

22 INCARNATIONS OF THE LORD

From Srimad Bhagavatam

1) Kumaras

Ordered by Lord Krishna in the beginning, Brahma created four great sages named Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Sanat-kumara. All of them were unwilling to adopt materialistic activities because they were highly elevated. Brahma spoke to his sons after generating them. "My dear sons," he said, "now generate progeny." Progeny means population . But due to their being attached to Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they aimed at liberation, and therefore they expressed their unwillingness. On the refusal of the sons to obey the order of their father, there was much anger generated in the mind of Brahma, which he tried to control and not express. Although he tried to curb his anger, it came out from between his eyebrows, and a child mixed blue and red was immediately generated. After his birth he began to cry: O destiny maker, teacher of the universe, kindly designate my name and place. Thereafter Brahmä said: O chief of the demigods, you shall be called by the name Rudra by all people because you have so anxiously cried.

Kumaras Visit Vaikuntha –Kingdom Of God

Kumaras who were born from Brahma's mind sometimes travel throughout the material and spiritual skies. After thus traveling all over the universes, they also entered into the spiritual sky, for they were freed from all material contamination i.e. because of their purity they could enter kingdom of God. In the spiritual sky there are spiritual planets known as Vaikunthas, which are the residence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead .

In Vaikuntha there are many forests in which the trees are desire trees, and in all seasons they are filled with flowers and fruits . Everyone in Vaikuntha sing glories of the Lord . When the king of bees hums in a high pitch, singing the glories of the Lord, there is a temporary lull in the noise of the pigeon, the cuckoo, the crane, the cakravaka, the swan, the parrot, the partridge and the peacock. Such transcendental birds stop their own singing simply to hear the glories of the Lord.

Thus the Kumaras after passing through the six entrances of Vaikuëöha-puré, the Lord's residence, without feeling astonishment at all the decorations, they saw at the seventh gate two shining beings of the same age, armed with maces and adorned with most valuable jewelry, earrings, diamonds, helmets, garments, etc. The two doormen were garlanded with fresh flowers which attracted intoxicated bees and which were placed around their necks and between their four blue arms. From their arched eyebrows, discontented nostrils and reddish eyes, they appeared somewhat agitated.

The great sages, headed by Sanaka, had opened doors everywhere. With open minds, they entered the seventh door out of their own will, just as they had passed through the six other doors, which were made of gold and diamonds.

The four sages were the first-born sons of Brahmā. Although they looked like five-year-old boys and traveled naked, the Kumāras were older than all other living creatures and had realized the truth of the self. Such saints were not to be forbidden to enter the kingdom of Vaikuntha, but by chance the doormen objected to their entrance. This was not fitting. The Lord is always anxious to serve sages like the Kumaras, but in spite of knowing this fact, the doormen, astonishingly and outrageously, prohibited them from entering.

When the Kumāras, although by far the fittest persons, were thus forbidden entrance by the two chief doorkeepers of Sri Hari while other divinities looked on, their eyes suddenly turned red because of anger due to their great eagerness to see their most beloved master, Sri Hari, the Personality of Godhead.

The sages said: Who are these two persons who have developed such a discordant mentality even though they are posted in the service of the Lord in the highest position and are expected to have developed the same qualities as the Lord? How are these two persons living in Vaikuntha? Where is the possibility of an enemy's coming into this kingdom of God? The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no enemy. Who could be envious of Him? Probably these two persons are imposters; therefore they suspect others to be like themselves.

When the doormen of Vaikuntaloka, who were certainly devotees of the Lord, found that they were going to be cursed by the brahmanas, they at once became very much afraid and fell down at the feet of the brahmanas in great anxiety, for a brahmana's curse cannot be counteracted by any kind of weapon.

After being cursed by the sages, the doormen said: It is quite apt that you have punished us for neglecting to respect sages like you. But we pray that due to your compassion at our repentance, the illusion of forgetting the Supreme Personality of Godhead will not come upon us as we go progressively downward.

The enraged Kumaras cursed both the Dwara Palas, the gate keepers Jaya and Vijaya, that they would have to give up their divinity and born as mortals on Earth and live there. When Jaya and Vijaya were cursed by the Sanat Kumaras at the gateway of Vaikunthaloka, Shri Vishnu appeared before them and the gatekeepers requested Shri Vishnu to lift the curse of the Kumaras. Shri Vishnu says that curse of Kumaras cannot be reverted. Instead, He gives Jaya and Vijaya two options. The first option is to take seven births on Earth as a devotee of Vishnu, while the second is to take three births as His enemy. After serving either of these sentences, they can re-attain their stature at Vaikuntha and be with Him permanently. Jaya and Vijaya cannot bear the thought of staying away from Vishnu for seven lives, they agree to the second option to become enemies.

In the first birth as enemy to Shri Vishnu, Jaya and Vijaya were born as Hiraneyaksha and Hiraneyakashyipu in Satya Yuga. Hiranyaksha was an asura, the son of Diti and Kashyapa rishi. He was slain by the Lord Vishnu after he (Hiranyaksha) took the Earth to the bottom of what has been described as the "Cosmic Ocean". Lord Vishnu assumed the Avatar of a boar - Varaha and dove into the ocean to lift the Earth, in the process slaying Hiranyaksha who was obstructing Him. The battle lasted one thousand years. He had an elder brother named Hiranyakashipu, who after having undertaken penances which made him incredibly powerful and invincible unless several conditions were met, was later slain by Lord Narasimha, another incarnation of Shri Vishnu.

In the next Treta yuga - Jaya and Vijaya were born as Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and were killed by Lord Vishnu in His forms as Ramachandra and Lakshmana. At the end of the Dwapara Yuga - Jaya and Vijaya were born their third birth as Shishupala and Dantavakra (an ally of Jarasandha, a friend of Shishupala and an enemy of Vasudeva Krishna) and Lord Krishna appeared Himself along with Balarama and killed them. Therefore, two attendants of the Lord in Vaikuntha named Jaya and Vijaya became Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha in Satya-yuga, Ravana and Kumbhakarna in the Treta-yuga, and as Shishupala and Dantavakra at the end of Dvapara-yuga. Because of their fruitive acts, Jaya and Vijaya agreed to become the Lord's enemies, and when killed in that mentality, they attained salvation in oneness. In this way Jaya and Vijaya attained liberation after three births.

