makheshta** - pleased by the performance of sacrifice.
- Makharupin** - the form of sacrifice.
- Mananiya** - worthy of great respect.
- Makheshvara** - Lord of sacrifice.
- Mahavata** - supremely powerful, like the wind.
- Mahabhaga** - greatly fortunate.
- Mahesha** - the great Lord.
- Atitamanusha** - superhuman.
- Manava** - assumes a human-like form.
- Manu** - takes the post of Manu.
- Manavanam Priyankara** - works for human welfare.

Mriga - deer.

Mrigapujya - worshiped by deer.

Mriganam-pati - the Lord of deer.

Budhasya-pati - the Lord of Mercury.

Brihaspateh-pati - the Lord of Jupiter.

Shanaishcharasya-pati - the Lord of Saturn.

Rahoh-pati - the Lord of Rahu.

Ketoh-pati - the Lord of Ketu.

Lakshmana - having auspicious markings.

Lakshana - having auspicious characteristics.

Lamboshtha - enchanting lips.

Lalita - handsome in appearance.

Nanalankarasamyukta - decorated with many ornaments.

Nanachandanacharchita - anointed with sandalwood pastes.

Nanarasojjvaladvakra - whose mouth glistens with juices.

Nanapushpopashobhita - decorated with various flowers.

Rama - Lord Rama.

Ramapati - the Lord of Lakshmi.

Sabharya Parameshvara - the ruler of all assemblies.

Ratnada - giver of jewels.

Ratnahartri - confiscator of jewels.

Rupin - possessing transcendental forms.

Rupavivarjita - having no material form.

Maharupa - all-encompassing form.

Ugrarupa - terrible form.

Saumyarupa - having a beautiful form.

Nilameghanibha - resembling a bluish cloud.

Shuddha - pure.

Kalameghanibha - resembling a dark cloud.

Dhumavarna - smoke-colored.

Pitavarna - golden complexion.

Nanarupa - various forms.

Avarnaka - without material color.

Virupa - assumes a terrible form.

- Rupada** - who awards attractive bodily features.
- Shuklavarna** - white complexion.
- Sarvavarna** - assumes all colors.
- Mahayogin** - the foremost yogi.
- Yajna** - the incarnation, Yajna
- Yajnakrit** - the performer of sacrifice.
- Suvarna** - having a golden complexion.
- Varnavat** - very colorful.
- Suvarnakhya** - compared to gold.
- Suvarnavayava** - golden limbs.
- Suvarnasvarnamekhala** - wears a golden cloth around the waist.
- Suvarnasya pradatri** - the giver of gold.
- Suvarnamsha** - having golden limbs.
- Suvarnasya priya** - fond of gold.
- Suvarnadhya** - possessing gold.
- Suparnin** - having beautiful wings.
- Mahaparna** - having great wings.
- Suparnasya karanam** - the creator of Garuda.
- Vainateya** - Vinata's son (Garuda).
- Aditya** - Aditi's son.
- Adi** - the original person.
- Adikara** - the initiator of creation.
- Shiva** - Lord Shiva.
- Mahatah karanam** - the cause of mahat.
- Puranasya karanam** - the origin of the Puranas.
- Buddhinam karanam** - creator of the intelligent persons.
- Manasah karanam** - creator of the mind.
- Chetasah karanam** - origin of consciousness.
- Ahankarasya karanam** - cause of the false ego.
- Bhutanam karanam** - creator of the material elements.
- Vibhavasoh karanam** - origin of fire.
- Akashakaranam** - cause of ether.
- Prithivyah param karanam** - the original creator of the earth.
- Andasya karanam** - cause of the cosmic egg.

- Prakriteh karanam** - source of prakriti.
- Dehasya karanam** - cause of the material body.
- Chakshusha karanam** - creator of the eyes.
- Shrotrasya karanam** - creator of the ears.
- Tvachah karanam** - creator of the skin.
- Jihvayah karanam** - creator of the tongue.
- Pranasya karanam** - creator of the life force.
- Hastayoh karanam** - creator of the hands.
- Padayoh karanam** - creator of the feet.
- Vachah karanam** - creator of speech.
- Payoh karanam** - creator of the organ of evacuation.
- Indrasya karanam** - the creator of Indra.
- Kuverasya karanam** - the creator of Kuvera.
- Yamasya karanam** - the creator of Yamaraja.
- Ishanasya karanam** - the creator of Ishana.
- Yakshanam karanam** - the creator of the Yakshas.
- Rakshanam param karanam** - original cause of the Rakshashas.
- Bhushananam shreshtham karanam** - the creator of ornaments.
- Dharmasya karanam** - creator of religious principles.
- Jantunam karanam** - cause of all varieties of creatures.
- Vasunam param karanam** - supreme cause of the Vasus.
- Manunam karanam** - creator of the Manus.
- Pakshinam param karanam** - the original cause of the birds.
- Muninam shreshtham karanam** - the creator of the sages.
- Yoginam param karanam** - supreme cause of the yogis.
- Siddhanam karanam** - creator of the Siddhas.
- Yakshanam param karanam** - original creator of the Yakshas.
- Kinnaranam karanam** - the creator of the Kinnaras.
- Gandharvanam karanam** - the creator of the Gandharvas.
- Nadanam karanam** - the creator of the rivers.
- Nadinam param karanam** - the supreme cause of the rivers.
- Sumudranam karanam** - the creator of the oceans.
- Vrikshanam karanam** - the creator of the trees.
- Virudham karanam** - the creator of creepers.

- Lokanam karanam** - the creator of the planets.
- Patala-karanam** - the creator of Patala-loka.
- Devanam karanam** - the creator of the demigods.
- Sarpanam karanam** - the creator of the serpents.
- Shreyasam karanam** - the cause of all auspiciousness.
- Pashunam karanam** - the creator of the animals.
- Sarvesham karanam** - the cause of all causes.
- Dehatman** - the soul within the body.
- Indriyatman** - the soul of the senses.
- Buddheh atman** - soul of the intellect.
- Manasah atman** - soul of the mind.
- Ahankarachetasah atman** - the soul of the mind's false ego.
- Jagratah atman** - soul of wakefulness.
- Svapatah atman** - soul of the state of sleep.
- Paramahadatman** - soul of the cosmic intellect.
- Pradhanasya paratman** - the supreme soul of pradhana.
- Akashatman** - soul of ether.
- Apam atman** - the soul of water.
- Prithivyah paramatman** - the Supreme Soul of the earth.
- Vayasyatman** - the soul of friendship.
- Gandhasya paramatman** - the Supreme Soul of smell.
- Rupasya para atman** - Supreme Soul of form.
- Shabdatman** - the soul of sound.
- Vagatman** - soul of speech.
- Sparshatman** - soul of touch.
- Purusha** - the supreme enjoyer.
- Shrotratman** - soul of the ears.
- Tvagatman** - soul of the skin.
- Jihvayah paramatman** - Supreme Soul of the tongue.
- Ghranatman** - the soul of smell.
- Hastatman** - the soul of the hands.
- Paramapadatman** - Supreme Soul of the feet.
- Upasthasya atman** - the soul of the genitals.
- Parama payvatman** - Supreme Soul of the organ of evacuation.

Indratman - the soul of Indra.

Brahmatman - the soul of Brahma.

Rudratman - the soul of Rudra.

Manoh atman - the soul of Manu.

Dakshasya prajapateh atman - the soul of the progenitor, Daksha.

Paramasatyatman - the Supreme Soul of truth.

Ishatman - the soul of Isha.

Paramatman - the Supreme Soul of the universe.

Mokshavid - the knower of liberation.

Yati - ascetic.

Yatnavan - endeavoring.

Yatna - endeavors.

Khadgin - bearing a sword.

Asurantaka - the slayer of the demons.

Hripravartanashila - embracing the quality of modesty.

Yatinam hite rata - looking after the welfare of the ascetics.

Yatirupin - having the form of an ascetic.

Yogin - yogi.

Yogidhyeya - worthy to be meditated upon by yogis.

Hari - the remover of sins.

Shiti - dark-complexioned.

Samvit - complete knower of everything.

Medha - unlimitedly intelligent.

Kala - time.

Ushma - the summer.

Varsha - the rainy season.

Mati - determination.

Samvatsara - year.

Mokshakara - bringing about salvation.

Mohapradhvamsaka - the remover of illusion.

Dushtanamohakarti - bewilderer of the wicked.

Mandavya - the sage, Mandavya.

Badavamukha - having a fiery mouth.

Samvartaka - the fire at the time of annihilation.

- Kalakartri** - the creator of time.
Gautama - the sage, Gautama.
Bhrigu - the sage, Bhrigu.
Angiras - the sage, Angiras.
Atri - the sage, Atri.
Vasishtha - the sage, Vasishtha.
Pulaha - the sage, Pulaha.
Pulastya - the sage, Pulastya.
Kutsa - the sage, Kutsa.
Yajnavalkya - the sage, Yajnavalkya.
Devala - the sage, Devala.
Vyasa - the sage, Vyasa.
Parashara - the sage, Parashara.
Sharmada - the giver of welfare.
Gangeya - Ganga's son (Bhishma).
Hrishiksha - the master of the senses.
Brihachchravas - possessing great ears.
Keshava - the Lord of Brahma.
Kleshahantri - deliverer from miseries.
Sukarna - having very nice ears.
Karnavarjita - possessing no material ears.
Narayana - lying down in the water.
Mahabhaga - wonderfully fortunate.
Pranasya-pati - the Lord of the vital air.
Apanasya-pati - the Lord of the apana air.
Vyanasya-pati - the Lord of the vyana air.
Udanasya shreshtha pati - the Lord of the udana air.
Samanasya-pati - the Lord of the samana air.
Sabdasya shreshtha pati - the Lord of speech.
Sparshasya-pati - the Lord of touch.
Rupanamadyanripati - the original creator of colors.
Khadgapani - having a sword in His hand.
Halayudha - using a plough as a weapon.
Chakrapani - having a disc in His hand.

- Kundalin** - wearing earrings.
- Shrivatsanka** - having the mark of Shrivatsa on His chest.
- Prakriti** - the Lord of prakriti.
- Kaustubhagriva** - wears the Kaustubha jewel around His neck.
- Pitambaradhara** - wearing yellow garments.
- Sumukha** - having a very fair face.
- Durmukha** - one who speaks harshly.
- Mukhena vivarjita** - having no material face.
- Ananta** - unlimited.
- Anantarupa** - possessing unlimited forms.
- Sunakha** - having beautiful nails.
- Surasundara** - the most beautiful of the demigods.
- Sukalapa** - a very beautiful garment worn at the waist.
- Vibhu** - the all-pervading Lord.
- Jishnu** - victorious.
- Bhrajishnu** - resplendent.
- Ishudhi** - having a quiver.
- Hiranyakashipuhantri** - the killer of Hiranyakashipu.
- Hiranyakshavimardaka** - slayer of Hiranyaksha.
- Putananihantri** - the killer of Putana.
- Bhaskarantavinashana** - killer of the demon, Bhaskaranta.
- Keshidalana** - bifurcator of the Keshi demon.
- Mushtikavimardaka** - killer of Mushtika.
- Kamsadanavabhettri** - the killer of Kamsa.
- Chanurapramardaka** - killer of Chanura.
- Arishtanihantri** - the killer of Arishtasura.
- Akrurapriya** - very fond of Akrura.
- Akrura** - the Lord of Akrura.
- Krurarupa** - having cruel features.
- Akrurapriyavandita** - worshiped by the friends of Akrura.
- Bhagaha** - the destroyer of the demons' glory.
- Bhagavan** - full of six opulences.
- Bhanu** - the sun.
- Bhagavata** - the book or devotee in relation to Bhagavan.

Uddhava - Krishna's uncle, Uddhava.

Uddhavasya ishya - the Lord of Uddhava.

Uddhavena vichintita - always meditated upon by Uddhava.

Chakradhrik - wielder of a wheel.

Chanchala - always restless.

Chanchalavivarjita - never materially restless.

Ahamkara - the Lord of the false ego.

Mati - determination.

Chittam - the Lord of consciousness.

Gaganam - the heavens.

Prithivi - the earth.

Jalam - water.

Vayu - wind.

Chakshus - the eyes.

Shrotram - the ears.

Jihva - the tongue.

Ghranam - the nose.

Vakpanipada - speech, the hands, and the feet.

Javana - accepts.

Payu - the organ of evacuation.

Upastha - the genitals.

Shankara - Lord Shiva.

Kharva - one thousand crores.

Kshantida - awards forgiveness.

Kshantikrit - one who forgives.

Nara - a man.

Bhaktapriya - very fond of His devotees.

Bhartri - the maintainer.

Bhaktiman - possessing devotion.

Bhaktivardhana - nourishes devotion.

Bhaktastuta - praised by devotees.

Bhaktapara - attached to His devotees.

Kirtida - giver of fame.

Kirtivardhana - the enhancer of fame.

- Kirtidipti** - the resplendence of fame.
Kshama - forgiveness.
Kanti - luster.
Bhakti - devotion.
Para daya - supreme compassion.
Dana - charity.
Datri - the giver.
Kartri - the doer.
Devadevapriya - fond of the lords of the demigods.
Shuchi - most pure.
Shuchiman - possessing supreme purity.
Sukhada - the giver of happiness.
Moksha - liberation.
Kama - lust.
Artha - wealth.
Sahasrapat - having one thousand feet.
Sahasrashirsha - having one thousand heads.
Vaidya - ayurvedic physician.
Mokshadvara - the door to liberation.
Prajadvaram - the door for one's subjects.
Sahasranta - having one thousand endings.
Sahasrakara - having one thousand hands.
Shukra - semen.
Sukiritin - wearing a beautiful helmet.
Sugriva - having a wonderful neck.
Kaustubha - the Kaustubha jewel.
Pradyumna - Lord Pradyumna.
Aniruddha - Lord Aniruddha.
Hayagriva - Lord Hayagriva.
Shukara - Lord Boar.
Matsya - Lord Fish.
Parashurama - Lord Parashurama.
Prahlada - Prahlada Maharaja.
Bali - Bali Maharaja.

Sharanya - the supreme shelter.

Nitya - eternal.

Buddha - Lord Buddha.

Mukta - ever-liberated.

Sharirabhrit - possessing a transcendental body.

Kharadushanahantri - the killer of Khara and Dushana.

Ravanasya Pramardana - the killer of Ravana.

Sitapati - the husband of Sita.

Bharata - Bharata, the brother of Rama.

Vardhishnu - flourishing.

Kumbhendrajit-nihantri - the killer of Kumbha and Indrajit.

Kumbhakarnapramardana - the slayer of Kumbhakarna.

Narantakantaka - the killer of Narantaka.

Devantakavinashana - the killer of Devantaka.

Dushtasuranihantri - killer of the demons.

Shambarari - the enemy of Shambara.

