

1. Sravanam Story-Maharaj Parikshit

(1) Śravaṇam. Hearing of the holy name of the Lord (śravaṇam) is the beginning of devotional service. When the chanting of the holy name, form, qualities and paraphernalia is heard from the mouth of a pure devotee, his hearing and chanting are very pleasing. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is full of transcendental chanting of the holy name, and therefore the chanting and hearing of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are transcendently full of mellows. The transcendental holy name of the Lord may be heard and chanted accordingly to the attraction of the devotee. The Lord has innumerable forms and names, and devotees may meditate upon a particular form and chant the holy name according to his attraction. Because Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate form of the Lord (kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam), it is best to hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, form and pastimes from a realized devotee who is particularly attracted by the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, great devotees like Śukadeva Gosvāmī have specifically described Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name, form and qualities. Unless one hears about the holy name, form and qualities of the Lord, one cannot clearly understand the other processes of devotional service.

Maharaj Parikshit was the son of Abhimanyu, who was the son of Arjuna. Arjuna was one of the five Pandavas and was the best friend of Krishna. During the battle of Kurukshetra, Parikshit was still in the womb of his mother, Uttara. At the end of the war, Asvatthama, the son of Dronacarya, tried to kill the child in the womb by throwing a weapon called brahmastra.

The Supreme Lord Krishna saved Parikshit by entering into the womb of his mother. After the Pandavas left this material world, Maharaj Parikshit became the ruler of the entire planet. He was a just king. There were no social problems, no crime, no poverty and no disease in his kingdom. Once when Maharaj Parikshit went into the forest for hunting, he became very tired and thirsty. He entered the hermitage of sage Shamika Rishi who was meditating at that time. The king again and again requested for water but the rishi deep in meditation did not hear him. This enraged the king and he completely lost his intelligence. In his anger, the king picked up a dead snake and placed it on the shoulder of the sage. The rishi's son Shringi came to know about this incident and angrily cursed the king. He cursed that on the seventh day from that day, a snake-bird would bite Parikshit Maharaj. When Shamika Rishi came to know about the curse, he chastised his son. When king Parikshit received the news of his death, he accepted this curse as good news. Maharaj Parikshit was a great devotee of the Supreme Lord Krishna. He had full faith in the protection of the Lord. He did not try to make any arrangements to protect himself. Instead he immediately gave up his royal duties and went to the banks of the Ganges.

He knew that one who engages in hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord gets liberated from the cycle of birth and death. He desired to associate with great saintly devotees who could speak to him about Krishna. By the arrangement of the Lord, many great saintly devotees also came to the banks of the river Ganges. The great sage Sukhdev Goswami, the son of Vyasadev appeared on the scene. Maharaj Parikshit accepted him as his spiritual master and requested him to narrate the transcendental, glorious pastimes of the Lord.

Being very pleased by the submissive and devotional attitude of the king, Sukhdev Goswami then narrated the nectarean pastimes of the Lord and His various expansions. These are recalled in the book Srimad Bhagavatam. Maharaj Parikshit was completely absorbed in hearing about the transcendental

pastimes of the Lord. Anyone who regularly hears Hari Katha becomes eligible to get liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

After hearing the katha for seven days and nights without sleeping, eating or drinking, Parikshit Maharaj fixed his mind on the Lord and meditated on Him. The snake-bird Takshaka bit the king. The body of the king immediately burst into flames and burned to ashes due to the fire of the snake-bird's poison. Parikshit Maharaj went back home, back to Godhead by perfecting his life by hearing the transcendental glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thus all of us can perfect our life by regularly hearing and reading about the beautiful and transcendental pastimes of Lord Krishna and His different avatars.

2. Kirtanam Story-Sukadeva Goswami

(2) Kirtanam. Chanting of the holy name, is the second item in the consecutive order. It is recommended that such chanting be performed very loudly. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Nārada Muni says that without shame he began traveling all over the world, chanting the holy name of the Lord. Similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has advised:

A devotee can very peacefully chant the holy name of the Lord by behaving more humbly than the grass, being tolerant like a tree and offering respects to everyone, without expecting honor from anyone else. Such qualifications make it easier to chant the holy name of the Lord. The process of transcendental chanting can be easily performed by anyone. Even if one is physically unfit, classified lower than others, devoid of material qualifications or not at all elevated in terms of pious activities, the chanting of the holy name is beneficial.

Therefore, even if one is able to perform other processes of devotional service, one must adopt the chanting of the holy name as the principal method of advancing in spiritual life. One should adhere seriously to the chanting of the holy name as recommended in the scriptures: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

In his previous life Sukadeva Goswami was a parrot. But he was not any ordinary parrot. He was the personal parrot of Srimati Radharani. He used to take messages from Her to Krishna. When Srimati Radharani was about to leave this world back to the spiritual world, She told her parrot, called Suka, to stay here. But the parrot did not want to stay here without Her. Then Srimati Radharani assured her wherever the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord are being narrated, you will not feel separation from Me.