At that very moment, the Lord, who is called Padmanabha because of the lotus grown from His navel and who is the delight of the righteous, learned about the insult offered by His own servants to the saints. Accompanied by His spouse, the goddess of fortune, He went to the spot on those very feet sought for by recluses and great sages.

The sages, headed by Sanaka , saw that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vishnu, who was formerly visible only within their hearts in ecstatic trance, had now actually become visible to their eyes. As He came forward, accompanied by His own associates bearing all paraphernalia, such as an umbrella and a camara fan, the white bunches of hair moved very gently, like two swans, and due to their favorable breeze the pearls garlanding the umbrella also moved, like drops of nectar falling from the white full moon or ice melting due to a gust of wind.

The Lord is the reservoir of all pleasure. His auspicious presence is meant for everyone's benediction, and His affectionate smiling and glancing touch the core of the heart. The Lord's beautiful bodily color is blackish, and His broad chest is the resting place of the goddess of fortune, who glorifies the entire spiritual world, the summit of all heavenly planets. Thus it appeared that the Lord was personally spreading the beauty and good fortune of the spiritual world.

He was decorated with Pitambar, and He wore a garland of fresh flowers which was distinguished by humming bees. His lovely wrists were graced with bracelets, and He rested

one of His hands on the shoulder of Garuda, His carrier, and twirled a lotus with another hand.

His countenance was distinguished by cheeks that enhanced the beauty of His alligator-shaped pendants, which outshone lightning. His nose was prominent, and His head was covered with a gem-studded crown. A charming necklace hung between His stout arms, and His neck was adorned with the gem known by the name Kaustubha.

When the breeze carrying the aroma of tulasi leaves from the toes of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead entered the nostrils of those sages, they experienced a change both in body and in mind, even though they were attached to the impersonal Brahman understanding.

The Lord's beautiful face appeared to them like the inside of a blue lotus, and the Lord's smile appeared to be a blossoming jasmine flower. After seeing the face of the Lord, the sages were fully satisfied, and when they wanted to see Him further, they looked upon the nails of His lotus feet, which resembled rubies. Thus they viewed the Lord's transcendental body again and again, and so they finally achieved meditation on the Lord's personal feature. The kumaras offered prayers & the Lord reciprocated.

2) Lord Varahadeva

After creating Kumaras & Rudra then Brahma created Svayambhuva Manu for progeny. One day Svayambhuva Manu was praying to Lord Brahma who was his father and a spiritual master, and toward the end of his prayers, he explained to Lord Brahmä that the earth is in a terrible predicament. It is lying deep in the Garbhodaka Ocean. Lord Brahma, he was thinking that I am just creating this universe and now this has happened. This is a great calamity because the earth is bearing the lives of so many living beings. So he began to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was the only shelter for all living beings from the insignificant ant up to Lord Brahmä. So at that time as Lord Brahmä was immersed in remembrance of Lord Vishnu, a most wonderful little boar came out from his nose. It was just hardly the size of the tip of one's thumb. He came out as a little boar and he went into the sky and he began to grow into a gigantic size, like a huge elephant, like a mountain, soon he was covering the entire sky. The great saints and sages from Janaloka, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka, they all began to offer prayers. At first, Brahma was wondering what is this? Who is this? But then this beautiful boar began to roar like a mountain. It was so sweet, it was so beautiful for the devotees, but it was like thunderous death to the non-devotees. And he began to slash his tail and cast his merciful loving glance upon all his devotees and then everyone began to offer prayers to him, and he dove into the ocean. Then as he dove, the ocean so fearful of this gigantic form that she raised her arms in the form of two large waves and she prayed, please do not cut me into pieces and he went deeper and deeper and deeper and the Lord especially took the form of a boar because the supreme Lord in this gigantic form of a boar with his nose, he was performing the pastime of searching for the earth towards the bottom of the Garbhodaka Ocean, and when he found the earth, he lifted it with his tusks and as he was bringing it up, the great demon Raksasa Hiranyaksha who was the younger brother of Hiranyakasipu, son of Aditi and Kasyapa Muni, he challenged the Lord to battle.

Birth of Hiranyaksha

Diti, daughter of Daksha, begged her husband, Kasyapa, the son of Marici, for a child but the particular time she asked was most inauspicious because at this time the horrible-looking ghosts and constant companions of the lord of the ghosts are visible. So Kasyapa muni asked her to wait for some time but she did not want to wait so kasyapa muni said she will give birth to 2 demons & Supreme Lord will descend and kill them. Diti was very sad to hear this & asked for forgiveness at that time Kayapa muni said “ one of the sons [Prahläda] of your son [Hiraëyakaçipu] will be an approved devotee of the Lord, and his fame will be broadcast equally with that of the Personality of Godhead. Hearing that her grandson would be a great devotee and that her sons would be killed by Kãñëa, Diti was highly pleased in mind.

Then she gave birth to twin sons after a full one hundred years of pregnancy. On the birth of the two demons there were many natural disturbances, there were earthquakes along the mountains on the earth, and it appeared that there was fire everywhere. Many inauspicious planets like Saturn appeared, along with comets, meteors and thunderbolts. There blew winds which were most uninviting to the touch, hissing again and again and uprooting gigantic trees. Darkness reigned everywhere, and nothing could be seen. The ocean, rivers and lakes were agitated, and lotuses withered. In the villages she-jackals yelled portentously, vomiting strong fire from their mouths, and jackals and owls & dogs also joined them with their cries. Cows, terrified, yielded blood in place of milk, clouds rained pus,

After birth their bodies became so tall that they seemed to kiss the sky with the crests of their gold crowns. They blocked the view of all directions and while walking shook the earth at every step. Their arms were adorned with brilliant bracelets, and they stood as if covering the sun with their waists, which were bound with excellent and beautiful girdles. Kasyapa, Prajapati, the creator of the living entities, gave his twin sons their names; the one who was born first he named Hiranyaksha, and the one who was first conceived by Diti he named Hiranyakashipu. The elder child, Hiranyakashipu, was unafraid of death from anyone within the three worlds because he received a benediction from Lord Brahma. His younger brother, Hiranyaksha, was always ready to satisfy his elder brother.

This Hiranyaksha in order to satisfy his brother with his mighty mace, he traveled throughout the entire universe conquering everyone. He was so powerful that when he went to the abode of Indra, Indra was hiding for his life. Whichever abode of the demigods he came to, there was no body there; they just ran from him. Ultimately, he went into the ocean to Vibhavari where he met with Varundeva and he fell at Varuna's feet and said, "Please, master, I beg you, fight me, I challenge you to battle." And Varuna looked at this, egoistic demon and he said, "I am too old to fight, but I know who will cut your ego to pieces and make you food for dogs, Vishnu. You find him and fight him." So Hiranyaksha consulted with Nārada, where is Vishnu, and Vishnu had already appeared in this wonderful form of a boar, and He was holding the earth on His tusks.