Narakasya nihantri - the killer of Naraka.

Trishirshasya vinashana - the killer of Trishira.

Yamalarjunabhethri - feller of the twin Arjuna trees.

Tapohitakara - He who encourages tapasya.

Vaditra - playing musical instruments.

Vadyam - musical instruments.

Buddha - the enlightened.

Varaprada - giver of benedictions.

Sara - the essence.

Sarapriya - fond of the essence.

Saura - belonging to the sun.

Kalahantri - destroyer of Kala.

Nikrintana - He who cuts.

Agastya - the sage, Agastya.

Devala - the sage, Devala.

Narada - the sage, Narada.

Naradapriya - very fond of Narada.

Prana - the vital air, prana.

- Apana** - the vital air, apana.
Vyana - the vital air, vyana.
Rajas - the material mode of passion.
Sattva - the material mode of goodness.
Tamas - the material mode of ignorance.
Sharat - the autumn season.
Udana - the vital air, udana.
Samana - the vital air, samana.
Bheshaja - medicine.
Bhishak - the physician.
Kutastha - unwavering.
Svachcharupa - having a pure, spiritual form.
Sarvadehavivarjita - without any kind of material body.
Chakshurindriyahina - without any mundane vision.
Vagindriyavivarjita - without any mundane speech.
Hastendriyavihina - having no material hands.
Padabhyam vivarjita - without any material feet.
Payupasthavihina - without any mundane genital or anus.
Mahatapavisarjita - producing great penance.
Prabodhena vihina - without mundane perception.
Buddhya vivarjita - without mundane intellect.
Cetasa vigata - having no mundane consciousness.
Pranena vivarjita - having no material vital air.
Apanena vihina - having no apana air.
Vyanena vivarjita - having no vyana air.
Udanena vihina - having no udana air.
Samanena vivarjita - having no samana air.
Akashena vihina - having a form that contains no ether.
Vayunaparivarjita - having a form that contains no air.
Agnina vihina - having a form that contains no fire.
Udakena vivarjita - having a form that contains no water.
Prithivyavihina - having a form that contains no earth.
Shabdena vivarjita - having no material sound.
Sparshena vihina - having no material sense of touch.

- Sarvarupvivarjita** - having no material form.
Ragena Vigata - devoid of material passion.
Aghena parivarjita - devoid of sins.
Shokena rahita - devoid of grief.
Vachasa parivarjita - having no material speech.
Rajovivarjita - having no connection with rajo-guna.
Shadvikaravivarjita - has no connection with the six transformations.
Kamavarjita - having no connection with material lust.
Krodhena parivarjita - devoid of material anger.
Lobhena vigata - without any material greed.
Dambhena vivarjita - without any material pride.
Sukshma - the most subtle.
Susukshma - subtler than the subtlest.
Sthulat sthulatara - grosser than the grossest.
Visharada - clever.
Baladhyaksha - leader of armies.
Sarvasya kshobhaka - agitator of everything.
Prakriteh kshobhaka - the agitator of material nature.
Mahatah kshobhaka - agitator of the mahat-tattva.
Bhutanam kshobhaka - agitator of the material elements.
Buddheh kshobhaka - agitator of the intelligence.
Indriyanam kshobhaka - agitator of the material senses.
Vishayakshobhaka - agitator of the objects of the senses.
Brahmanahkshobhaka - the agitator of Brahma.
Rudrasya kshobhaka - the agitator of Rudra.
Chakshuradeh agamya - beyond the range of the eyes.
Shrotragamya - beyond the range of the ears.
Tvacha na gamya - cannot be known by the sense of touch.
Kurma - Kurma-avatara.
Jihvagrahya - beyond the perception of the tongue.
Ghranendriyagamya - beyond the perception of smell.
Vachagrahya - cannot be known by means of speech.
Panibhyam agamya - unknown by the hands.
Padagamya - unknown by the feet.

Manasah agrahya - beyond the understanding of the mind.

Buddhya agrahya - beyond the reach of the intelligence.

Hari - the remover of evil.

Ahambudhya grahya - realizable by the mind.

Chetasa grahya - realizable by purified consciousness.

Shankhapani - holding a conch shell in His hand.

Avyaya - without deterioration.

Gadapani - holding a club in His hand.

Sharngapani - holding the Sharnga bow in His hand.

Krishna - all-attractive.

Jnanamurti - the personification of knowledge.

Parantapa - slayer of the enemies.

Tapasvin - ascetic.

Jnanagamya - realized by the cultivation of knowledge.

Jnanin - endowed with knowledge.

Jnanavid - possessor of knowledge.

Jneya - the object of knowledge.

Jneyahina - without any objective of knowledge.

Jnapti - knowledge.

Caitanya rupaka - the personification of consciousness.

Bhava - the form of transcendental ecstasy.

Bhavya - that which is to be conceived.

Bhavakara - the cause of creation.

Bhavana - the creator.

Bhavanashana - the liberator from birth.

Govinda - the Lord of the cows.

Gopati - the master of the cows.

Gopa - a cowherd boy.

Sarvagopisukhaprada - the giver of happiness to the gopis.

Gopala - one who tends the cows.

Gomati - whose mind is attentive to the cows.

Godhara - the maintainer of cows.

Upendra - Lord Vamanadeva, the younger brother of Indra.

Nrisimha - half-man half-lion incarnation.

- Shauri Krishna** - the grandson of Shurasena.
- Janardana** - tormentor of the wicked.
- Araneya** - produced from Arani
- Brihadbhanu** - the Lord's incarnation as the 14th Manu.
- Brihaddipta** - greatly effulgent.
- Damodara** - Krishna, when He was bound around the waist.
- Trikala** - the three phases of time.
- Kalanjara** - knower of time.
- Kalavarjita** - freed from the influence of time.
- Trisandhya** - the three junctions of the day.
- Dvaparam** - the age of Dvapara.
- Treta** - the age of Treta.
- Prajadvara** - the gateway for all living entities.
- Trivikrama** - Lord Vamanadeva, who took three steps.
- Vikrama** - most heroic.
- Dandahasta** - holding a staff in His hand.
- Ekadandin** - holding a single staff.
- Tridandadhrik** - holding three staffs.
- Samabheda** - varieties of self-control.
- Samopaya** - being self-controlled.
- Samarupin** - the form of self-control.
- Samaga** - attained by self-control.
- Samaveda** - the Sama Veda.
- Atharva** - the Atharva Veda.
- Sukrita** - pious activities.
- Sukharupaka** - the form of happiness.
- Atharvedavid** - the knower of the Atharva Veda.
- Atharvacharya** - the preceptor of the Atharva Veda.
- Rigrupin** - the form of the Rg Veda.
- Rigveda** - the Rg veda.
- Rigvedeshu prathishthita** - situated in the Rg Veda.
- Yajurvedtri** - the knower of the Yajur Veda.
- Yajurveda** - the Yajur Veda.
- Yajurvedavid** - the knower of the Yajur Veda.

Ekapat - having one foot.

Bahupat - having many feet.

Supat - having very nice feet.

Sahasrapat - having one thousand feet.

Chatushpat - having four feet.

Dvipat - having two feet.

Smriti - supplementary Vedic literature.

Nyayopama - full of logic.

Balin - most powerful.

Sannyasin - most renounced.

Sannyasa - renunciation.

Chaturashrama - the four stages of spiritual life.

Brahmacharin - celibate student life.

Grihastha - household life.

Vanaprastha - retired life.

Bhikshuka - mendicant.

Brahmana - the intelligent class of men.

Kshatriya - the administrative class of men.

Vaishya - the business and agricultural classes of men.

Shudra - the laborer class of men.

Varna - class of society.

Shilada - giver of good character.

Shilasampanna - endowed with a good character.

Duhshilaparivarjita - not having a bad character.

Moksha - liberation from material existence.

Adhyatmasamavishta - engaged in spiritual activities.

Stuti - praises.

Stotri - one who praises.

Pujaka - worshiper.

Pujya - worthy of worship.

Vakkaranam - the organ of speech.

Vachya - speech.

Vachaka - the reciter.

Vettri - the knower.

- Vyakaranam** - grammar.
- Vakyam** - sentence.
- Vakyavit** - well-versed in speaking.
- Vakyagamya** - can be understood by speech.
- Tirthavasini** - residing in a sacred place.
- Tirtha** - sacred place.
- Tirthin** - personification of holy places.
- Tirthavid** - the knower of holy places.
- Tirthadibhuta** - residing in all holy places.
- Samkhya** - the Samkhya philosophical system.
- Niruktam** - the science of etymology.
- Abhidaivata** - nondifferent from the demigods.
- Pranava** - the sacred syllable, om.
- Pranavesha** - the Lord of om.
- Pranavena pravandita** - worshiped by om.
- Pranavena lakshya** - indicated by om.
- Gayatri** - the Gayatri-mantra.
- Gadadhara** - holding a club in His hand.
- Shalagramanivasini** - residing in the shalagrama-shila.
- Shalagrama** - the shalagrama-shila.
- Jalashayini** - lying on the water.
- Yogashayini** - lying in mystic meditation.
- Sheshashayini** - lying on the serpent, Shesha.
- Kusheshaya** - mystic lotus.
- Mahabhartri** - the great Lord.
- Karyam** - the result.
- Karanam** - the cause.
- Prithividhara** - the sustainer of the earth.
- Prajapati** - the progenitor of mankind.
- Shashvata** - eternal.
- Kamya** - worthy of being desired.
- Kama yitri** - the creator of desire.
- Virat** - the universal form.
- Samrat** - the emperor.

Pushan - the sun.

Svarga - the heavenly planets.

Rathastha - situated on a chariot.

Sarathi - the charioteer.

Balam - strength.

Dhanin - rich.

Dhanaprada - the giver of wealth.

Dhanya - most blessed.

Yadavanam hite ratah - engaged for the welfare of the Yadavas.

Arjunasya priya - very fond of Arjuna

Arjuna - the son of Kunti, Arjuna.

Bhima - the son of Kunti, Bhima.

Parakrama - heroism personified.

Durvisaha - unbearable.

Sarvashastravisharada - expert in understanding of all shastra.

Sarasvata - a devotee of Sarasvati.

Mahabhishma - the performer of most terrible activities.

Parijatahara - stealer of the parijata flower.

Amritasya pradatri - the giver of nectar.

Kshiroda - the ocean of milk.

Kshira - milk.

Indratmaja - the son of Indra (Jayanta).

Indragoptri - the protector of Indra.

Govardhanadhara - the lifter of Govardhana Hill.

Kamsasya Nashana - the killer of Kamsa.

Hastipa - the keeper of an elephant.

Hastinashana - the killer of an elephant.

Shipivishta - pervaded by rays.

Prasanna - cheerful.

Sarvalokartinashanam - remover of the miseries of the world.

Mudra - mysterious.

Mudrakara - mystic gesture of the hand.

Sarvamudravivarjita - without any mudras.

Dehin - embodied.

- Dehasthita** - situated within the body.
Dehasya niyamaka - arranger of the body.
Shrotri - the hearer.
Shrotraniyantri - the controller of the ears.
Shrotavya - worthy of being heard.
Shravana - the power of hearing.
Tvaksthita - present within the skin.
Sparshayitri - one who touches.
Sparshya - the object of touch.
Sparshanam - the power of touch.
Chakshustha - situated in the eye.
Rupadrashtri - the seer of forms.
Chakshushah niyantri - the controller of the eyes.
Drishyam - the object of vision.
Jihvastha - present in the tongue.
Rasajna - knower of taste.
Jihvaniyamaka - controller of the tongue.
Ghranastha - seated within the nose.
Ghranakrit - the creator of the sense of smell.
Ghrantri - the one who smells.
Ghranendriyaniyamaka - the controller of the nose.
Vakstha - seated within speech.
Vaktri - the speaker.
Vaktavya - the object of speech.
Vachana - speech.
Vanniyamaka - the controller of speech.
Pranistha - situated within all living beings.
Shilpakrit - creator of the fine arts.
Shilpa - the fine arts.
Hastayoh niyamaka - controller of the hands.
Padavyah - roads.
Gantri - one who travels.
Gantavya - the destination.
Gamana - going.

Padayoh niyantri - the controller of the feet.

Padyabhak - the receiver of padya.

Visargakrit - one who excretes.

Visargasyua niyantri - the controller of excretion.

Upasthastha - situated within the genitals.

Sukha - pleasure.

Upasthasya niyantri - controller of the genitals.

Upasthanandakara - creator of pleasure experienced by the genitals.

Shatrughna - the killer of enemies, the brother of Lord Rama.

Kartavirya - Kartaviryarjuna.

Dattatreya - the son of Atri, Dattatreya.

Alarkasya hite ratah - engaged in the welfare of the sage, Alarka

Kartaviryanikrintana - the slayer of Kartavirya.

Kalanemi - the rim of the wheel of time.

Mahanemi - the great rim.

Megha - cloud.

Meghapati - Lord of the clouds.

Annaprada - giver of food.

Annarupin - the form of food.

Annada - partaker of food.

Annpravartaka - producer of food.

Dhumakrit - creator of smoke.

Dhumarupa - the form of smoke.

Devakiputra - the son of Devaki.

Uttama - the supreme.

Devakyanandana - the giver of pleasure to Devaki.

Nanda - the Lord's foster father.

Rohinyah priya - beloved of Rohini.

Vasudeva priya - the beloved of Vasudeva.

Vasudevasuta - the son of Vasudeva.

Dundhubhi - the horn, Dhundubhi.

Hasarupa - the form of laughter.

Pushpahasa - a smile like flowers.

Attahasapriya - a loving, boisterous laugh.

Sarvadhyaaksha - residing Deity of everything.

Kshara - deteriorating.

Akshara - never deteriorating.

Achyuta - infallible.

Satyesha - the Lord of truth.

Satyaya priya - lover of truth.

Vara - most excellent.

Rukminyah pati - the husband of Rukmini.

Rukminyah vallabha - the lover of Rukmini.

Gopinam vallabha - the lover of the gopis.

Punyashloka - meritorious fame.

Vishruta - most famous.

Vrshakapi - the Lord, who favors His devotees.

Yama - the lord of death.

Guhya - most confidential.

Mangala - auspicious.

Budha - the planet Mercury.

Rahu - the planet Rahu.

Ketugraha - the planet Ketu.

Graha - planets.

Gajendramukhamelaka - associate of the lord of elephants.

Grahasya vinihantri - killer of the crocodile.

Gramani - the village leader.

Rakshaka - the protector.

Kinnara - semi-divine beings, the Kinnaras.

Siddha - semi-divine beings, the Siddhas.

Chandas - poems.

Svachandas - independent.

Vishvarupa - the universal form.

Vishalaksha - having wide eyes.

Daityasudana - the killer of the demons.

Anantarupa - having unlimited forms.

Bhutastha - situated within the elements.

Devadanavasamsthita - situated between the Devas and Danavas.

- Sushuptistha** - situated in the state of sleep.
Sushupti - dreamless sleep.
Sthanam - eternal abode.
Sthananta - the limit of residence.
Jagatstha - situated within the universe.
Jagartri - ever wakeful.
Jagaritam sthanam - the abode of those who are awake.
Svapnastha - situated in dreams.
Svapnavid - the knower of dreams.
Svapna - dream.
Sthanastha - remaining in His position.
Sustha - well-positioned.
Jagradvihina - devoid of wakefulness.
Svapnavihina - devoid of dreams.
Sushuptivihina - devoid of sleep.
Chaturthaka - the fourth.
Vijnanam - scientific knowledge.
Chaitrarupa - the form of the month of Chaitra.
Jiva - the living entity.
Jivayitri - the giver of life.
Bhuvanadhipati - the Lord of the universe.
Bhuvananam niyamaka - controller of the universe.
Patalavasin - residing in Patala.
Patala - the lower planet of Patala.
Sarvajvaravinashana - the destroyer of fever.
Paramanandarupin - the form of supreme ecstasy.
Dharmanam pravartaka - propounder of dharma.
Sulabha - easily attained.
Durlabha - very difficult to attain.
Pranayamapara - engaged in breathing exercises.
Pratyahara - withdrawal of the mind from sense objects.
Dharaka - the supporter.
Pratyaharakara - performer of the process of pratyahara.
Prabha - effulgence.

Kanti - brilliance.

Archis - luster.

Shuddha - pure.

Sphatikasannibha - like glass.

Agrahya - incomprehensible.

Gaura - fair-complexioned.

Sarva - everything.

Shuchi - pure.

Abhishtuta - who is adored.

Vashatkara - the mantra, vashat.

Vashat - a mantra beginning with the word vashat.

Svadha - a kind of sacrificial offering.

Rati - attraction.

Paktri - cook.

Nandayitri - one who delights.

Bhoktri - the enjoyer.

Boddhri - the knower.

Bhavayitri - the creator.

Jnanatman - the soul of knowledge.

Dehatman - the soul within the body.

Bhuma - prolific.

Sarveshvareshvara - the Lord of all.

Nadi - river.

Nandin - who is delighted.

Nandisha - the Lord of Nandi.

Bharata - the son of Rishabhadeva.

Tarunashana - the destroyer of trees.

Chakrapa - protector of the wheel.

Shripati - the Lord of Lakshmi.

Nripa - king.

Chakravartinamisha - the Lord of emperors.

Sarvadevanamisha - Lord of the demigods.

Svavakashasthita - residing in his own abode.

Pushkara - lotus.

Pushkaradvipa - a portion of Bhu-mandala.

Bharata - nourisher.

Janaka - King Janaka.

Janya - the result.

Sarvakaravivarjita - without any specific form.

Nirakara - having no material form.

Nirnimitta - having no material cause.

Niratanka - being without fear.

Nirashraya - having no support.

Deva - the Lord.

Vishnu - the all-pervading Lord.

Isha - the controller.

Lord Hari said, "O Shiva, I have thus narrated to you the one thousand holy names of Lord Vishnu, which destroy all sinful reactions."

Later, as Lord Brahma was conversing with Shrila Vyasadeva, he spoke as follows: The devotee who follows the following daily routine, without break, is sure to achieve enlightenment in this very life. One should wake up at the end of night, before the sun has risen and immediately begin to meditate upon the Supreme Lord, Vishnu.

After passing stool and urine, a devotee should bathe in the pure water of a river because bathing in the morning absolves one of all sins. The wise have declared that a morning bath causes fruition of all of one's activities. While soundly sleeping, a person becomes contaminated in various ways. Therefore, one should not begin any activity without first of all bathing in the morning. A morning bath removes sins resulting from poverty, illness, the effects of bad dreams, and evil thoughts. One should never begin his morning religious performances without first having bathed.

If a person is indisposed and weak, he can bathe without touching water to his head, or by wiping his body with a wet

cloth. Purificatory baths are of six types—Brahma, Agneya, Vayavya, Divya, Varuna, and Yaugika. A Brahma bath entails sprinkling one's body with water from a bunch of kusha grass while chanting mantras and then wiping it with a cloth.

Smearing the body with the dust of dried cow dung is an excellent form of bath called Vayavya. Bathing in the rain when there is sunshine is called a Divya bath. Plunging into the water of a lake or river (or artificial body of water) is called a Varuna bath. A Yaugika bath involves meditation upon the Paramatma while mentally bathing.

For brushing one's teeth, one should select a twig from one of the following trees—bilva, karavira, apamarga, malati, ashvattha, or udumbara. One should face east or north while brushing his teeth. After brushing, one should wash the twig and throw it away in a clean place. After bathing and performing achamana, one should perform tarpana (the offering of water to the demigods and forefathers). After this, achamana should be performed once again and then one should chant the Gayatri mantra. Thereafter, one should sit down to practice his form of yoga, whether it be mystic yoga or bhakti yoga.

After a detailed description of astrology, Lord Hari spoke to Lord Shiva on the science of physiognomy as follows: If a person's palms are soft, like the inner portion of a lotus flower, and if they do not perspire—if his fingers are close together and do not have any space between them—if his nails are copper colored—if his ankles are well shaped and without veins—if his feet are plump and shaped like the back of a tortoise—he is certainly destined to become a king.

Rough and yellowish nails, a face with protruding veins, odd-shaped feet, and fleshless toes—these indicate sorrow and poverty. When one's calves resemble the trunks of elephants, with sparse hair—this is an excellent sign.

Those who are destined for greatness have a hair growing from each pore of the body. Those who are destined to become

great Vedic scholars have two hairs growing from each pore. Those who are destined to become poor have three hairs growing from each pore.

A sickly person has knee-caps devoid of flesh. A man with a small penis is destined to become rich but without children. A man with a stout penis will be poor. A man with a single testicle will be miserable. A man with testicles of different sizes will be lecherous. A man with testicles that hang loose will not live long.

If, when a man passes urine, it makes a lot of noise, he will be poverty-stricken. Men destined for greatness pass urine steadily, without making any noise. Those destined to enjoy material pleasure have flat bellies. Those who are pot-bellied are very miserly.

Lines indicate the age of men. A man having three parallel lines on his forehead will experience happiness with his children. One who has two parallel lines can expect to live only up to the age of forty. If the figure of a trident or a broad-edged spear appears on a man's forehead, he can expect to have children, wealth, and a long life.

A girl with curly hair, a round face, and a navel that curls to the right makes her family flourish. A girl with a golden complexion and hands that resemble a red lotus is one in a thousand in terms of chastity. A woman with uneven hair and round eyes will always be unhappy and will become a widow at a young age. A girl with a face like the full moon that shines like the rising sun, having wide eyes and red lips, will always be happy. If a woman has many lines marking her body, she will suffer much. A few lines indicate poverty, red lines denote happiness, and black lines indicate slavery.

A real wife is like a minister who handles the personal affairs of her husband. She executes her duties like a real friend. She is affectionate like a mother and in bed, she is like the most expert courtesan. Such a wife is very auspicious.

A woman who has lines on the palm of her hand resembling a goad, a circle, or a wheel, marries a great man and gives birth to a son. If a woman has hair on her breasts, or if her lips are high, her husband will die soon. If a woman has brown hair that curls upwards over her body, she is destined to become a slave, even though she may have been born a princess.

If a woman's little finger and thumb do not lay flat when placed on a flat surface, she will prove to be of ill repute. A woman who shakes the ground as she walks will become the killer of her husband.

Smooth, oily eyes indicate a happy married life. Oily teeth indicate a liking for food. Oily skin indicates sexual pleasure, and oily feet denotes the possession of conveyances.

If a woman's feet are beautiful, with high arches and copper-colored nails; if the soles of her feet have lines resembling a fish, goad, lotus, wheel or plough; and if they do not perspire—she will lead a happy life. If a woman's calves are free of hair, if her thighs resemble the trunk of an elephant, if her vagina is broad like the leaf of an ashvattha tree, if her navel is deep, and if her breasts are free of hair—these are all considered to be auspicious.

If a man's feet rarely perspire, if his soles are as soft as the inside of a lotus, if his toes join one another, if his nails are copper-colored, if his instep is arched, and if his heels are fine—he is destined to become a king.

If a man's feet are flat, if his nails are greyish, and if his toes do not touch one another—he is destined to be poor.

If a man's calves have fine hair, if his thighs are like the trunk of an elephant, and if his knees are fleshy and even—he is destined to become a king. Persons with curly hair are likely to die in exile.

It is said that if a man's penis is short, he will live a long life and will become rich. A man with a stout penis will not have a son and he will be poor. If a man's penis slants to the left—he

will have no sons but will be rich. If his penis is curved, a man will have sons. If a man's penis is small, he will not beget sons. If his penis has a protruding vein, he will be happy. If the bulb of the penis is stout, a man will be blessed with sons.

A man whose testicles are unequal in size will always be running after girls. If the testicles are tight, he shall be long lived. If they always appear dirty, a man will experience happiness. If, when a man urinates, it comes out in one continuous flow, that indicates happiness. Men passing urine in a single flow will enjoy women. Persons with high, oily testicles that are equal in size will possess good women and wealth. If a man's semen smells like honey, he will enjoy much wealth. If a man's semen is dry, he is destined to be miserable. If a man's semen has the smell of fish, he will beget sons. If the semen has no smell, he will beget daughters. If a man's semen smell like meat, he will greatly enjoy sexual pleasure. If a man's semen has a salty smell, he is destined to be poor.

A man who finishes sexual intercourse quickly enjoys longevity. A man of prolonged sexual intercourse is short-lived. A man with stout buttocks is destined to be poor, a man with fleshy buttocks is ever happy.

If a man has a neck like a buffalo, he is destined to become a warrior. If a man has a delicate neck, like a deer, he will become a master of the Vedas. A man with a neck that resembles a conch shell may become a king, and a man with a long neck becomes a glutton.

A back that is straight and devoid of hair is auspicious—otherwise, it is inauspicious. It is an excellent sign if one's armpits are shaped like the leaf of a banyan tree, emit a good smell, and have hair like that of a deer.

Hands that are plump and a little curved, and that fit together nicely are good. Hands that extend to the knees indicate royalty. Poor people have short hands that are covered with hair. The fingers of intelligent persons are short. The fingers of servants are flat. Fingers that are very fat indicate poverty. Thin fingers

indicate humility. Persons with hands like a monkey's will be poor.

A depressed palm indicates that one's ancestral property will be lost. Persons whose wrists make a sound when twisted will meet with poverty. The wrists of wealthy persons are very fleshy. It is not a good indication if one's wrists are unequal.

If a man's fingernails are like husks, it indicates that he is impotent. The man with split nails is crooked. A man with pale fingernails is fond of arguments.

A man with a thin chin is destined to be poor. One with a fleshy chin is destined to become rich. The lips of a king are very red, like a bimba fruit. If one's lips are rough, split, or uneven—that person is destined to be poor.

Smooth, shiny teeth that are without a gap are auspicious. Sharp teeth of equal size indicate good fortune. A reddish tongue is auspicious, as is a long and fine tongue.

A round face indicates prosperity. A woman with a round face will get a son. A long face indicates poverty, misfortune and great sorrow. A square face indicates a coward, a sinner and a rogue. A short face indicates miserliness. Persons with shiny moustaches enjoy all sorts of luxuries. A moustache of smooth and thick hair is auspicious. A man with a reddish moustache is surely a thief.

A man with ears that are flat and without flesh will enjoy opulence. Misers have short ears. Kings have spear-shaped ears. Ears that are covered with hair indicate a long duration of life. Persons with big ears become kings or rich men. Ears with lobes that hang down indicate royalty.

A man with a nose like that of a parrot will be happy. A man with a dry nose lives long. A person with a chiselled nose having deep nostrils will have sexual intercourse with unworthy women. A long nose indicates good fortune. A curved nose is an indication that one is a thief. A flat nose indicates death and misfortune. A nose bent towards the right indicates cruelty. A sudden spasm of

sneezing indicates strength. If sneezing is continual, it indicates great delight and if it is resonant, it indicates a long life.

If a man's eyes resemble the petals of a lotus, and are a little curved at the corners, it indicates happiness. A sinful man has cat-like eyes and wicked men have eyes the color of honey. Squint-eyed persons are ruthless. Green-eyed men are sinful. Commanders of armies have eyes like those of an elephant. Kings have grave eyes, ministers have thick fleshy eyes, scholars have eyes like a blue lotus, and dark eyes indicate good fortune. Round eyes indicate a sinful person. Persons with pitiable eyes are destined to be poor.

Smooth, oily skin indicates that one will abundantly enjoy luxuries. Persons with wide, high eyebrows are happy. Persons with uneven eyebrows are destined to be poor. Long, unattached eyebrows indicate wealth. Persons with hair on their foreheads are misers.

Untrembling, mild laughter is good. Laughter with the eyes closed indicates sin. Frequent laughter indicates a defect or the onset of madness.

A man with a pot-like head delights in sinful activities and is devoid of wealth. Whatever the limb, if it is rough and lacking in flesh—it is a very inauspicious sign.

Persons destined for greatness have three things broad, grave, and long—five things that are very fine—six that are high—four that are short—four that are reddish—and seven that are even. The navel, voice, and understanding—these shall be deep and grave. The forehead, face, and chest—these shall be broad. Eyes, sides, teeth, nose, mouth, and the back of the neck—these shall be elevated. Calves, neck, penis, and back—these four shall be short. The hands, palate, lips, and nails—these four shall be red. The corners of the eyes, feet, tongue, and lips shall be short. The five things that will be fine are the teeth, knuckles, nails, hair, and skin. These shall be long—the space between the nipples, the hands, teeth, eyes, and nose.

For women who shall attain greatness (or become a queen)—these are the signs. Her feet are smooth and even. The soles and nails are reddish. The toes touch one another with no space between them. The tips of the toes are raised. The heels are plump and the soles have the luster of a lotus flower. They do not perspire and may have the marking of a fish, goad, banner, thunderbolt, lotus, or plough. If the calves are devoid of hair, well-rounded and not muscular—that is auspicious. The thighs should resemble the trunks of elephants and they should be devoid of hair. The vagina should be in the shape of a fig leaf and very wide. The clitoris should be hidden. The hips should be large and heavy. The arms should be long. The navel should be fleshy and the belly should have three circular wrinkles. The breasts should be equally developed, without hair, large and firm. The neck should be firm, hairy, and resembling a conch.