Hiranyaksha challenged him to battle, but Varahadeva, he simply went ignoring him and Hiranyaksha was calling him a coward, but the Lord exhibited his supreme opulence of renunciation. What does he care for the words of demons?

Lord Varahadeva Killing Hiranyaksha :

So He placed the earth on the ocean and then there was a big fight. Hiranyaksha began to blaspheme the Lord, "Now you will meet your death," and Lord Varahadeva said, "Yes, anyone can talk, but let Me see you fight with Me," and then they began to fight. Hissing indignantly, all his senses shaken by wrath, the demon quickly sprang upon the Lord and dealt Him a blow with his powerful mace. The Lord, however, by moving slightly aside, dodged the violent mace-blow aimed at His breast by the enemy. The Personality of

Godhead now exhibited His anger and rushed to meet the demon, who bit his lip in rage, took up his mace again and began to repeatedly brandish it about. Then with His mace the Lord struck the enemy on the right of his brow, but since the demon was expert in fighting, he protected himself by a maneuver of his own mace. In this way, the demon and the Lord, the Personality of Godhead, struck each other with their huge maces, each enraged and seeking his own victory. After arriving at the place of combat, Brahma, the leader of thousands of sages and transcendentalists, saw the demon, who had attained such unprecedented power that no one could fight with him. Brahma then addressed Narayana, who was assuming the form of a boar for the first time. Brahma continued: My dear Lord, You are infallible. Please kill this sinful demon before the demoniac hour arrives and he presents another formidable approach favorable to him. After hearing the words of Brahmā, the creator, which were free from all sinful purposes and as sweet as nectar, the Lord heartily laughed and accepted his prayer with a glance laden with love.

The Lord, who had appeared from the nostril of Brahmā, sprang and aimed His mace at the chin of His enemy, the demon, who was stalking fearlessly before Him. Struck by the demon's mace, however, the Lord's mace slipped from His hand and looked splendid as it fell down whirling. This was miraculous, for the mace was blazing wonderfully. Even though the demon had an excellent opportunity to strike his unarmed foe without obstruction, he respected the law of single combat, thereby kindling the fury of the Supreme Lord.

As the Lord's mace fell to the ground and a cry of alarm arose from the witnessing crowd of gods and rishis, the Personality of Godhead acknowledged the demon's love of righteousness and therefore invoked His Sudarsana discus. As the discus began to revolve in the Lord's hands and the Lord contended at close quarters with the chief of His Vaikuntha attendants, who had been born as Hiranyaksha, a vile son of Diti, there issued from every direction strange expressions uttered by those who were witnessing from airplanes. They had no knowledge of the Lord's reality, and they cried, "May victory attend You! Pray dispatch him. Play no more with him."

The demon, who had fearful tusks, stared at the Personality of Godhead as though to burn Him. Springing into the air, he aimed his mace at the Lord, the Lord in His boar form, the enjoyer of all sacrificial offerings, playfully knocked down the mace with His left foot, even as it came upon Him with the force of a tempest. The Lord then said: "Take up your weapon and try again, eager as you are to conquer Me." Challenged in these words, the demon aimed his mace at the Lord and once more loudly roared. When the Lord saw the mace flying toward Him, He stood firmly where He was and caught it easily. His valor thus frustrated, the great demon felt humiliated and was put out of countenance. He was reluctant to take back the mace when it was offered by the Personality of Godhead. He now took a trident which was as rapacious as a flaming fire and hurled it against the Lord, the enjoyer of all sacrifices, even as one would use penance for a malevolent purpose against a holy brahmana. Hurling by the mighty demon with all his strength, the flying trident shone

brightly in the sky. The Personality of Godhead, however, tore it to pieces with His discus Sudarsana.

The demon was enraged when his trident was cut to pieces by the discus of the Personality of Godhead. He therefore advanced toward the Lord and, roaring aloud, struck his hard fist against the Lord's broad chest, which bore the mark of Srivatsa. Then he went out of sight. Hiranyaksha being very frustrated, he began to conjure up all sorts of magical, mystical powers. Fierce winds began to blow from all directions, spreading darkness occasioned by dust and hail storms; stones came in volleys from every corner, as if thrown by machine guns.

The sky rained pus, hair, blood, stool, urine and bones. mountains discharged weapons of various kinds, and naked demonesses armed with tridents appeared with their hair hanging loose. The Lord, the personal enjoyer of all sacrifices, now discharged His beloved Sudarsana, which was capable of dispersing the magical forces displayed by the demon. When the demon saw his magic forces dispelled, he once again came into the presence of the Personality of Godhead, Kesava, and, full of rage, tried to embrace Him within his arms to crush Him. But to his great amazement he found the Lord standing outside the circle of his arms. The demon now began to strike the Lord with his hard fists, but Lord Adhoksaja slapped him in the root of the ear. Though struck indifferently by the Lord, the conqueror of all, the demon's body began to wheel. His eyeballs bulged out of their sockets. His arms and legs broken and the hair on his head scattered, he fell down dead, like a gigantic tree uprooted by the wind.

“Sri Varahadeva ki – Jai.”

And Lord Brahmā came down and he saw Hiranyaksha. He did not look like a dead man, although he was dead. He had a beautiful luster emanating from his body, and Lord Brahmā said. “How fortunate to die in the hands of God, how fortunate.” And then all the great saints and sages began to glorify Lord Boar who then after saving the earth, he cast his merciful loving glance upon all his devotees and then he returned to the spiritual world.

Lesson:-

Some of you may ask, how is this possible? Is this some sort of fairytale, a boar holding the earth on his tusks? But what is impossible for the Supreme Personality of Godhead? For the Lord who had created the earth and the suns and all of the planets and all of the oceans and all of the mountains by an insignificant indirect process of his energies, his material energies, what is that that Lord cannot do? Acintya-sakti. The Supreme Lord has inconceivable potencies. He can do anything, anytime, anywhere, and one who has proper intelligence understands this. And therefore, the more wonderful a Lord appears it does not create doubt in a devotee's mind. Rather, it just increases our love and appreciation for his supreme opulence. How can we doubt what God can or cannot do? Krishna is absolute.