Red lips are auspicious, as is a round, plump face. The teeth should be white and the voice very sweet, like that of a cuckoo. Simplicity of speech, consideration for others, and an absence of stubbornness make the voice very pleasant to hear. An attractive nose with symmetrical curves at the tip is auspicious. The eyes should be like a blue lotus and they should be close to the nose. The eyebrows should not be very thick and they should resemble the crescent moon. The forehead should not be high, it should resemble the half moon, and it should be devoid of hair. The ears should not be fleshy and they should be of equal size. Hair should be dark, soft and curly. A symmetrical well-formed head is auspicious for women. The hands should be soft, like the inner part of a lotus flower.

All of the above-mentioned characteristics indicate happiness in the marriage of a woman. Characteristics that are contrary to these are inauspicious. Other inauspicious signs for a woman are—calves that are too fleshy or hairy, a belly that resembles a pot, a vagina that is depressed, a short neck, a very long neck, and a very stout neck (which indicates a fierce nature). Squinting eyes and roving eyes indicate an absence of chastity.

If, when a woman smiles, two dimples are seen on the cheeks, she is certainly an adulteress.

A woman whose belly hangs down will be the killer of her father-in-law. If her buttocks hang down, she will be the killer of her husband. A moustache-like growth of hair on a woman's upper lip is inauspicious for her husband. Hairy breasts are inauspicious. Sharp and uneven teeth indicate misery. If a woman's teeth are long, she will bring about the death of her husband. If her hands resemble those of a crow, are sinewy, or wrinkled—a woman will become poor. An elevated upper lip indicates a quarrelsome nature and harshness of speech.

If a woman is ugly, these defects are strong indications. If she is beautiful then some of these defects can be ignored.

The Garuda Purana next discusses astrology at great length. These are all subtle sciences—palmistry, astrology, physiognomy, numerology, and vastu. Grossly materialistic persons often doubt their validity but still, all have a large following.

Everyone feels the effects of subtle influences. We feel that, "This seems like a bad day" or, "I feel lucky today." We all feel under the influence of subtle causes but we are generally not able to understand how they work. Sometimes, our mental states makes us exude confidence and sometimes, our mental state gives us a feeling of hopelessness.

Truthfully, we primarily live within our mind. Enjoyment is primarily a mental state. The mind is a subtle entity and it is influenced by gross conditions, to be sure. However, there are innumerable subtle influences on the mind, as well. In other words, subtle influences affect us through the mind.

In this present age, Kali-yuga, we are very materially absorbed, on the gross platform. Subtle things appear to us to be very esoteric. Still, everyone knows that the kind of "vibes" one puts out will cause an effect on the people one comes in contact with.

The universe has certainly been ordered by a supremely intelligent being—God. God's intelligence is so great that we struggle to only partially understand the universe but we have something right in front of us that can give us a clue—our computers. It's hard for us to keep track of our kids and few possessions but a computer keeps track of an incredible amount of information. Just imagine how God keeps track of everything that goes on within the universe. Just imagine how God arranges the universe in a way that we are influenced so subtly that we cannot understand how we are being completely controlled.

These subtle sciences were explained in the Vedic literature and people of ancient times were not so absorbed on the gross platform so that they were much more sensitive to subtle existence. Still, at present, there are many who claim to be masters of these subtle sciences. Sometimes, they disappoint and sometimes, they inspire, I suppose. For me, it is just a way of further appreciating the greatness of God when I contemplate how intricately He has arranged the great machine of material nature. It's awesome squared (awesome times awesome).

In many ways, we think that things happen by chance. Science even suggests that life came about by a random interaction of molecules. The more we understand God, however, the more we become convinced that nothing happens by chance. Nature is not working by chance—it is working under the strict control of God. It is working according to the laws of nature, and God is the lawmaker. It is not by chance that we were born in a particular family. This birth was awarded to us as a result of our past activities, or karma. Similarly, the time that we were born was also not by chance, and the bodily characteristics that we possess are also not by chance.

In a drama, nothing takes place by chance—everything is under the control of the director. Similarly, our lives are being governed by gross and subtle laws and nothing is happening by chance.

After a treatise on astrology, the Garuda Purana next discusses the testing of gems. First, the following story is told to explain the origin of valuable gems: There was a demon named Bala who conquered Indra and the demigods. Indeed, this demon was so formidable that the demigods had no hope of gaining revenge by means of prowess. It so happened, however, that on the pretext of begging for a benediction, the demigods requested Bala to become their sacrificial animal.

When Bala was tied to the sacrificial stake, his various limbs became the seeds of gems. A great struggle then took place between the demigods and demons for possession of the seeds of the gems. As they coursed through the sky in their chariots, the seeds fell here and there, in the oceans and rivers, on the mountains, and in the jungles. Wherever they fell, there came to be mines of gems. Some of these gems had various powers for counteracting the influence of poison, illness, serpents, and demons, and some of the gems were powerless.

These were the different kinds of gems created—vajra (diamond), mukta (pearl), mani, padmaraja (ruby), marakata (emerald), indranila (sapphire), vaidurya (lapis lazuli), pushparaja (topaz), karketana, pulaka, rudhira (blood red stone), sphatika (crystal), and vidruma (coral). Those who are knowers of gems have classified them in this way.

One who is expert in studying gems first looks at their shape and color. Then, he looks for any defects, and then ascertains the gem's influence. After such a study, a price is fixed.

About pearls it is said that they are found in lordly elephants, clouds, wild boars, shell, fish, cobras, oysters and bamboo. Only the pearls found in oysters are considered to be valuable gems.

It is said that the teeth of the great demon, Bala, fell into the ocean and found a place within oysters. While the sun-god was taking the blood of Bala through the sky, he was suddenly confronted by Ravana, the king of the Rakshashas. At that time, the sun dropped the blood of the demon into a river which

thereafter became known as the Ravana-Ganga. Rubies are found on the banks of that river.

As Vasuki was taking away the demon Bala's bile through the sky, he was attacked by Garuda. Because of this, Vasuki dropped the bile on the Manikya mountain. After the fall, the bile crossed the mountain and reached the ocean, where it was transformed into emeralds. Garuda caught some of the bile and, as he was falling unconscious, he released it through his nostrils. This also produced emeralds.

The eyes of the demon Bala, when they fell to the earth, were transformed into sapphires. The vaidurya stone was produced from the loud shouts of the demon, Bala. Particles of his skin fell on the Himalayas, producing the topaz. The wind-god gathered the nails of the demon and scattered them amidst lotus flowers, producing a gem called karketana, which is not visible at present. The semen of the demon fell in the northern region of the Himalayas, producing gems called bhishma, which are white. Serpents scattered the demon's claws in a mountainous region, producing the pulaka gem. The fire-god carried the facial features of the demon and deposited them in the Narmada river, creating blood stones. Balarama scattered the fat of the demon over the Vindhya mountains and elsewhere in modern-day China and Nepal, making crystal. Shesha carried the intestines of the demon and deposited them in modern-day Kerala and other places, producing coral.

Thereafter, while describing the holy place, Gaya, this story is narrated: There was a great demon named Gaya. Once, he performed severe austerities that began to scorch all living beings throughout the fourteen worlds. Being burnt by the demon's austerities, the demigods approached Lord Vishnu.

Lord Vishnu assured the demigods that He would stop the demon's austerities. One day thereafter, Lord Vishnu picked some lotuses and presented them to Gaya for the worship of Lord Shiva. Being deluded by maya, the demon didn't perform

the worship but instead, lay down and slept. Being given this opportunity, Lord Vishnu killed the demon with His club. Ever since that time, Lord Vishnu has remained at that place (Gaya) with His club in His hand.

Once, Yajnavalkya was addressing an assembly of sages and in the course of his narrations, he discussed household life at great length. There are seven kinds of marriage. A brahma marriage is one where the bridegroom is invited and the girl is decorated according to the family's capacity and then given in marriage. A daiva marriage is one where a ritvik priest of a sacrifice is chosen as the bridegroom. When two cows are given along with the girl at the time of marriage—it is known as arsha. A marriage where the advice is given, "both of you carry on with your sacred duties," is a sakama marriage. An asura marriage is one where money is given. A Gandharva marriage is performed simply by mutual consent and love. A Rakshasha marriage is one where the bride is forcibly taken after a fight, and a paishacha marriage is one where the girl is duped and married.

The first four types of marriage are recommended for brahmanas. The Gandharava and Rakshasha marriages are for kings. The asura type of marriage is for vaishyas, and the despicable last type is for shudras.

The father, grandfather, brother, kinsman, or mother can give a girl in marriage—the latter when the former is not available. If a father does not give his daughter in marriage, he incurs the sin of killing a foetus with every menstrual period the girl has. If no one gives a girl in marriage, she is free to accept her own choice of husband or lover.

A wife found guilty of adultery should be made to wear dirty clothes, she should be given just a little food once a day, she should be rebuked, and she should be forced to sleep on the bare ground.

The moon-god has blessed women as a class with purity. The Gandharvas have blessed them with sweet speech. Fire and

women are always pure. A wife addicted to wine, a wife with an incurable disease, and a wife who behaves inimically can be forsaken. A wife of sweet speech should always be maintained.

When there is no discord or dispute between husband and wife—virtue, love and wealth flourish. If a woman remains alive after the death of her husband and doesn't remarry—she receives praise in this world and after death, she attains an exalted destination.

The highest duty for a woman is to carry out the behests of her husband. Any night when a woman is eager for sexual intercourse, her husband should receive her, knowing well how lust in women is very strong. A good wife should be skilled in the maintenance of her household, she should be satisfied even with a minimum of possessions, and she should be reluctant to spend lavishly. She should offer respect to her mother-in-law and father-in-law by touching their feet.

A woman whose husband is away from home should abstain from sports, decorating her body, attending festivals, boisterous laughter, and visits to others' houses. Whether in the day or at night, a woman should not be seen outside her house without her husband. Only a senior wife can take part in religious performances—not a junior one.

A householder should preferably wear white clothes. Hair, moustache, and nails should always be kept clean. He should never speak unpleasant words. He should always wear his sacred thread and cultivate humility. He should never pass urine in a riverbed, a shady grove, on ashes, in a cowshed, in running water, or while facing a fire, the sun, moon, cows, water, women, or brahmanas.

He should not drink water with cupped hands. He should never gaze at fire, the sun, a nude woman, a woman engaged in sexual intercourse, wine, or stool. He should never sleep with his head facing west. He should never spit into water. Feet should not be shown to fire for warming, nor should one jump over fire.

One should not wake up a sleeping person. One should never pull a calf away from its mother while it is drinking milk.

While speaking to the sages at Naimisharanya, Suta Gosvami imparted the following words of wisdom for daily conduct of one's life:

A person desiring success in his endeavors, and the achievement of a lofty goal of life, should always associate with good men and never with the wicked. One should always avoid arguments with mean-minded people and indeed, one should try to avoid even seeing them. One should try to avoid creating enmity with friends, and one should avoid intimacy with those who serve the enemy.

Even a great scholar can come to grief by trying to advise a foolish disciple, by supporting a wicked wife, and by associating with wicked men. A true scholar bides his time after a careful consideration of causes and effects. A person never comes to grief if he associates with good people, regularly converses with scholars, and makes intimate friendship with people who are devoid of greed.

Illicit contact with another man's wife or gay revelry in her company, desire for another man's wealth, and residence in another man's house—these three should be avoided.

A well-intentioned enemy is far superior to a relative acting against one's interests. Indeed, such a person is actually an enemy. One is a true friend who works for one's benefit. He is a real father who nourishes one. A friend is a person in whom you can place confidence. A true servant is loyal and obedient. A real wife is one who speaks pleasantly and a real son is one who adheres to family traditions. A person's life is successful when he possesses virtues and good qualities. One devoid of these lives in vain.

A true wife manages the household affairs expertly, speaks pleasantly, completely dedicates herself to her husband, and is

loyally devoted to him. A man who has a wife with these qualities is no less than Indra, the king of heaven. He is not an ordinary man.

A good wife bathes daily, applies perfume to her body, speaks sweetly, is satisfied with whatever food is provided, very carefully performs her duties, is not very talkative, exhibits her love for her husband by every action she performs, and is pleased to submit herself for his pleasure after the four days of her menstrual period. Indeed, such a good wife enhances the good fortune of all those around her.

Old age is not so dispiriting as a wife who is devoid of these good qualities and instead, possesses all kinds of bad traits. A wife whose eyes are displeasing to see, who is lazy, messy, quarrelsome, devoid of shame, and evil-minded, who frequently goes to others' houses, and depends on other people's help, is very depressing for her husband. Indeed, it is worse than death to have such a wicked wife, as it is to have a rogue as a friend, and a servant who rudely talks back.

Forsake contact with the wicked, cultivate friendship with those who are good, perform meritorious acts throughout the day, and remember the instability of all material situations.

A woman devoid of love, horrible in appearance, ferocious by nature, who is worse than having a serpent around one's neck, who has tiger-like reddish eyes, who appears ready to spit fire, and who always visits others' houses should never be approached.

A devoted son, a good deed performed by an ungrateful person, coldness in fire—these may sometimes be seen, by God's grace—but never true love in a prostitute.

Who can be complacent when snakes inhabit one's house, when there is an incurable illness, and when death can strike at any moment?

Money should be saved for an emergency. A wife should be protected, even at the cost of all of one's hoarded wealth. One

should save one's own self, even at the cost of one's wife and accumulated wealth.

One should sacrifice oneself to save his family. A family should be sacrificed to save a village. A village should be sacrificed for the welfare of a country and even the entire world can be sacrificed to save one's soul.

It is better to live in hell than to live in the house of a person of evil conduct. While living in hell, one's sins are eradicated but association with those who are wicked only compounds one's sins.

An intelligent person places one foot firmly and then lifts the other foot. Without understanding a new situation well, the previous situation should not be abandoned.

One should unhesitatingly leave a place that is infested with men of evil conduct and crude mentality, and one should abandon a deceptive friend.

Of what use is money to a miser? What is the use of knowledge for a man who is a rogue? What is the use of beauty for a person devoid of good character? What is the use of a friend who turns his face away at the time of misfortune?

Many persons not known to him will flock around a person occupying an important post, hoping to become his friend or assistant. If that person loses his post and wealth, however, even his relatives will treat him inimically.

It can be understood whether a friend is genuine or not during times of danger. The test of the purity of a man is his conduct in places where he is not known. Loss of wealth puts the fidelity of a wife to test.

Birds leave a tree when the fruit is exhausted. A crane leaves a lake that has dried up. A prostitute turns away the man who has no money. Ministers bid farewell to the king who has lost his throne. Bees neglect a flower that has faded. Deer flee the forest that is being consumed by fire. From this we can understand that people take an interest in each other according to what

delights them. For what other reason does one take an interest in someone?

One should pacify a greedy person by giving him money, a praiseworthy man by respect and folded hands, a fool by allowing him to do as he pleases, and a scholar by a clear statement of the facts.

Demigods, good people, and brahmanas are pleased with a person having a good character. Ordinary, vulgar people are pleased by an offer of something to eat or drink. Learned scholars are pleased by honor and due rewards. Noble people can be won over by humility and submission. A rogue can be won over by a threat, and the vulgar with small gifts and concessions.

An intelligent person should penetrate deep into the innermost recesses of a person's heart and speak and act in a way that befits his nature and inclinations to win him over to his side.

Implicit trust in rivers, clawed beasts, horned animals, armed men, women, and the sons of kings is never to be encouraged.

Men of sense will never disclose a loss of wealth, mental anguish, illicit activities within his house, incidents where he has been the victim of deception, and times when he has been disrespected.

These are the causes of the destruction of a woman's chastity and good conduct—association with low-minded people, long separation from her husband, too much love and attention shown by another man, and residence in another man's house.

Which family is devoid of defects? Who is not distressed by sickness? Who is not oppressed by vices and calamities? Who continuously enjoys the blessings of the goddess of fortune? Who is the man who does not become haughty upon gaining wealth? Who has escaped the miseries of life? Whose mind is not torn apart by the sight of a beautiful girl? Who is it that has escaped the notice of the god of death? Who is it that has emerged unscathed after falling into the wily nets of the wicked?

He who has no intellect and has no friends or relatives to advise him certainly suffers much. How can a wise man endeavor for that which does not yield any tangible gain if successfully completed and which produces misery if uncompleted?

One should leave that place where no one honors or respects him, where there are no relatives, and where there is no opportunity for higher learning. One should earn that wealth that cannot be taken away by robbers, and which does not leave one at the time of death (the wealth of knowledge of the Supreme Lord).

The wealth a man earns at the risk of his life is divided among his family members after his death. Only the reactions of his sins are his exclusive property and are thus carried by him to his next life.

Beggars who roam the streets naked, grief-stricken, dirty, and armed with sharp pieces of broken bowls point out to the people of this world the fruit obtained by uncharitable persons. O miserly persons! When beggars approach you, saying, "please give," they teach you that this is the result of not giving.

A fitting punishment for a thief is death. Being reserved is the best punishment for a false friend. Lying on a separate bed is punishment for women. Not giving an invitation is punishment for a brahmana.

Wicked persons, artisans, slaves, defiled people, drums, and women are softened by being beaten—they do not deserve gentle handling.

By sending them on errands, the ability of servants can be understood. Sincerity of kinsmen can be understood during times of adversity. Genuine friendship can be understood when some mishap occurs. The fidelity of one's wife will be understood when one's fortunes dwindle.

A woman's diet is twice that of a man, her shrewdness is four times, her energy is six times, and her lustiness is eight times.

It is impossible to conquer sleep by sleeping. It is impossible to control a woman by loving her. It is impossible to smother a fire by pouring on ghee, and it is impossible to quench one's thirst by drinking wine.

Meat, nice clothes, wine, perfume, and fragrant flowers kindle passion in women. It can be said with certainty that even when a woman is practicing celibacy, the god of love remains very busy. When she sees a man to her liking, a woman's vagina becomes wet. It is a fact that the vaginal passage of a woman begins to profusely secrete upon seeing a handsome, well-dressed man, even he may be a brother or a son.

Rivers and women are similar in that they both like to choose their own course. Rivers erode their banks, and women undermine their families. The course of a river and a woman is sometimes wayward and cannot be checked.

A blazing fire cannot be satiated by any amount of fuel supplied, the ocean can never be filled by the water of any number of rivers entering it, the god of death is never satiated by any number of living being he smites, and a passionate woman is never satisfied with a man.

It is never possible to become satiated by the company of good men, friends, men of delightful conversation, pleasures, sons, life, and benedictions. A king's ambition to amass wealth is never satiated. A scholar is never satiated by the lectures given by him. An ordinary man's eyes are never satiated by the glimpses they get of the king.

The most excellent men maintain themselves by whatever they earn by doing their prescribed duty. They are devoted to shastra, they are fond of their own wives, they have subjugated the unreasonable tendencies of their senses, and they are delighted to serve guests. For such men, salvation awaits them at their door.

If a man's wife is after his heart and if she is attractive and dresses nicely, if a man lives in his own house—this is heaven

and can only be attained by good deeds performed in one's previous life.

Women are incorrigible—they can never be won over by gifts, offering respect, straightforward dealing, or humble service. They cannot be threatened with a weapon nor controlled by scriptural injunctions.

Five things should be pursued slowly and cautiously—learning, earning of wealth, climbing a mountain, an amorous approach to women, and assimilation of virtuous conduct.

Those who have not acquired sufficient learning during their student days, and those who have not acquired a decent wife and sufficient wealth during youth are to be pitied. Their lives are no better than that of animals, although their form is certainly human.

Those who were unmindful of their studies and who had wasted their wealth in the pursuit of fulfilling their lusty desires during youth, experience misery during old age, being slighted by others.

Next, I have come upon a verse that is perhaps identical to a famous verse in the Mahabharata, beginning with the words, tarko'pratistha srutayo vibhinnah. The Sanskrit is not given in my reference book but the English rendition states: Arguments are never stable and irrefutable. The Vedic literature is vast and varied. Every sage has tried to put forward his own unique commentary. The real truth of religion is hidden within a cave. The path traversed by great men should be accepted as the correct one.

Fortunately, the verse in the Mahabharata has been explained by the acharyas in the line of Vaishnava disciplic succession. Where can one find the truth if logic is unsteady, the Vedas offer various opinions, and each philosopher has a different angle of vision? This verse says that the truth is found in a guha. Guha means cave, and so some scholars say that the truth is found in a cave. But guha also refers to the heart and so the Vaishnava

acharyas say that the truth of religion can be found in the heart of a mahajana, or great soul. Therefore, one should follow the path that is chalked out by such a mahajana.

I have given this example just to show that, by interpretation, practically any meaning can be extracted from a Vedic text. Therefore, it is a great fortune if one is able to hear the Vedic literature from the mouth (or pen) of a pure devotee in disciplic succession! My request is—although you are now reading this book, please do not neglect the books of Shрила Prabhupada, who is a great mahajana of the present age. By doing so, you will certainly be able to understand things as they are.

The inner workings of a man's mind can be inferred from his facial expressions, behavior, gestures, movements, speech, and the contractions of his eyes and lips.

A spoken word is understood even by an animal. Horses and elephants carry out the commands they are given. A scholar, however, can infer what is not expressly stated. Intellect is fruitful when one is able to comprehend other's expressions and gestures.

If a person forsakes things having a sure result in the pursuit of things having unsure results, he loses both the certain as well as the uncertain.

It is the result of no small penance to possess both delicious food and a good appetite, sexual virility and a beautiful wife, extensive wealth and the desire to give it to others.

The aim of Vedic study is an understanding of how to perform fire sacrifices. Everything auspicious should be accepted for the purpose of attaining good conduct and a purposeful life. A good wife should yield sexual pleasure and good children. Wealth is intended for personal enjoyment and gifts of charity.

An intelligent man should marry a girl from a noble family, even if she is not very beautiful. He should not marry a girl from low family, even if she is very beautiful and has nice hips.

Ghee for performing sacrifice can be taken from even a family of wicked persons. A wise statement uttered by a child is worth listening to. Gold can be taken from anywhere—even a garbage heap. A jewel of a girl can be accepted even if she was born in a very low family.

Friendship with a king is impossible. A serpent devoid of poison is unheard of. A household cannot remain pure if there are too many women assembled there.

Servants and jewelry should be put in their proper places. A jewel worn on one's foot would never shine brightly.

One who tries to again cultivate the friendship of a person who once deceived him truly seeks his own death.

As a thorn is picked out of one's skin by means of another thorn—an enemy should be humiliated by means of another enemy whose help has been secured by means of an act of gratification.

One should not be concerned by a person who constantly harasses him because that person will fall away, just as trees on the banks of a river are washed away.

Unnecessary bashfulness and reserve should not be felt during monetary transactions, the acquisition of knowledge, while eating, and while enjoying one's wife in bed.

A person should not reside where the following five things are not found—rich men, Vedic scholars, a good king, a river, and a good physician.

Even a day's stay should be avoided in a place where there is no means of livelihood, fear of the law, sense of shame, and courteousness and liberal-mindedness.

One should not permanently reside in a place where these five things are not found—an astrologer, a Vedic scholar, a good king, a river, and a saint.

The florist picks flower after flower but does not uproot the plant. The king should act like this and not like the maker of charcoal who burns the entire tree.

It is certainly pleasurable to satisfy one's lust. Having a lot of money is certainly very pleasing. But life is as fickle as the roving glances of a young girl. Old age is waiting to attack us, just as a tigress waits for her prey. Diseases, like enemies, crop up all over the body. Life can flow out like water from a broken pot and yet, no one thinks seriously of his redemption.

O mankind! Do service to others! Act in a way that will prove beneficial later on. Why do you rejoice now in the association of beautiful women, without any suspicion as to what is in store for you later on? Your life is slowly coming to its end, like water slowly leaking from a pot, and so use your valuable time for worshipping Lord Vishnu, under the direction of qualified brahmanas.

(Here is a verse that resembles a shloka of Chanakya Pandita and which Shrila Prabhuapada often quoted. In his purport to Shrimad-Bhagavatam, Shrila Prabhupada said, "A learned man treats all women except his wife as his mother, looks on others' property as garbage in the street, and treats others as he would treat his own self. These are the symptoms of a learned person as described by Chanakya Pandita. This should be the standard for education.") He is a wise man who regards another man's wife as his mother, another man's wealth as no better than a lump of dirt, and all other living beings as on a level as himself.

He who has money has many friends. He who has money has many attentive relatives. People consider a man with a lot of money fit to be called a gentleman and a scholar. Friends, sons, wives, and relatives abandon a man devoid of wealth and if he regains his lost wealth, they come back to him. From this we can understand that wealth alone is a man's kith and kin, and none other.

Servants are of three types—the excellent, the middling, and the base. Just as gold is tested in four ways—by rubbing, cutting, beating, and melting—a servant can be tested by his appearance, conduct, parentage, and activities.

Servants of this type are very rare—those who are not lazy, who are self-satisfied, who can easily be roused from sleep in an

emergency, who are equal in happiness and distress, and who are courageous.

Those servants should not be retained who were at first valorous, of gentle speech, truthful, and self-controlled but later on proved to be otherwise.

Man enjoys the fruit of his previous actions. In every birth, a man reaps the fruit of his previous pious and sinful activities. When chased, a serpent can escape into a well and a mouse can hide in his hole but who can escape his karma (his previous acts)? Just as a calf can recognize its mother in the midst of a thousand cows, previous karma approaches the doer. Enjoy the fruit of your past deeds, O fool! Why should you feel aggrieved? What you do now will certainly follow you hereafter, whether it is good or bad.

Of all purities, purity of food is most important. If a man becomes impure by eating contaminated food, he cannot be cleansed with any amount of soap or water. There are five cleansing agents—truthfulness, a pure mind, restraint of the senses, sympathy toward all living beings, and water. He who maintains truthfulness along with general purity finds easy access to heaven. Truthfulness is superior to the performance of a horse sacrifice.

The characteristics of a saintly person are—he is not elated when he is honored, he does not become angry when he is insulted, and he does not speak harshly when angered.

No one is intrinsically a friend or enemy. Friendship and enmity arise from specific causes. One does not have as much confidence in his mother, wife, brother, or son as he does in a friend who is like-natured. If you wish for a prolonged friendship, avoid these three—gambling with him, monetary transactions with him, and seeing his wife in his absence.

(Here is a verse that resembles a verse that Shрила Prabhupada often quoted from the Shrimad-Bhagavatam) One should not sit on the same seat with one's mother, sister, or daughter in an

isolated place. The powerful senses can agitate even a learned man, and so what to speak of an ordinary man. The god of love compels men to turn their attention to that which can award them punishment and even death (in other words, the god of love compels men to ignore their own wives and run after the wives of others).

It is easier to gauge the depth of the ocean than the heart of a person who is devoid of love for all living entities.

If there is no opportune moment, if there is no privacy, and if there is no one making overtures then women maintain their chastity. A woman serves one man but cherishes love for another. In the absence of a man, a woman can very well remain chaste.

Fire, water, women, fools, serpents, and royal families can take away one's life in an instant.

What is astonishing if a brahmana becomes a great scholar? What is astonishing if a king who is well-versed in the science of diplomacy and administration becomes a virtuous ruler? What is astonishing if a beautiful and charming young woman becomes diverted from the path of chastity? What is astonishing if a poor man commits sinful activities?

One's own kinsman pursuing the same goal and knowing of one's weaknesses is the fiercest foe—even more dangerous than the enemy waiting outside one's gate.

For a poor man, a group of guests is like poison (because of the expenditure involved). For an old man, a woman in the prime of her youth is like poison (because his desire can never be fulfilled). Poorly assimilated knowledge is like poison and so is eating more than one can digest.

These are the six primary causes of disease—excessive drinking of water, eating hard indigestible food, wastage of semen, constipation, sleep during the day, and staying awake at night.

These reduce the lifespan of a man—early morning rays of the sun, excessive indulgence in sexual intercourse, smoke from

a crematorium, warming of the palms, and the constant sight of the face of a woman in her menstrual period.

These six things give vitality to a man's body and mind—fresh melted butter, grapes, sleeping with a woman in the prime of her youth, a milk diet, hot water, and the shade of a large tree.

Water in a well, the shade of a banyan tree, and the well-rounded breasts of a young woman—these three are warm in the winter and cool in summer.

Three instantly invigorating things are—a young woman, a bath after massaging the body with oil, wholesome food. Three instantly debilitating things are—a hazardous journey, sexual intercourse, and fever.

Bad luck resides in the shadow of a lamp, bed, and chair, and water used by a washerman. Dust raised by elephants, horses, chariots, grains, and cows is auspicious. Dust raised by donkeys, camels, goats, and sheep is inauspicious.

One should never walk between two brahmanas, a brahmana and fire, a husband and wife, two masters, two horses, and two bulls.

What wise man will place his confidence in women, kings, fire, serpents, an enemy, or worldly enjoyment? Do not place too much trust even in the trustworthy because danger lurks when one reposes his trust and such trust can virtually uproot a person when misplaced.

He who remains complacent after making peace with an enemy is like a man sleeping on the top of a tree. He will only wake up after his fall.

Meritorious persons bow down like the branches of fruit-laden trees. Dry trees and fools would rather break than bend.

A family is illuminated by a single good son who is endowed with learning, intelligence and courage—like the sky by the moon. A forest becomes fragrant by a single tree in bloom, just

like the family of a virtuous son. One good son is preferable to one hundred sons devoid of good character. A son should be allowed to act as he pleases for the first five years. During the next ten years, one should be very strict with his son, and from the sixteenth year, he should be treated like a friend.