3) Narada Muni

Narada Muni has eternal life, unlimited knowledge & unfathomed bliss, & he can travel all over the material & spiritual worlds without restriction. In the Mahabharata his name is mentioned in many places. He is the son & disciple of Lord Brahma, & from him, the disciplic succession in the line of Brahma has been spread. He initiated Vyasadeva, the author of the Vedic literature, & by Vyasadeva, Madhvacarya was initiated & thus the Madhva Sampradaya in which the Gaudiya-sampradaya is also included, has spread all over the universe. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu belonged to this Madhva-sampradaya. Narada Muni has instructed many kings from time immemorial. In the Bhagavatham we see that he instructed Prahalada Maharaja while he was in the womb of his mother, and he instructed Vasudeva, father of Krishna, as well as Maharaja Yudhishthira.

In his previous life, Narada Muni was the son of a maidservant working in a brahmana's house. Narada was a five year old boy. Once in the rainy season, several sages of Lord Vishnu asked and received shelter from the brahmana's house. Narada's mother was assigned to take care of their needs during the four months they stayed. Narada would also help his mother by delivering their food to them and clean their rooms.

Whenever the sages discussed the past times of Lord Krsna, Narada would eagerly hear and wanted to hear more. Once, when he was taking away the sages leftover foods (prasadam that had been offered to Lord Vishnu), Narada asked them if he could eat them. The sages agreed and Narada ate their leftovers and all his karmic punishments had been erased. At the end of the rainy season, the holy men left to other holy places.

When Narada's mother died of a snake bite, he left the brahmin's house to become a sincere devotee of the Lord. He passed through many cities, towns, forests, hills and mountains. After awhile, he felt thirsty and hungry and he soon came upon a lake and after bathing in it and drinking the water, he felt refreshed. He sat under the large banyan tree near the lake and meditated upon the Lord (Supersoul) in his heart.

Narada immediately saw Lord Krsna in his heart and was filled with tremendous happiness. But, the Lord immediately disappeared from his heart leaving him with extreme grief.

Seeing Narada's grief, the Lord said that Narada would not be able to see him for the rest of his life. It was because Narada was incomplete in his devotional service and he would be able to see him when he became completely pure. So, from then on Narada remembered and chanted the Lord's name and glories and at the end of his life, he became a complete pure devotee. The Lord then awarded him a transcendental spiritual body full of knowledge and bliss.

By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Narada travels everywhere without restriction both in the material and spiritual worlds performing devotional service to the Lord. Wherever Narada travels, he always sings God's glories and plays devotional music on his vina. It was given to him by Lord Kṛṣṇa himself.

Narada's message to all of us are. Chant his holy name and become completely free from all anxieties and miseries of this material world.

Influenced by the external energy of Lord Viṣṇu, Prajāpati Dakṣa begot ten thousand sons in the womb of his wife, Pāścājanī. These sons, who were all of the same character and mentality, were known as the Haryaṅgas. Ordered by their father to create more and more population, the Haryaṅgas went west to the place where the River Sindhu (now the Indus) meets the Arabian Sea. In those days this was the site of a holy lake named Nārāyaṇa-saras, where there were many saintly persons. The Haryaṅgas began practicing austerities, penances and meditation, which are the engagements of the highly exalted renounced order of life. However, when Ṣrī Nārada Muni saw these boys engaged in such commendable austerities simply for material creation, he thought it better to release them from this tendency. Nārada Muni described to the boys their ultimate goal of life and advised them not to become ordinary karmīs to beget children. Thus all the sons of Dakṣa became enlightened and left, never to return.

Prajāpati Dakṣa, who was very sad at the loss of his sons, begot one thousand more sons in the womb of his wife, Pāścājanī, and ordered them to increase progeny. These sons, who were named the Savalāṅgas, also engaged in worshiping Lord Viṣṇu to beget children, but Nārada Muni convinced them to become mendicants and not beget children. Foiled twice in his attempts to increase population, Prajāpati Dakṣa became most angry at Nārada Muni and cursed him, saying that in the future he would not be able to stay anywhere. Since Nārada Muni, being fully qualified, was fixed in tolerance, he accepted Dakṣa's curse.

4) Nara Narayana Rishi

The incarnation of Nara - Narayana is worshiped still at Badaré-Narayana, on the range of the Himalayas.

To exhibit His personal way of austerity and penance, Lord Krishna appeared in twin forms as Narayana and Nara in the womb of Murti, the wife of Dharma and the daughter of Daksha. Celestial beauties, the companions of Cupid, went to try to break His vows, but they were unsuccessful, for they saw that many beauties like them were emanating from Him, the Personality of Godhead. Badarikasrama in the Himalayas, the abode of the Nara-Narayana sages, is a great place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Even up to the present, hundreds and thousands of pious Hindus go to pay respects to the incarnation of Godhead Nara-Narayana. It appears that even five thousand years ago this holy place was being visited by such a holy being as Uddhava, and even at that time the place was known to be very, very old. On the occasion of the appearance of Nara-Narayana, the entire world was full of joy. Everyone's mind became tranquil, and thus in all directions the air, the rivers and the mountains became pleasant. In the heavenly planets, bands began to play, and they showered flowers from the sky. The pacified sages chanted Vedic prayers, the denizens of heaven known as the Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang, the beautiful damsels of the heavenly planets danced, and in this way, at the time of the appearance of Nara-Narayana, all signs of good fortune were visible. Just at that time, great demigods like Brahmā also offered their respectful prayers.

That Nara-Narayana Āñi, who is a partial expansion of Kāñëa, has now appeared in the dynasties of Yadu and Kuru, in the forms of Kāñëa and Arjuna respectively, to mitigate the burden of the world. Narayana is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Nara is a part of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana. Thus the energy and the energetic together are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Maitreya informed Vidura that Nara, the portion of Narayana, had appeared in the family of the Kurus and that Narayana, the plenary expansion of Kāñëa, had come as Kāñëa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, with the purpose of delivering suffering humanity from the pangs of material burdens. In other words, Narayana Āñi was now present in the world in the forms of Kāñëa and Arjuna.

Nara-Narayana Āñi, who is perfectly peaceful and is the best of sages, was born as the son of Dharma and his wife Mūr̥ti, the daughter of Dakñā. Nara-Narayana Āñi taught the devotional service of the Lord, by which material work ceases, and He Himself perfectly practiced this knowledge. He is living even today, His lotus feet served by the greatest of saintly persons.