You cannot find an enemy like a son! When he is born, a son take's away one's wife (she gives all attention to her son and neglects her husband). While growing up, a son takes away one's wealth. (I have seen a t-shirt saying, "My father is an ATM.") If, by chance, a son dies, he takes away the life of his father as well.

In this world, some men are like deer with the mouth of a tiger and some men are like a tiger with the mouth of a deer. If you want to understand such people, you must mistrust them at every step.

There is only one fault in people who are tolerant and forbearing. There is no second fault. People take them to be powerless.

A collection of even insignificant things can have a powerful effect. Many blades of grass can be used to make a rope that can bind an elephant.

Sages have prescribed atonement for the killer of a brahmana, a drunkard, a thief, and those who break their vows, but there is no atonement for an ungrateful wretch.

Even an insignificant enemy having evil intentions should never be neglected. Even a tiny spark, if not extinguished, can consume a great forest.

One who is quiet and tranquil during the boisterous age of youth deserves credit for being tranquil. Who does not become tranquil when all of his youthful energy is spent?

Alas! Life in Kali-yuga is very troublesome. Virtue has taken the renounced order of life. Austerity has started a long journey to a distant land. Truth has been exiled to a foreign country.

People are fraudulent, brahmanas have become greedy, women are fickle, and fools have been elevated to high positions.

Fortunate are those who do not see their wives flirting with other men, and who do not see their sons indulging in sinful activities. Who can feel delighted with a vicious son? Who can be thrilled in the association of a disloyal wife?

Sin slowly spreads from one man to another by conversation, touch, frequent association, eating together, sitting together, lying down together, and travelling together.

Women perish because of their beauty, penance is destroyed by anger, travel becomes discouraging when the distance is too great, and pious brahmanas perish by eating food offered by shudras.

There are many defects in fondling, and there are many benefits in thrashing. Therefore, a disciple and son should be thrashed and not fondled.

Base men desire strife. Those who are middling desire reconciliation, and noble men desire great honor. Verily, honor is prized by great men as the greatest asset. Base men simply want money. Those who are middling desire money and honor, and noble men simply desire honor.

There are five things that burn without fire—separation from one's wife, insults from relatives, a debt not paid, service rendered to a master of base character, and desertion by friends when one is impoverished.

Among the thousands of worries that trouble one's mind, four are very severe—insults from crude persons, a hungry wife, a cold reception given by a beloved person, and harassment from brothers.

Five things uproot miseries—an obedient son, a skill that earns good money, good health, association of good people, and a loving surrendered wife.

Five kinds of brahmanas are never honored, even though they may be as learned as Brihaspati—those who are impatient, harsh in speech, very proud, poorly dressed, and uninvited.

These five are already decided when a child is born—his duration of life, his activities in later life, his character, his education, and the time of his death.

These five things are never stable or long-lasting—the shadow of clouds, the pleasant attitude of a wicked man, intimacy with another man's wife, youth, and wealth.

What is the difference between an animal and an animal in human form who is devoid of discrimination between what is wholesome and what is not, who enters into endless arguments about the conclusions of the Vedic literature, and who is satisfied simply to fill his belly.

What is the use of a life devoid of wealth and honor? What use is a friend who hesitates whether to be friendly or not?

A person is to be considered successful if he has an independent means of support—not he who depends upon others. Those who depend upon others are no better than dead, although breathing.

A king is the support of the weak. Crying is the strength of a child. The strength of a fool lies in silence, and that of a thief is falsehood.

When a person devotes himself for the welfare of others, everyone likes him and so he becomes very popular.

A person perishes because of these three—greed, a grave error, and implicit confidence in others.

Repay good actions with goodness and violence with violence. I do not find any fault if a wicked man is dealt with wickedly. A friend who speaks sweetly in our presence but spoils our work behind our back should be avoided by employing any foul means. Even a good man perishes by association with the wicked, just as pure water is rendered muddy by its mixing with dust.

Food taken after superiors have been fed is real food. Real intelligence is possessed by a person who does not perform any sinful activities. Friendship that is manifest behind one's back is real friendship. A genuine religious performance is one that is not done ostentatiously.

That is no assembly where elders are not present who expound virtues. That is no virtue that is not backed by the truth. That is no truth that is mixed with deception.

Something is auspicious when the mind feels delight. Real life is that which is without slavery. Real earning is that which is shared with one's family.

If one wishes the return of a guest, he should not be followed very far at the time of his leaving. He can be followed up to a pond, a well, or a tree with plenty of shade.

One should not reside in a place where there is no leader, where there are many leaders, or where the leadership is in the hands of a woman or a child.

The father protects her in her childhood, the husband in her youth, and the sons in old age. A woman should not be allowed to live independently.

A barren woman should be abandoned in the eighth year after marriage. A woman whose children die in infancy should be abandoned in the ninth year, a woman who gives birth to only daughters should be abandoned in the eleventh year, and a woman who speaks unpleasant words should be abandoned immediately.

Those who are mad after money have no real friends. Those who are lecherous and lusty know no shame. Those who are full of anxiety have no pleasure or sleep and those who are oppressed with hunger do not care whether food is warm and has salt or not.

How can these persons have peaceful sleep—the poor, slaves, a man fond of another's wife, and the wretch who wants to rob someone's wealth?

The height of a lotus flower is in proportion to the amount of water in the pond. A servant becomes proud if his master is strong and influential.

Even a person who is far away is as good as near if he has a place in one's heart. If a person who is near has been cast off from one's heart, he is actually far away.

Learning gives beauty to one who is ugly. Learning is a well protected asset, it makes a man saintly, it makes him popular, and it is respected by those who are respectable. Indeed, even kings honor learned men. A man devoid of learning is no better than an animal. Inside a person's house there are many things that can be taken away, but not learning.

Next, in the course of listing the kings in the solar and lunar dynasties, a brief summary of the Ramayana is narrated by Lord Brahma. I would guess that many of you have read the Ramayana, perhaps several times. I have also written a summary of the Ramayana. Mostly, people are not interested in reading an absolutely complete Ramayana or Mahabharata because they are lengthy. This is the age of fast food, action movies, and life in the fast lane. People's minds are very disturbed and so they cannot apply them to such lengthy narrations.

A good summary will tell the complete story with all the details and provide the gist of the moral or spiritual instruction that is simultaneously imparted. The most basic level of understanding of a Vedic text is the remembrance of the story line. Reading is very nice engagement for the time spent but it is also expected that what was read well, at least partially, remain in the reader's memory for the duration of the his life.

Suppose you had read the Ramayana and then someone asked you to tell them what you had read. If you have an excellent memory, you might be able to recount the entire story, with vivid details. On the other hand, if you have a poor memory, you might have trouble giving even a brief summary of the events, and there would be many gaps and names forgotten.

Sometimes, I sit with people who show an interest in the story of the Ramayana because they have never read it. I then recount the story briefly from memory, as best I can. Here is a brief summary that would serve the purpose of informing someone of the entire Ramayana very concisely.

Brahma was born from the navel of Lord Vishnu and Marichi was his son. Kashyapa was the son of Marichi and Kashyapa's son was Vivasvan, the sun-god. Manu was the son of Vivasvan and Ikshvaku was Manu's son. A descendent of Ikshvaku was Raghu. Raghu's son was Aja, whose son was the mighty Dasharatha. King Dasharatha had four heroic sons. Rama was born of Kaushalya. Bharata was the son of Kaikeyi, and Lakshman and Shatrughna were born of Sumitra.

When Rama accompanied Vishvamitra, He learned the use of celestial weapons from him. Rama then killed the female Rakshasha, Tadaka, and the Rakshasha, Subahu, at Vishvamitra's place of sacrifice. While visiting the sacrifice of King Janaka, Rama married Sita. Lakshmana married Urmila, Bharata married Mandavi, and Shatrughna married Shrutakirti. The last two were the daughters of Kushadvaja.

Rama and His brothers returned to Ayodhya, along with their wives. Thereafter, Bharata and Shatrughna went to stay with Bharata's maternal uncle, Yudhajit. While they were away from Ayodhya, King Dasharatha wanted to install Rama as the successor to the royal throne. However, Kaikeyi insisted that her son be installed upon the royal throne instead, and that Rama should be banished to the forest for fourteen years.

For His father's benefit, Rama renounced the kingdom as if it were no more than a blade of grass and went to Shringaverapura, accompanied by Lakshmana and Sita. After abandoning His chariot, Rama proceeded toward Chitrakuta. Being unable to bear the pangs of separation from Rama, King Dasharatha passed away.

After performing the funeral ceremonies of his father, Bharata took his army and went to the forest to see Rama.

He said to Rama, "Please come back to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom, my dear noble brother."

Rama refused to return to Ayodhya, however, but as a symbol of His ruling the kingdom, He gave Bharata His shoes. Thereafter, Bharata ruled the kingdom from Nandigram, never once entering Ayodhya.

Meanwhile, Rama left Chitrakuta and went to the ashram of Atri Muni. After offering respect to Sutikshna and Agastya, He went to the Dandaka forest. When the female Rakshasha, Shurpanakha, approached Him, Rama had Lakshmana cut off her ears and nose. She then induced her brothers—Khara, Trishiras, and Dushana—to fight with Rama. Rama sent them all to the abode of Yamaraja, by means of His arrows, along with their army of fourteen thousand Rakshashas.

Thereafter, being incited by his sister, Shurpanakha, Ravana assumed the guise of a mendicant and had Maricha assume the form of an enchanting deer. In this way, they went to abduct Sita. At Sita's request, Rama went to capture the magical deer as it pranced and played before her. Thereafter, while dying, Maricha called out, "Alas! O Sita! O Lakshmana!" in a voice resembling that of Rama.

Upon hearing this, when Sita asked him to go and help his brother, Lakshmana departed, leaving her alone. When Rama met Lakshmana, He said, "This was only a deceptive trick of the Rakshasha. Surely Sita has been kidnapped!"

Having received this opportunity, Ravana kidnapped Sita. After killing Jatayu, he returned to his abode, Lanka. Ravana kept Sita in a grove of ashoka trees and meanwhile, Rama returned to His cottage only to find it deserted. Being terribly grief-stricken, Rama searched for Sita everywhere. The dying Jatayu directed Rama to go toward the South. After cremating Jatayu's body, Rama went and made an alliance with Sugriva. He cut down seven huge trees with His arrow and then killed Sugriva's brother, Vali. Rama installed Sugriva as the king of Kishkindha and then remained at the Rishyamuka Hill.

Sugriva then sent hordes of monkeys to search for Sita in all directions. Those who went to the East, North and West came back and reported that they had not met with success. Those who went to the South roamed through forests and mountains and when they could not find Sita, they decided to give up their lives in the fire.

Then, from Sampati, the elder brother of Jatayu, the monkeys learned of Sita's whereabouts. Hanuman leapt across the ocean to Lanka, where he found Sita sitting in the ashoka grove. She was being rebuked by female Rakshashas and tormented by Ravana. Hanuman presented to Sita the ring that Rama had given him, and he consoled her with news of Rama. He said, "I am a messenger from Rama. O princess of Mithila, do not be aggrieved. Give me something that Rama will recognize so that He will believe that I have found you."

Sita gave a jewel to Hanuman, saying, "Speak to Rama in such a way that He will come and rescue me without delay."

While Hanuman was engaged in destroying the ashoka grove, he killed Prince Aksha and other demons before allowing himself to be bound. Being bound by Indrajit's nooses, Hanuman was led into the presence of Ravana. Hanuman told him, "I am a messenger from Rama. Return Sita to Him."

Becoming enraged, Ravana had Hanuman's tail set on fire but when Hanuman escaped, he burnt much of Lanka. Thereafter, the monkeys returned to Rama, after feasting on the fruit of Madhuvana. Hanuman handed over Sita's jewel to Rama.

Thereafter, accompanied by Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sugriva and an army of monkeys, Rama marched to Lanka. Ravana's younger brother, Vibhishana, took shelter of Rama and in return, the Lord crowned him as the future king of Lanka. The leaders of the monkeys were Nila, Angada, Nala, Dhumra, Dhumraksha, Virendra, Jambavan, Mainda, Dvidida, and many others. They attacked Lanka while Rama and Lakshmana fought with the Rakshashas.

The leaders of the Rakshashas were Vidyujjihva, Dhumraksha, Devantaka, Narantaka, Mahodara, Mahaparshva, Atikaya, Mahabala, Kumbha, Nikumbha, Matta, Makaraksha, Akampana, Prahasta, Vira, Unmatta, and the powerful Kumbhakarna. Rama killed them all. Lakshmana killed Indrajit, the son of Ravana. After cutting off his arms, Rama killed Ravana.

After Sita proved her chastity by walking through a blazing fire, she was accepted by Rama. Thereafter, everyone returned to Ayodhya on the Pushpaka chariot. Rama ruled the kingdom, protecting the citizens as if they were His children. He performed ten horse sacrifices. Rama ruled the kingdom for eleven thousand years. Shatrughna killed the demon, Lavana. Finally, along with all of the inhabitants of Ayodhya, Rama returned to His eternal abode in the spiritual sky.

Next, the story of Mahabharata is given in a nutshell: Brahma was born from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Atri was Brahma's son and Soma (the moon-god) was his son. Budha was the son of Soma and he begot Pururava in the womb of Urvashi. Pururava's son was Ayu. In the dynasty of Ayu—Yayati, Bharata, Kuru, and Shantanu were born. Bhishma was born as the son of Shantanu and Ganga. Bhishma was endowed with all good qualities and he became a master of the Brahma-vaivarta Purana.

Shantanu begot two sons from his wife, Satyawati. The first was Chitrangada, who was killed by a Gandharva having the same name. The other son was Vichitravirya, who married two daughters of the king of Kashi. After Vichitravirya died, Shrila Vyasadeva begot a son, Dhritarashtra, in the womb of his widow, Ambika. Shrila Vyasadeva also begot a son, Pandu, in the womb of Vichitravirya's widow, Ambalika, and another son, Vidura, in the womb of a maidservant.

Dhritarashtra and his wife, Gandhari, had one hundred powerful sons, the chief of which was Duryodhana. Pandu and his wives, Kunti and Madri, had five sons—Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. However, due to fate, an enemy arose between the sons of Dhritarashtra (the Kauravas) and the

sons of Pandu (the Pandavas). As a result, Duryodhana began to harass the Pandavas.

After setting fire to the house of shellac, the Pandavas saved themselves by escaping in a tunnel. They disguised themselves as brahmanas and resided at a brahmana's house in the village of Ekachakra, where they killed the demon, Vaka. They then heard of Draupadi's svayamvara in Panchala. Thus it came to be that the Pandavas won the hand of Draupadi.

With the sanction of Bhishma and Drona, Dhritarashtra brought back the Pandavas and gave them half of the kingdom, with their capital at Indraprastha. The Pandavas built a wonderful assembly hall and then performed the Rajasuya sacrifice. Thereafter, Arjuna married Lord Krishna's sister, Subhadra, at Dvaraka.

From Agni, Arjuna received the celestial chariot, Nandighosha, the Gandiva bow, inexhaustible quivers, and impenetrable armor. With the Gandiva bow in hand, and with the help of Lord Krishna, Arjuna gratified Agni by allowing him to devour the Khandava forest.

Unfortunately, Yudhisthira was defeated in a deceitful game of dice that had been arranged by the wicked Duryodhana, who followed the advice of Karna, Dushasana, and Shakuni. Thereafter, according to the conditions of the dice game, the Pandavas underwent hardships in the forest for twelve years.

While living in the forest, the Pandavas were accompanied by the sage, Dhaumya; their wife, Draupadi; and many other sages and brahmanas. After the conclusion of the twelfth year, the Pandavas went to live incognito in the kingdom of Virata. At the end of that year, as they were rescuing Virata's cows, the Pandavas were recognized and so they put forward their claim to the kingdom. In fact, the Pandavas were ready to accept half of the kingdom and if not that, just five villages to rule over.

Duryodhana refused to give the Pandavas anything and as a result, a great battle took place at Kurukshetra. The Pandavas

amassed an army of seven akshauhinis while the Kauravas enlisted an army of eleven akshauhinis. In the beginning, Bhishma was the commander-in-chief of Duryodhana's army. During the terrific battle that ensued, Shikandin stayed at the head of the Pandava army. After ten days of fighting, Bhishma was pierced by the arrows of Arjuna and Shikandin and thrown down from his chariot. He waited for the sun to pass over into the northern hemisphere while lying on a bed of arrows. After the end of the war, Bhishma taught Yudhisthira the essence of religious principles.

After the fall of Bhishma, the battle continued for five days as a contest between Drona and Dhrishtadyumna. After hearing the lie that his son, Ashvattama, had died, Drona put down his weapons and was slain.

Karna then became the commander of the Kaurava forces and he fought with Arjuna. After two days, when his chariot wheel became stuck in the earth, as a result of former curses, Karna was killed by Arjuna's arrows. Thereafter, Shalya fought with Yudhisthira and was killed by mid-day. The final contest was between Duryodhana and Bhima—a duel fought with clubs. In the end, Duryodhana was killed, his thighs broken by Bhima.

Ashvattama, the son of Drona, infuriated by the death of his father, entered the Pandava camp at night and killed Dhrishtadyumna and the five sons of Draupadi as they were sleeping. As Draupadi was lamenting, Arjuna chased Ashvattama and then severed the jewel from his hair. Arjuna did not kill Ashvattama in consideration of his being their guru's son and a brahmana.

Thereafter, Yudhisthira ruled the kingdom and performed a horse sacrifice. Upon hearing of the destruction of the Yadu dynasty, the king recited the one thousand names of Vishnu, installed his grandson, Parikshit, upon the throne, and then ascended to heaven in the company of his brothers.

Next is a lengthy discussion of diseases and their cures as prescribed by Dhanvantari, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu who delivered the science of ayur-veda. The causes of disease are described as an imbalance of the three elements within the body—kapha, pitta, and vayu (mucus, bile and air). The analysis presented as to the classification of diseases, their causes, and their cures is beyond the scope of this small summary but for those who are interested, this is certainly a good reference.

After the discussion of diseases, Lord Hari said, “O Shambhu, I shall now explain the Vaishnava-kavacha by means of which protection is awarded and all ailments are removed.”

(The Vaishnava-kavacha should be chanted as follows:) Having bowed down to Lord Janardana, who is unborn, all-pervading, omniscient and eternal, I tie this kavacha, which never goes in vain, which is incomparable, and which wards off all miseries.

May Vishnu protect me from the front. May Krishna protect me from behind. May Hari protect my head, and may Janardana protect my heart. May Hrishiksha protect my mind. May Keshava protect my tongue. May Vasudeva protect my eyes. May the all-pervading Sankarshana protect my ears. May Pradyumna protect my nose. May Aniruddha protect my skin. May Vanamali protect my throat. May Shrivatsa protect the lower portion of my body.

May the divine Sudarshana chakra, the destroyer of the demons, protect my left side. May the divine club, the destroyer of the demons, protect my right side. May the divine rod of chastisement protect my stomach. May the divine plough protect my back. May the Sharnga bow protect the upper portion of my body. May the sword, Nandaka, protect my calves.

May the divine conch shell protect my heels. May the divine lotus flower protect my feet. May Garuda protect me for the successful completion of all my activities. May the boar incarnation protect me when I am in the water. May Vamanadeva

protect me in all difficult situations. May Narasimhadeva protect me when I am in the forest. May Keshava protect me from all sides.

May Lord Hiranyagarbha grant me gold. May Kapiladeva, the propounder of the Sankha philosophy insure the equilibrium of my bodily elements. May Aja lead me to Svetadvipa. May the slayer of Madhu and Kaitabha destroy my enemies.

May Vishnu extract all the sin from my body. May the swan, fish, and tortoise incarnations protect me from all sides. May Trivikrama curb all of my sinful tendencies. May Lord Narayana protect my intellect. May Shesha make my wisdom perfect and may He destroy my ignorance.

May Lord Vamana place ecstasy on my head in the form of His lotus feet. May Dattatreya endow me with sons, cattle, and kinsmen. May Parashurama destroy all of my enemies with His axe. May Rama, the son of Dasharatha, the killer of the Rakshashas, protect me.

May Balarama, the scion of the Yadu dynasty, destroy my enemies with His plough weapon. May the child Krishna, who killed Keshi, Chanura, Putana, and Kamsa, grant me the fulfillment of my desires.

I see a being more terrible than pitch darkness, having a black complexion and resembling the god of death with a noose in his hands, and so I am terrified. I have sought the refuge of the lotus-eyed Lord Achyuta and so I now feel most fortunate and fearless.

While meditating on Lord Narayana, the destroyer of all impediments, I tied this kavacha around my neck and am now wandering over the earth, free of cares. I feel that no living being can harm me because I identify myself as the servant of all the demigods in the sense that I always remember Lord Vishnu, the possessor of unlimited strength and opulence.

May success always be mine on the strength of chanting this mantra. May whoever looks at me with hateful eyes, may whoever I gaze at with contempt—let him be bound and struck in the eyes.

Let the spokes of Lord Vishnu's Sudarshana chakra cut off my sins, and let it strike those who are violent toward me.

The above mantra can be chanted when Rakshashas or Pishachas attack, when one is in a dense jungle, when one is engaged in an argument, while crossing a river, while going down the highway, when one faces some danger, when there is a great fire, when the planets are in adverse positions, when lightning strikes, during sickness, when there is an obstacle, or whenever some cause for fear arises.

This mantra is the personal mantra of Lord Vishnu and it is the most sacred of all mantras. This kavacha destroys all sins.

Next, there is a very long list of all the medicinal drugs and herbs that are found in the forest, and the diseases they cure.

After this, there is a detailed explanation of Sanskrit grammar. Following the descriptions of grammar is a section referred to as dharma-shastra, which outlines the duties of a brahmana.

After carefully studying the Vedic literature, a brahmana should try to put into practice whatever he has learned.

Truthfulness, a charitable disposition, absence of greed, learning, sacrifice, worship of the Lord, and restraint are the eight holy characteristics of the virtuous.

Not taking back what was given, the giving of gifts, study of the Vedic literature, learning, penance, valor, nobility of birth, health, destroying material bondage, happiness, and knowledge—all these result from the practice of dharma.

A brahmachari, or student, should bathe three times daily. He should collect alms while living at the ashram of his guru. He should wear a garment called a mekhala that is made of kusha grass and he should keep matted hair or else shave his head.

The duty of one in the renounced order of life is to avoid all worldly enterprise, beg for alms, reside underneath a tree, not accept any gift, perform no injury to others, view all living entities equally, remain equal in happiness and distress, view with an equal mind that which is pleasant and that which is unpleasant, practice purity both internally and externally, restrain his speech, engage in meditation, curb his senses, and understand the purpose of life.

The common characteristics that people in all walks of life should practice are non-violence, truthful and pleasing speech, purity, forgiveness, and compassion.

A householder should rise early in the morning, during the brahma-muhurta, which is about one and a half hours before sunrise. After passing stool and urine, brushing his teeth and bathing, a householder should sit down and say his sandhya prayers.

During the day, passing stool and urine should be done while facing north. During the night, one should face the south. In a life-threatening situation, however, a brahmana can face any direction while passing stool and urine. Stool and urine should never be passed on cow dung, an anthill, in pure water, in the shade of trees by the side of the road, or on burning coal.

The twelve types of dirt produced from the body are—fat, semen, blood, marrow, saliva, stool, urine, ear wax, mucus, a secretion from the eyes, tears, and sweat.

A human being has innumerable pores all over his body that exude dirt, day and night, making one extremely contaminated. An early morning bath purifies one. Like a bath in the Ganga, an early morning bath gives pleasure to the mind, increases beauty, and removes sorrow.

While bathing, one should chant this mantra: I am bathing as if it were in the Ganga, to remove these ten sins—the sin of not giving charity on auspicious occasions, the sin of doing forbidden things, the sin of violence, the sin of committing

adultery, the sin of speaking harsh words, the sin of telling lies, the sin of speaking ill of others, the sin of speaking nonsensically, the sin of coveting another's wealth, and the sin of wishing harm to others.

After saying one's sandhya prayers, a person should sit down and perform a fire sacrifice. After performing sacrifice, a brahmana should recite mantras pertaining to the sun.

There are eight very auspicious things in this world—brahmanas, cows, fire, gold, butter, the sun, water, and the king. Therefore, everyone should worship and circumambulate these eight.

Five duties in relation to the Vedic literature are—reading them, understanding them, rewriting them, deliberating over their meaning, and teaching them to children.

After performing one's religious duties in the morning, one should engage in the activity that will enable him to earn enough to maintain his dependents. A householder has these dependents—mother, father, preceptor, brothers, poor people who seek his refuge, casual visitors, and especially, invited guests. It is the duty of everyone to maintain his dependents in all respects. He truly lives who looks after many. Those who live only to fill their own bellies are as good as dead, although breathing. Even a dog fills his belly!

It is from accumulated wealth that all activities emerge, just as all rivers originate in the mountains. The earth, with its precious gems, fields of grain, cattle, and women—all of these can be termed wealth.

When there is no danger threatening, a brahmana should maintain himself by choosing a profession that does not entangle him in doing harm to other living beings. If this is not possible, he should accept work that involves the least amount of injury.

After a lengthy discussion of the performance of fire sacrifice and the shraddha ceremony, Lord Brahma said: I shall now briefly describe the essence of dharma and so please listen, Shankara, for this understanding is very subtle. It is grief that

destroys learning, righteousness, strength, courage, happiness, and enthusiasm in men. For this reason, grief must be avoided at all costs.

One gets a wife according to his actions. One moulds his surroundings according to his actions. One's friends and family members behave with him according to his actions. It is the activities of a man that award him happiness and misery.

Giving in charity is the greatest virtue. Everything good in life comes to a person who is charitable. It is by charity that one is enabled to go to heaven. Considering all this, one should be very liberal while giving charity.

Those who perform fire sacrifices, chant japa, bathe in holy rivers, and worship the Deities, as well as those who are truthful, forgiving, and merciful, attain heaven.

No one gives a gift of happiness or distress, and no one takes away one's happiness or distress. Men experience the happiness or misery that is brought about by their own actions.

He who dedicates his life for the sake of virtue crosses over all difficulties. People sink into misery due to association and intimacy, as well as due to greed. Greed generates anger. Malice is born of greed. Greed causes delusion, false prestige, and rivalry.

He who is free from lust, hatred, falsehood, anger, greed, delusion, and arrogance becomes peaceful in mind and attains an exalted destination. This is the highest achievement in life—when a man is merciful to all living entities, is able to curb his senses, and fully realizes how everything is transitory.

If a man does not perform meritorious activities, even though he sees death staring him in the face, his life is worthless, like the nipple-like growth on the chin of a goat.

There is no gift better than the gift of food. It is food that sustains the world of moving and non-moving beings. The gift of a virgin girl, the gift of a bull, pilgrimage, and education, as well as the gift of a horse, elephant, chariot, or gems, or even

land—none of these are equal to one-sixteenth the gift of food. The vital air, strength, bodily luster, valor, fortitude, and power of memory have their origin in food.

Even the sight of good men purifies one. The sight of a saintly person is more valuable than a visit to a holy place of pilgrimage.

Truthfulness, restraint, penance, purity, contentment, forgiveness, straightforwardness, wisdom, tranquility, mercy and charity—these are eternal virtues.

Next is a discussion of atonement. If one eats food containing a fly or some hair, he should immediately vomit it to become purified of the fault. Water that is drunk with the left hand and water that has already been drunk by another person is like wine.

A brahmana who takes food from a washerman, an actor, a bamboo worker, or a cobbler must perform the chandrayana penance.

When someone dies in the family, a brahmana remains impure for ten days, and a kshatriya for twelve days. A vaishya becomes pure after fifteen days and a shudra after a month.

In Dvapara-yuga, the Lord accepted the form of Shrila Vyasadeva, seeing how the people were less intelligent, and divided the Vedas into four. He then taught the Rg-veda to Paila, the Sama-veda to Jaimini, the Atharva-veda to Sumantu, and the Yajur-veda to Mahamuni. Suta Gosvami and Vaishampayana were taught the Puranas.

The five topics that a Purana deals with are—creation, subsequent creation, genealogy, the manvantaras, and detailed descriptions of the exploits of great saintly kings.

The eighteen Puranas are—Brahma, Padma, Vaishnava, Shaiva (or sometimes Vayu), Bhagavata, Bhavishya, Naradiya, Skanda, Linga, Varaha, Markandeya, Agneya, Brahmavaivarta, Kaurma, Matsya, Garuda, Vayaviya, and Brahmanda.

Many Upa-puranas have also been mentioned by sages, such as the Nrsimha Purana. The eighteen vidyas, or departments of knowledge are—Puranas, dharma-shastra, the four Vedas, the six Vedangas, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Ayurveda, arthashastra, Gandharva vidya (the science of music), and Dhanurveda (the science of bowmanship).

Thereafter, in Kali-yuga, men become vicious, ruthless, and evil-minded. When the quality of goodness predominates, when people are interested in cultivating knowledge and performing austerities—know it to be Satya-yuga. When the energy of the people is directed towards fulfilling their material desires because the mode of passion predominates—know it to be Treta-yuga. When the modes of passion and ignorance are equally predominant, giving rise to greed, discontent, false prestige, arrogance, and rivalry so that a man rushes here and there to attain desired objects—know it to be Dvapara-yuga.