King Indra became fearful, thinking that Nara-Narayana Āñi would become very powerful by His severe penances and seize Indra's heavenly kingdom. Thus Indra, not knowing the transcendental glories of the incarnation of the Lord, sent Cupid and his associates to the

Lord's residence in Badarikāçrama. As the charming breezes of spring created a most sensuous atmosphere, Cupid himself attacked the Lord with arrows in the form of the irresistible glances of beautiful women. The primeval Lord, understanding the offense committed by Indra, did not become proud. Instead He spoke laughingly as follows to Cupid and his followers, who were trembling before Him: "Do not fear, O mighty Madana, O wind-god and wives of the demigods. Rather, please accept these gifts I am offering you and kindly sanctify My āçrama by your presence."

My dear King Nimi, when Nara-Narayana Āñi thus spoke, eradicating the fear of the demigods, they bowed their heads with shame and addressed the Lord as follows, to invoke His compassion: Our dear Lord, You are always transcendental, beyond the reach of illusion, and therefore You are forever changeless. Your causeless compassion toward us, despite our great offense, is not at all unusual in You, since innumerable great sages who are self-satisfied and free from anger and false pride bow down humbly at Your lotus feet.

The demigods place many obstacles on the path of those who worship You to transcend the temporary abodes of the demigods and reach Your supreme abode. Those who offer the demigods their assigned shares in sacrificial performances encounter no such obstacles. But because You are the direct protector of Your devotee, he is able to step over the head of whatever obstacle the demigods place before him.

While the demigods were thus praising the Supreme Lord, the all-powerful Lord suddenly manifested before their eyes many women, who were astonishingly gorgeous, decorated with fine clothes and ornaments, and all faithfully engaging in the Lord's service.

When the followers of the demigods gazed upon the fascinating mystic beauty of the women created by Nara-Narayana Āñi and smelled the fragrance of their bodies, the minds of these followers became bewildered. Indeed, upon seeing the beauty and magnificence of such women, the representatives of the demigods were completely diminished in their own opulence.

The Supreme Lord of lords then smiled slightly and told the representatives of heaven, who were bowing down before Him, "Please choose one of these women, whomever you find suitable for you. She will become the ornament of the heavenly planets."

Vibrating the sacred syllable oà, the servants of the demigods selected Urvaçé, the best of the Apsaräs. Placing her in front of them out of respect, they returned to the heavenly planets.

The servants of the demigods reached the assembly of Indra, and thus, while all the residents of the three heavens listened, they explained to Indra the supreme power of Narayana. When Indra heard of Nara-Narayana Āñi and became aware of his offense, he was both frightened and astonished.

5) Lord Kapila

Commanded by Lord Brahmā to beget children in the worlds, the worshipful Kardama Muni practiced penance on the bank of the river Sarasvatī for a period of ten thousand years.

Then, in the Satya-yuga, the lotus-eyed Supreme Personality of Godhead, being pleased, showed Himself to that Kardama Muni and displayed His transcendental form, which can be understood only through the Vedas. Kardama Muni saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is free from material contamination, in His eternal form, effulgent like the sun, wearing a garland of white lotuses and water lilies. The Lord was clad in spotless yellow silk, and His lotus face was fringed with slick dark locks of curly hair. Adorned with a crown and earrings, He held His characteristic conch, disc and mace in three of His hands and a white lily in the fourth. He glanced about in a happy, smiling mood whose sight captivates the hearts of all devotees. A golden streak on His chest, the famous Kaustubha gem suspended from His neck, He stood in the air with His lotus feet placed on the shoulders of Garuḍa. When Kardama Muni actually realized the Supreme Personality of Godhead in person, he was greatly satisfied because his transcendental desire was fulfilled. He fell on the ground with his head bowed to offer obeisances unto the lotus feet of the Lord. His heart naturally full of love of God, with folded hands he satisfied the Lord with prayers. Then the Supreme Lord said The Emperor Svāyambhuva Manu, the son of Lord Brahmā, who is well known for his righteous acts and rules over the earth with its seven oceans. will come here day after tomorrow, with his queen, Śatarūpā, wishing to see you. He has a grown-up daughter whose eyes are black. She is ready for marriage, and she has good character and all good qualities. She is also searching for a good husband. My dear sir, her parents will come to see you, who are exactly suitable for her, just to deliver their daughter as your wife. That princess, O holy sage, will be just the type you have been thinking of in your heart for all these long years. She will soon be yours and will serve you to your heart's content. She will bring forth nine daughters from the seed sown in her by you, and through the daughters you beget, the sages will duly beget children. With your heart cleansed by properly carrying out My command, resigning to Me the fruits of all your acts, you will finally attain to Me. O great sage, I shall manifest My own plenary portion through your wife, Devahūti, along with your nine daughters, and I shall instruct her in the system of philosophy that deals with the ultimate principles or categories. Thus having spoken to Kardama Muni, the Lord, departed from that lake called Bindu-sarovara, which was encircled by the river Sarasvatī. While the sage stood looking on, the Lord left by the pathway leading to Vaikuṅṭha, a path extolled by all great liberated souls. The sage stood listening as the hymns forming the basis of the Sāma Veda were vibrated by the flapping wings of the Lord's carrier, Garuḍa.

Then, after the departure of the Lord, the worshipful sage Kardama stayed on the bank of Bindu-sarovara, awaiting the time of which the Lord had spoken. Svāyambhuva Manu, with

his wife, mounted his chariot, which was decorated with golden ornaments. Placing his daughter on it with them, he began traveling all over the earth. They reached the hermitage of the sage, who had just completed his vows of austerity on the very day foretold by the Lord.

The holy Lake Bindu-sarovara, flooded by the waters of the river Sarasvatī, was resorted to by hosts of eminent sages. Its holy water was not only auspicious but as sweet as nectar. It was called Bindu-sarovara because drops of tears had fallen there from the eyes of the Lord, who was overwhelmed by extreme compassion for the sage who had sought His protection.