When the mode of ignorance alone predominates so that people speak lies without hesitation, and are lazy and overwhelmed by grief, delusion, terror and wretchedness, and they don't hesitate to employ violent means—know it to be Kali-yuga.

In Kali-yuga, people are very lusty and their speech is harsh. The country is overrun by thieves and plunderers. The Vedas are spoiled due to being interpreted by atheists. Kings beg from the subjects, who are overpowered by their genitals and bellies. Mendicants become householders and ascetics live in the towns. People are short in stature and gluttonous. Thieves are respected.

As Kali-yuga progresses, the people will become so disgruntled that they will appear as if ghostly haunted. They will simply be devotees of women, and everyone will be on the level of shudras. Women will become so callous that when they are rebuked, they will simply scratch their heads and defy all orders. Being overwhelmed by atheists in the garb of gurus, the masses of people will give up the worship of Lord Vishnu.

And yet, even though the age of Kali is an ocean of defects, there is one great virtue. In Kali-yuga, simply by singing the glories of Lord Krishna, one can free himself from material bondage. In Satya-yuga, people perform meditation, in Treta-yuga they perform sacrifices, in Dvapara-yuga, they worship the Lord in the temple but in Kali-yuga, one can be liberated from material bondage simply by the performance of Krishna-kirtana.

Suta Gosvami said: I shall now explain devotion to Lord Vishnu whereby everything desirable can be obtained. The Lord is not pleased by anything else as much as by unmotivated devotion. The regular remembrance of Lord Hari is the root cause of all welfare, and it is the tastiest fruit available. Those who shed tears of love while their hair stands on end as the holy names of the Lord are being sung are the real devotees.

Those who perpetually engage in the Lord's service with great affection are real Vaishnavas. Even if such devotees are ignorant of Vedic philosophy, if they bow down with great devotion before the Lord and happily serve His devotees—they are to be considered genuine Vaishnavas.

If there is delight in hearing the pastimes of the Lord, one's ears have born fruit. One who has dedicated all of his love at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu is a maha-bhagavata. Even one who worships the Lord to earn a living is considered to be a neophyte devotee.

A person who has mastered the Vedanta is better than thousands of men who perform sacrifice while chanting mantras. A devotee of Lord Vishnu is millions of times better than such Vedantists.

If one's body is not thrilled so that the hair stands on end while listening to the holy name of Lord Vishnu then it is no better than a corpse.

Material existence is like a poisonous tree but two of its fruit are like nectar—one is devotion for Lord Krishna and the other is the association of His devotees.

Shaunaka Rishi said: O Suta, you possess perfect knowledge by the grace of Shrila Vyasadeva. Some authorities say that the soul attains another body after quitting the present body. Others say that the soul enters another body after suffering torments in the abode of Yamaraja. What is the truth?

Suta Gosvami said: Your question is praiseworthy. I shall answer by referring to a conversation that took place between Garuda and Lord Krishna.

Once, Garuda desired to travel throughout the universe. He started his journey, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari. Thereafter, he wandered over the earth, as well as in heaven and in hell, but could not attain peace. When he returned to Vaikuntha, Garuda felt distressed due to seeing the sorrow of the people of this world.

There, in Vaikuntha, Garuda saw the inhabitants as four-armed, some having dark complexions and some fair. He then saw the Lord of Lakshmi, surrounded by His associates. Feeling greatly pleased, Garuda bowed to the Lord as tears streamed from his eyes.

Lord Vishnu said: O Garuda, tell Me—how much of the earth you wandered over in such a short time?

Garuda said: My Lord, by Your grace, I visited the three worlds and have seen all kinds of living beings—moving and non-moving. I traveled everywhere, except the abode of Yamaraja. Among all the worlds, Bhu-mandala is thickly populated with all kinds of creatures. This region is very auspicious because it affords a place of enjoyment for all and it is also a place where one can strive for salvation. Even the demigods think that the inhabitants of Bharata-varsha are greatly fortunate.

My dear Lord, how is it that creatures die? Having died, where do they go? What are the rituals that are performed upon the death of a person?

O soul of the universe, while traversing the world out of curiosity, when I saw how the people are merged in sorrow, a

great pain arose within my heart. The affliction on the earth caused by the death of a dear one is greater than the affliction caused by the sight of demons in heaven. I was afraid of losing myself in hell. O Lord, there is no place safer than Your lotus feet!

I saw that all the people were merged deeply into attachment and envy. Some were blind, some squint-eyed, some dumb, some lame, some deaf, some suffering from leprosy and other diseases, and some were suffering from great pride as false as a flower in the sky.

After seeing how strangely people behave, even in the face of death, I have come to You, my Lord, to ask—why is there death and why do people act so strangely? What shall a dying man do? After death, does a soul languish or does he attain another body? Kindly favor me by answering my questions.

Lord Krishna said: O gentle one, you have put the proper questions to Me because they are meant for the welfare of the people rotting in the material world.

A dying person should be placed on the ground, smeared with cow dung, and then darbha grass should be strewn over his body. In this way, the ailing person is relieved of his sins because they do not cling to him any more.

Tulasi, brahmanas, cows, Lord Vishnu, and Ekadashi—these five are the boats that protect people from drowning in the ocean of material existence. Darbha grass was created from My hair and sesame seeds were created from My perspiration.

As the hour of death approaches, darbha grass (kusha grass) should be placed in the hands of a dying man. He whose body is spread over with darbha grass at the time of death attains My eternal abode.

The feet of a deceased person should be kept on the ground with the toes pointing upward. Burning of the dead body is a kind of atonement for the sins the person committed throughout his life. After smearing the ground with cow dung, the dying man

should be placed upon a mattress of darbha grass. Salt is very effective for the destruction of sins. Salt has come from the body of the Lord and so it is recommended as a very good gift. When, at the time of death, the soul does not depart but lingers around the body, the relatives should give a donation of salt because this will open his path to heaven.

It is Kala that detaches the soul from the body. Just as the wind scatters clouds here and there—Kala, the destroyer, disperses people from one end of the world to the other. The sun, moon, Shiva, water, air, Indra, fire, sky, earth, herbs, Vasus, rivers, seas, and everything else is created and destroyed by Kala.

O Garuda, when the hour of death approaches then, as if by chance, some disease becomes manifest. The internal organs grow weak and the dying person begins to feel the pangs of death. The dying person begins to lose consciousness and foam comes to his mouth. Finally, while all of his relatives are lamenting, the Yamadutas come and take the soul, which is the size of a thumb, out of the body.

He who never spoke falsely and had firm faith in the existence of God dies peacefully. He who never strays from dharma due to lust, anger, or envy and acts according to what he preaches dies peacefully. Those who bear false witness, who lie, and are deceitful die unconscious.

The ferocious, foul-smelling Yamadutas, with clubs and sticks in their hands, forcibly take wicked persons away. Being terrified, they tremble while calling out for their mother, father, or sons. While suffering terribly, the wicked soul leaves his body.

When sinful people have exhausted the results of their impious activities in hell, they are again born on earth. The killer of a brahmana becomes a deer, horse, pig, or camel. A gold thief becomes a worm, a germ, or a fly. The killer of a brahmana suffers from tuberculosis. A drunkard has brown teeth. One who steals gold has bad nails. One who has relations with his teacher's wife suffers from a skin disease.

After having sexual intercourse with the wives of others, or after killing a brahmana, one becomes a brahmana-rakshasha in a lonely place. One who steals jewels is born in a low family. The corn thief becomes a rat. One who steals a vehicle becomes a camel, and a fruit thief becomes a monkey. One who steals utensils becomes a vulture, as does one who steals a cow. One who steals women's clothes becomes a leper. One who steals bronze becomes a swan.

One who kills his teacher becomes an epileptic, and the performer of cruel deeds becomes a dwarf. One who discards his wife becomes an animal that will be killed by a hunter. One who steals the property of a brahmana or a deity suffers from jaundice. One who eats meat becomes a leper. One who does not return borrowed money become a person with one good eye. He who lives off the earnings of his wife becomes lame.

One who disregards his wife and children has bad luck. He who had sexual relations with a brahmana's wife becomes a jackal. One who steals clothes becomes a moth. An envious person is born blind. One who steals a lamp becomes a beggar. One who kills a friend becomes an owl. One who habitually lies cannot talk properly. One who disturbs a marriage becomes a mosquito.

One who passes stool by the side of the road becomes a bull. One who spoils a young girl becomes a eunuch. One who teaches the Vedas for money becomes a leopard. He who eats here and there, indiscriminately, becomes a cat. He who sets fire in the forest becomes a fire-fly. One who envies others becomes a bee.

One who never gives gifts becomes a bull. One who steals cows becomes a serpent. One who steals water becomes a fish. One who steals milk becomes a crane. One who gives stale food to a brahmana becomes a hunchback.

If one steals fruit, his children die prematurely. If one eats alone without giving any food to others, he will not have any children. One who fails to take sannyasa when he is old becomes

an evil spirit in the desert. One who steals books becomes blind.

One who makes a promise to a brahmana but does not keep it is born as a jackal. One who earns the blame of the people becomes a tortoise. A man of a higher caste who marries a shudra woman is born as a wolf. One who touches fire with his foot is born as a cat. One who refuses to hear the glories of the Lord and His devotees is born with a hearing defect.

One who pretends to be religious but is not sincere will suffer from a skin disease in his next life. A treacherous person will suffer from headaches in his next life. One who was against the worship of Lord Shiva will have some disease of the genitals in his next life.

Women who commit these sins have the same result as men, or they may become the wives of those who suffer in the above-mentioned ways. We should be reminded that sinful persons suffer in hell after giving up the present body and then when their term of torment comes to an end, they are born on earth in the above-mentioned conditions.

When it has been ascertained that life has gone out of the body, the son should bathe the corpse with clean water, without delay. Then, fresh clothes should be placed on the corpse after having smeared it with sandalwood paste. Thereafter, the arrangements for cremating the dead body are to be made, and charity should be given to the brahmanas.

When the body is placed on the pyre, the mourners should stand facing south. The corpse should be anointed with ghee and then the fire should be lit while everyone chants, "You are the creator of creatures, the birth place of the world, and the protector of the people. Please consume this corpse and carry the soul to heaven." After thus worshipping the fire-god, one should set fire to the dead body. When the body is half burnt, more ghee should be poured over it.

After the body is burnt, the mourners should circumambulate the pyre and then, after casting a mournful look at the ashes, go for a bath. After reaching the reservoir of water, the mourners should first wash their clothes and shave their heads before entering the water to bathe. The bathers should be sober and not agitate the water.

After coming out of the water, the mourners should make water offerings to the forefathers. While doing so, they should be careful not to cry or spit because the departed souls will have to helplessly consume the tears or mucus if they do.

Thereafter, a learned personality should address the mourners, impressing upon them how everything in this material world is only a temporary manifestation and not ultimate reality. He should explain how the material body, in and of itself, is of no importance once the eternal soul is away from it. The body is made from the five material elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether. After the departure of the soul, these material elements disperse. In consideration of this, what is there to lament? Even the universe will one day be destroyed and so it is folly to think that anything can escape destruction.

In this way, a learned person should address the mourners as they sit in a nice grassy lawn outside the cremation ground. After hearing these words indicating the truth of material existence, the mourners should return home with the children walking in front.

Upon reaching the front door of his house, a mourner should chew neem leaves, rinse his mouth with water, and then touch auspicious articles, such as cow dung, durva grass, or a bull. After entering the house, he should ignite the sacrificial fire.

A woman who has been chaste and faithful to her husband should ascend the funeral pyre after bowing down to her husband. A woman who ascends the pyre follows her husband, staying in heaven for as many years as there are hairs on her body. Just as a snake charmer entices a snake from its hole, such

a woman delivers her husband from hell and then enjoys with him in paradise.

She who ascends her husband's funeral pyre goes to heaven, where she is praised by the Apsaras, and she enjoys with her husband there for a period of fourteen Indras.

Even if a woman's husband had killed a brahmana, or a friend, or anyone else of noble character, he becomes purified of all sins when she ascends the funeral pyre. A woman who follows her husband to heaven in this way purifies three generations of her mother's family, three generations of her father's family, and three generations of her husband's family.

A woman is chaste who is sad when her husband is sad and glad when he is glad, who misses him terribly when he is away from home in a distant place, and who dies when he dies.

Garuda inquired: If a man dies away from home in a distant place so that his family does not have his body to cremate, what rites can they perform?

Lord Krishna said: If the body of a man who has died abroad is not available, there is still a procedure to be followed.

O Garuda, I shall tell you a most confidential rite of death for those who died because of a snake bite; who were eaten by a tiger or killed by some other wild animal; who drowned; who died of hunger; who were poisoned; who committed suicide; who fell from a tree, wall, or hill; who fell from a horse; or who died in prison; as well as those who were killed by a thief, a washerman, a shudra, or a woman in her period.

All of these deaths are considered inauspicious but for the welfare of the departed soul and so that the surviving relatives will not be reproached, the ritual known as Narayana-bali should be performed. This rite should be performed in a holy place by qualified brahmanas, or else in a temple of Lord Vishnu.

Thereafter, the following story was narrated: There was a pious king named Viravahana, who ruled from his capital, Viradha. Once, he journeyed to the ashrama of Vasishtha

Muni. There, he saw the great sage surrounded by many other ascetics.

After bowing down to the sage, the king said: I have performed my religious duties to the best of my capacity. Still, I am terribly afraid at heart. O ocean of mercy, kindly tell me how I can avoid seeing Yamaraja and his fierce looking messengers after death.

The sage, Vasishtha, replied: Sages who are well versed in the Vedas have prescribed many religious duties but due to their subtlety, they are often misunderstood. Giving in charity, going on pilgrimage, performing austerities, sacrifice, and the acceptance of sannyasa are all religious practices but the vrishotsarga is a superior act.

A man should desire many sons because if even one son goes to Gaya and releases a bull (while performing the vrishotsarga, a ritual where one gives a bull calf in charity), it will award him great benefit. All heinous sins are washed away by releasing a bull and by swimming in the ocean. Somehow or other, a vrishajajna should be performed (vrisha means calf).

One should select a young bull as he moves among a herd of cows and he should be wedded to a she-calf while reciting the wedding mantras. The young bull should then be praised by saying, "You are Dharma in the form of a bull and thus you give delight to the world. Please award me peace. Drink the water of the Ganga and eat freshly grown grass. Kindly speak of my good deeds before Dharmaraja."

While praising the bull, one should mark him with the sign of a trishula on his right shoulder, and the sign of a chakra on his left thigh. The bull should then be worshiped with incense, flowers, and uncooked rice before being released along with the she-calf.

Vasishtha concluded by saying: Therefore, O king, you should perform the vrishotsarga as it is enjoined in the dharma-shastra. You possess all the virtues for undertaking this auspicious rite.

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 Rishi, "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 antyajjas 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 Bhuvan-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 Mymaya 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.



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