The shore of the lake was surrounded by clusters of pious trees and creepers, rich in fruits and flowers of all seasons, that afforded shelter to pious animals and birds, which uttered various cries. It was adorned by the beauty of groves of forest trees. The area resounded with the notes of overjoyed birds. Intoxicated bees wandered there, intoxicated peacocks proudly danced, and merry cuckoos called one another. Lake Bindu-sarovara was adorned by flowering trees such as kadamba, campaka, aśoka, karañja, bakula, āsana, kunda, mandāra, kuṭaja and young mango trees. The air was filled with the pleasing notes of kāraṇḍava ducks, plavas, swans, ospreys, waterfowl, cranes, cakravākas and cakoras. Its shores abounded with deer, boars, porcupines, gavayas, elephants, baboons, lions, monkeys, mongooses and musk deer. Entering that most sacred spot with his daughter and going near the sage, the first monarch, Svāyambhuva Manu, saw the sage sitting in his hermitage, having just propitiated the sacred fire by pouring oblations into it. His body shone most brilliantly; though he had engaged in austere penance for a long time, he was not emaciated, for the Lord had cast His affectionate sidelong glance upon him and he had also heard the nectar flowing from the moonlike words of the Lord. The sage was tall, his eyes were large, like the petals of a lotus, and he had matted locks on his head. He was clad in rags. Svāyambhuva Manu approached and saw him to be somewhat soiled, like an unpolished gem. Seeing that the monarch had come to his hermitage and was bowing before him, the sage greeted him with benediction and received him with due honor. After receiving the sage's attention, the King sat down and was silent. Recalling the instructions of the Lord, Kardama glorified the King and asked

the purpose for which he had come there.

Manu replied: To expand himself in Vedic knowledge, Lord Brahmā, the personified Veda, from his face created you, the brāhmaṇas, who are full of austerity, knowledge and mystic power and are averse to sense gratification.

Svayambhuva Manu said for the protection of the brāhmaṇas, the thousand-legged Supreme Being created us, the kṣatriyas, from His thousand arms. Hence the brāhmaṇas are said to be His heart and the kṣatriyas His arms. That is why the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas protect each other, as well as themselves; and the Lord Himself, who is both the cause and effect and is yet immutable, protects them through each other. Then continued saying My

daughter is the sister of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda. She is seeking a suitable husband in terms of age, character and good qualities.

The moment she heard from the sage Nārada of your noble character, learning, beautiful appearance, youth and other virtues, she fixed her mind upon you. Therefore please accept her, O chief of the brāhmaṇas, for I offer her with faith and she is in every respect fit to be your wife and take charge of your household duties.

The great sage replied: Certainly I have a desire to marry, and your daughter has not yet married or given her word to anyone. Therefore our marriage according to the Vedic system can take place.

After having unmistakably known the decision of the Queen, as well as that of Devahūti, the Emperor most gladly gave his daughter to the sage, whose host of virtues was equaled by hers.

Empress Śatarūpā lovingly gave most valuable presents, suitable for the occasion, such as jewelry, clothes and household articles, in dowry to the bride and bridegroom. Thus relieved of his responsibility by handing over his daughter to a suitable man, Svāyambhuva Manu, his mind agitated by feelings of separation, embraced his affectionate daughter with both his arms.

The Emperor was unable to bear the separation of his daughter. Therefore tears poured from his eyes again and again, drenching his daughter's head as he cried, "My dear mother! My dear daughter!" After asking and obtaining the great sage's permission to leave, the monarch mounted his chariot with his wife and started for his capital.

After the departure of her parents, the chaste woman Devahūti, who could understand the desires of her husband, served him constantly with great love. Devahūti served her husband with intimacy and great respect, with control of the senses, with love and with sweet words. Working sanely and diligently, she pleased her very powerful husband, giving up all lust, pride, envy, greed, sinful activities and vanity. The daughter of Manu, who was fully devoted to her husband, looked upon him as greater even than providence. Thus she expected great blessings from him. Having served him for a long time, she grew weak and emaciated due to her religious observances. Seeing her condition, Kardama, the foremost of celestial sages, was overcome with compassion and spoke to her in a voice choked with great love. Kardama Muni said: O respectful daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu, today I am very much pleased with you for your great devotion and most excellent loving service. Since the body is so dear to embodied beings, I am astonished that you have neglected your own body to use it on my behalf.

Kardama Muni continued: I have achieved the blessings of the Lord in discharging my own religious life of austerity, meditation and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although you have not yet experienced these achievements, which are free from fear and lamentation, I shall offer

them all to you because you are engaged in my service. Now just look at them. I am giving you the transcendental vision to see how nice they are.

Kardama Muni continued: What is the use of enjoyments other than the Lord's grace? All material achievements are subject to be annihilated simply by a movement of the eyebrows of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By your principles of devotion to your husband, you have achieved and can enjoy transcendental gifts very rarely obtained by persons proud of aristocracy and material possessions. Upon hearing the speaking of her husband, who excelled in knowledge of all kinds of transcendental science, innocent Devahūti was very satisfied. Her smiling face shining with a slightly bashful glance, she spoke in a choked voice because of great humility and love.

Śrī Devahūti said: My dear husband, O best of brāhmaṇas, I know that you have achieved perfection and are the master of all the infallible mystic powers because you are under the protection of yoga-māyā, the transcendental nature. And she reminded him that they should have children. And requested him to make arrangements for the same.

to please his beloved wife, the sage Kardama exercised his yogic power and instantly produced an aerial mansion that could travel at his will.

It was a wonderful structure, bedecked with all sorts of jewels, adorned with pillars of precious stones, and capable of yielding whatever one desired. It was equipped with every form of furniture and wealth, which tended to increase in the course of time. The castle was fully equipped with all necessary paraphernalia, and it was pleasing in all seasons. It was decorated all around with flags, festoons and artistic work of variegated colors. It was further embellished with wreaths of charming flowers that attracted sweetly humming bees and with tapestries of linen, silk and various other fabrics. The palace looked charming, with beds, couches, fans and seats, all separately arranged in seven stories. Its beauty was enhanced by artistic engravings here and there on the walls. The floor was of emerald, with coral daises.

The palace was very beautiful, with its coral thresholds at the entrances and its doors bedecked with diamonds. Gold pinnacles crowned its domes of sapphire. With the choicest rubies set in its diamond walls, it appeared as though possessed of eyes. It was furnished with wonderful canopies and greatly valuable gates of gold. Here and there in that palace were multitudes of live swans and pigeons, as well as artificial swans and pigeons so lifelike that the real swans rose above them again and again, thinking them live birds like themselves. Thus the palace vibrated with the sounds of these birds.

The castle had pleasure grounds, resting chambers, bedrooms and inner and outer yards designed with an eye to comfort. All this caused astonishment to the sage himself.

When he saw Devahūti looking at the gigantic opulent palace with a displeased heart, Kardama Muni could understand her feelings because he could study the heart of anyone. Thus he personally addressed his wife as follows. My dear Devahūti, you look very much

afraid. First bathe in Lake Bindu-sarovara, created by Lord Viṣṇu Himself, which can grant all the desires of a human being, and then mount this airplane.

The lotus-eyed Devahūti accepted the order of her husband. Because of her dirty dress and the locks of matted hair on her head, she did not look very attractive. Her body was coated with a thick layer of dirt. She dove, however, into the lake, which contained the sacred waters of the Sarasvatī.

In a house inside the lake she saw one thousand girls, all in the prime of youth and fragrant like lotuses. Seeing her, the damsels suddenly rose and said with folded hands, “We are your maidservants. Tell us what we can do for you.” The girls, being very respectful to Devahūti, brought her forth, and after bathing her with valuable oils and ointments, they gave her fine, new, spotless cloth to cover her body. They then decorated her with very excellent and valuable jewels, which shone brightly. Next they offered her food containing all good qualities, and a sweet inebriating drink called āsavam. Then in a mirror she beheld her own reflection. Her body was completely freed from all dirt, and she was adorned with a garland. Dressed in unsullied robes and decorated with auspicious marks of tilaka, she was served very respectfully by the maids.

Her entire body, including her head, was completely bathed, and she was decorated all over with ornaments. She wore a special necklace with a locket. There were bangles on her wrists and tinkling anklets of gold about her ankles. About her hips she wore a girdle of gold, set with numerous jewels, and she was further adorned with a precious pearl necklace and auspicious substances.

Her countenance shone, with beautiful teeth and charming eyebrows. Her eyes, distinguished by lovely moist corners, defeated the beauty of lotus buds. Her face was surrounded by dark curling tresses. When she thought of her great husband, the best of the sages, Kardama Muni, who was very dear to her, she, along with all the maidservants, at once appeared where he was.

She was amazed to find herself surrounded by a thousand maids in the presence of her husband and to witness his yogic power. The sage could see that Devahūti had washed herself clean and was shining forth as though no longer his former wife. She had regained her own original beauty as the daughter of a prince. Dressed in excellent robes, she was waited upon by a thousand Gandharva girls. O destroyer of the enemy, his fondness for her grew, and he placed her on the aerial mansion.

Though seemingly attached to his beloved consort while served by the Gandharva girls, the sage did not lose his glory, which was mastery over his self. In the aerial mansion, Kardama Muni with his consort shone as charmingly as the moon in the midst of the stars in the sky, which causes rows of lilies to open in ponds at night. In that aerial mansion he traveled to the pleasure valleys of Mount Meru, which were rendered all the more beautiful by cool, gentle, fragrant breezes that stimulated passion. In these valleys, the treasurer of the gods, Kuvera, surrounded by beautiful women and praised by the Siddhas, generally enjoys

pleasure. Kardama Muni also, surrounded by the beautiful damsels and his wife, went there and enjoyed for many, many years.

Satisfied by his wife, he enjoyed in that aerial mansion not only on Mount Meru but in different gardens known as Vaiśrambhaka, Surasana, Nandana, Puṣpabhadra and Caitrarathya, and by the Mānasa-sarovara Lake. He traveled in that way through the various planets, as the air passes uncontrolled in every direction. Coursing through the air in that great and splendid aerial mansion, which could fly at his will, he surpassed even the demigods.

What is difficult to achieve for determined men who have taken refuge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's lotus feet? His feet are the source of sacred rivers like the Ganges, which put an end to the dangers of mundane life. After showing his wife the globe of the universe and its different arrangements, full of many wonders, the great yogī Kardama Muni returned to his own hermitage.

After coming back to his hermitage, they gave birth to 9 daughters. Then Kardama muni was to leave to go to forest. When she saw her husband about to leave home, she smiled externally, but at heart she was agitated and distressed. Śrī Devahūti said: My lord, you have fulfilled all the promises you gave me, yet because I am your surrendered soul, you should give me fearlessness too.

My dear brāhmaṇa, as far as your daughters are concerned, they will find their own suitable husbands and go away to their respective homes. But who will give me solace after your departure as a sannyāsī?

The sage said: Do not be disappointed with yourself, O princess. You are actually praiseworthy. The infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead will shortly enter your womb as your son.

You have undertaken sacred vows. God will bless you. Hence you should worship the Lord with great faith, through sensory control, religious observances, austerities and gifts of your money in charity. The Personality of Godhead, being worshiped by you, will spread my name and fame. He will vanquish the knot of your heart by becoming your son and teaching knowledge of Brahman.

Devahūti was fully faithful and respectful toward the direction of her husband, Kardama, who was one of the Prajāpatis, or generators of human beings in the universe. O great sage, she thus began to worship the master of the universe, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in everyone's heart.

After many, many years, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared in Devahūti just as fire comes from wood in a sacrifice. At the time of His descent on earth, demigods in the form of raining clouds sounded musical instruments in the sky. The celestial musicians, the Gandharvas, sang the glories of the Lord, while celestial dancing girls known as Apsarās danced in joyful ecstasy.

At the time of the Lord's appearance, the demigods flying freely in the sky showered flowers. All the directions, all the waters and everyone's mind became very satisfied. Brahmā, , went along with Marīci and other sages to the place of Kardama's hermitage, which was surrounded by the river Sarasvatī.

Lord Brahmā said: My dear son Kardama, since you have completely accepted my instructions without duplicity, showing them proper respect, you have worshiped me properly. Then he praised the 9 daughters & told Kardama muni to get them married to 9 sages so that they will create progeny. He told devahuti that supreme Lord who has appeared in her womb will cut off all the knots of your ignorance and doubt. Then He will travel all over the world.

Ans said Your son will be the head of all the perfected souls. He will be approved by the ācāryas expert in disseminating real knowledge, and among the people He will be celebrated by the name Kapila. As the son of Devahūti, He will increase your fame. “ And Lord Brahma departed .

after the departure of Brahmā, Kardama Muni, having been ordered by Brahmā, handed over his nine daughters, as instructed, to the nine great sages who created the population of the world.

Kardama Muni handed over his daughter

Kalā to Marīci

Anasūyā, to Atri.

Śraddhā to Aṅgirā,

Havirbhū to Pulastya.

Gati to Pulaha

Kriyā to Kratu,

Khyāti to Bhṛgu,

Arundhatī to Vasiṣṭha.

Śānti to Atharvā

Thus he got the foremost brāhmaṇas married, and he maintained them along with their wives.

Then kardama muni approached Kapila Muni in a secluded place, offered obeisances and spoke as follows. You, my dear Lord, who are always increasing the honor of Your devotees, have descended in my home just to fulfill Your word and disseminate the process of real knowledge.

Today I have something to ask from You, who are the Lord of all living entities. Since I have now been liberated by You from my debts to my father, and since all my desires are fulfilled, I wish to accept the order of an itinerant mendicant. Renouncing this family life, I wish to wander about, free from lamentation, thinking always of You in my heart.

My appearance in this world is especially to explain the philosophy of Sāṅkhya, Now, being sanctioned by Me, go as you desire, surrendering all your activities to Me. Conquering insurmountable death, worship Me for eternal life. I shall also describe this sublime knowledge, which is the door to spiritual life, to My mother, so that she also can attain perfection and self-realization, ending all reactions to fruitive activities. Thus she also will be freed from all material fear. Then Kardama muni circumambulated Him, and with a good, pacified mind he at once left for the forest & ultimately went back to godhead.

When Kardama left for the forest, Lord Kapila stayed on the strand of the Bindu-sarovara to please His mother, Devahūti & instructed her in the science of devotional service. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Kapila, after instructing His beloved mother, took permission from her and left His home, His mission having been fulfilled. As instructed by her son, Devahūti also began to practice bhakti-yoga in that very āśrama. She practiced samādhi in the house of Kardama Muni, which was so beautifully decorated with flowers that it was considered the flower crown of the river Sarasvatī. She began to bathe three times daily, and thus her curling black hair gradually became gray. Due to austerity, her body gradually became thin, and she wore old garments.

She utilized every moment of her day in the process of bhakti. Always thinking of Krishna, worshipping His form as a deity, hearing His glories, associating with His devotees, chanting His names. by following the principles instructed by Kapila, Devahūti soon became liberated from material bondage and achieved the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as Supersoul, without difficulty. The place where Devahūti achieved her perfection, my dear Vidura, is understood to be a most sacred spot. It is known all over the three worlds as Siddhapada.

The great sage Kapila, the Personality of Godhead, left His father's hermitage with the permission of His mother and went towards the northeast.

While He was passing in the northern direction, all the celestial denizens known as Cāraṇas and Gandharvas, as well as the munis and the damsels of the heavenly planets, prayed and offered Him all respects. The ocean offered Him oblations and a place of residence. Even now Kapila Muni is staying there in trance for the deliverance of the conditioned souls in the three worlds, and all the ācāryas, or great teachers, of the system of Sāṅkhya philosophy are worshipping Him.

Phalasruti: anyone who hears or reads this narration becomes a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is carried by Garuḍa, and he thereafter enters into the abode of the Supreme Lord to engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

Essence of Kapila muni's teachings: combination of everything that He has explained is that we must associate with devotees of the Lord, we must hear the glories of the Lord, chant the names of the Lord and develop pure unalloying devotion. Because that is the purpose of this entire creation to bring independent rebellious souls again back to their same consciousness of becoming the loving surrendered servants of Lord Sri Krishna

6) Lord Dattatreya

Anasūyā, the wife of Atri Muni, gave birth to three very famous sons — Soma, Dattātreya and Durvāsā — who were partial representations of Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā. Soma was a partial representation of Lord Brahmā, Dattātreya was a partial representation of Lord Viṣṇu, and Durvāsā was a partial representation of Lord Śiva.

When Lord Brahmā ordered Atri Muni to create generations after marrying Anasūyā, Atri Muni and his wife went to perform severe austerities in the valley of the mountain known as Ṛkṣa. In that mountain valley flows a river named Nirvindhya. On the bank of the river are many aśoka trees and other plants full of palāśa flowers, and there is always the sweet sound of water flowing from a waterfall. The husband and wife reached that beautiful place.

There the great sage concentrated his mind by the yogic breathing exercises, and thereby controlling all attachment, he remained standing on one leg only, eating nothing but air, and stood there on one leg for one hundred years. He was thinking: May the Lord of the universe, of whom I have taken shelter, kindly be pleased to offer me a son exactly like Him.

While Atri Muni was engaged in these severe austerities, a blazing fire came out of his head by virtue of his breathing exercise, and that fire was seen by the three principal deities of the three worlds. At that time, the three deities approached the hermitage of Atri Muni, accompanied by the denizens of the heavenly planets, such as the celestial beauties, the Gandharvas, the Siddhas, the Vidyādhars and the Nāgas. Thus they entered the āśrama of the great sage, who had become famous by his austerities. The sage was standing on one leg, but as soon as he saw that the three deities had appeared before him, he was so pleased to see them all together that despite great difficulty he approached them on one leg. Thereafter he began to offer prayers to the three deities, who were seated on different carriers — a bull, a swan and Garuda — and who held in their hands a drum, kuśa grass and a discus. The sage offered them his respects by falling down like a stick. Atri Muni was greatly pleased to see that the three devas were gracious towards him. His eyes were dazzled by the effulgence of their bodies, and therefore he closed his eyes for the time being.

But since his heart was already attracted by the deities, somehow or other he gathered his senses, and with folded hands and sweet words he began to offer prayers to the predominating deities of the universe. The great sage Atri said: O Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, you have divided yourself into three bodies by accepting the three modes of material nature, as you do in every millennium for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation. I offer my respectful obeisances unto all of you and beg to inquire whom of you three I have called by my prayer.

I called for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, desiring a son like Him, and I thought of Him only. But although He is far beyond the mental speculation of man, all three of you

have come here. Kindly let me know how you have come, for I am greatly bewildered about this.

Upon hearing Atri Muni speak in that way, the three great deities smiled, and they replied in the following sweet words. The three deities told Atri Muni: Dear brāhmaṇa, you are perfect in your determination, and therefore as you have decided, so it will happen; it will not happen otherwise. We are all the same person upon whom you were meditating, and therefore we have all come to you. You will have sons who will represent a partial manifestation of our potency, and because we desire all good fortune for you, those sons will glorify your reputation throughout the world. Thus, while the couple looked on, the three deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara disappeared from that place after bestowing upon Atri Muni the benediction.

Thereafter, from the partial representation of Brahmā, the moon-god was born of them; from the partial representation of Viṣṇu, the great mystic Dattātreya was born; and from the partial representation of Śaṅkara [Lord Śiva], Durvāsā was born.