Thus the parrot Suka started looking out for a place where Hari Katha was going on. He finally reached Kailash, the place where Lord Shiva and Parvati live. Lord Shiva was reciting Srimad Bhagavatam to Parvati. The Parrot Suka hid himself in the green leaves of the tree under which Lord Shiva was sitting and started hearing the nectarean pastimes of his beloved lord.

Lord Shiva was completely absorbed in reciting Srimad Bhagavatam. Every few minutes Parvati would make some sounds like, Hmmm... so that Lord Shiva would know that she was still listening. However after sometime she went to sleep and stopped making any sound. Then Suka, who was hiding behind the leaves, started making sound in the same way as Parvati. When the Srimad Bhagavatam was

about to end Parvati woke up. Lord Shiva wanted to know how she liked the narration. Parvati begged forgiveness from the Lord and admitted that she had gone off to sleep. Lord Shiva was amazed and asked her who was making that sound. When she said that she did not know, Lord Shiva started looking all around to see if someone was hiding and hearing these pastimes. He finally spotted the parrot hiding in the tree. Lord Shiva started thinking that the parrot was not qualified to hear Srimad Bhagavatam. If an unqualified person hears these transcendental narrations there will be lots of disturbances therefore he wanted to kill the parrot immediately. Lord Shiva took his trident and ran towards the parrot. Seeing Lord Shiva, Suka started flying away, Lord Shiva followed him. Finally the parrot reached the hermitage of Srila Vyasadev. Srila Vyasadev was narrating Srimad Bhagavatam to his wife, Bitika. While hearing his wife yawned. At that point the parrot entered into her open mouth. Lord Shiva also reached the hermitage. He inquired from Vyasadev if he had seen the parrot.

Then Lord Shiva narrated him the whole incident. Lord Shiva told Srila Vyasadev that anyone who hears Srimad Bhagavatam gets free from the cycle of birth and death and becomes eternal. Srila Vyasadev commented that since the parrot had become eternal by hearing Srimad Bhagavatam, he could not be killed. So Lord Shiva went away. The Parrot, Suka, inside the body of Bitika took the form of a baby within her womb. However He did not come out of the womb at the usual time. Instead of nine month he stayed in the womb for 16 years. This boy became famous as Sukadeva Goswami. He was the one who narrated Srimad Bhagavatam to Maharaj Parikshit.

3. Vishnu Smaranam Story-Prahalad Maharaj

(3) Smaraṇam. After one regularly performs the processes of hearing and chanting and after the core of one's heart is cleansed, smaraṇam, remembering, is recommended.

According to different relationships with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there are varieties of nāmānukīrtanam, chanting of the holy name, and thus according to different relationships and mellow there are five kinds of remembering. These are as follows: (a) conducting research into the worship of a particular form of the Lord, (b) concentrating the mind on one subject and withdrawing the mind's activities of thinking, feeling and willing from all other subjects, (c) concentrating upon a particular form of the Lord (this is called meditation), (d) concentrating one's mind continuously on the form of the Lord (this is called dhruvānusmṛti, or perfect meditation), and (e) awakening a likening for concentration upon a particular form (this is called samādhi, or trance). Mental concentration upon particular pastimes of the Lord in particular circumstances is also called remembrance. Therefore samādhi, trance, can be possible in five different ways in terms of one's relationship. Specifically, the trance of devotees on the stage of neutrality is called mental concentration.

Prahalad was the son of the great demonic king Hiranyakashipu. When Hiranyakashipu went to perform austerities in order to please Lord Brahma, the demigods stole his wife, Kayadhu. At that time she was pregnant. The demigods wanted to kill the child in the womb and thus destroy the dynasty of Hiranyakashipu.

However, Narada Muni prevented them from committing such a sinful act. He told them that a great devotee of the Lord was going to take birth from her womb. Narada Muni gave shelter to Kayadhu in his ashram and allowed her to stay there until Hiranyakashipu came back from the forest.

Everyday she would listen to the narrations of the pastimes of the Lord from the lotus mouth of Narada Muni. However, she would go to sleep while hearing the narrations. But her son, Prahalad who was

conscious within the womb would attentively hear these transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord; he developed great devotion for Lord Krishna.

Finally Hiranyakashipu came back from the forest after receiving the great boons from Lord Brahma. Narada Muni took Kayadhu back to her husband. By this time Prahalad had also taken birth and was a small child. He sent him to the ashram of Sanda and Amarka to get trained as a demonic king. Sanda and Amarka tried to teach various demoniac principles to Prahalad. He was a pure devotee of the Lord and was always absorbed in hearing and chanting His transcendental glories.

When Hiranyakashipu came to know that his son was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, he became very angry. He ordered Prahalad to stop worshipping Lord Vishnu. However, Prahalad refused to follow the order of Hiranyakashipu. This made Hiranyakashipu furious and he tried to kill Prahalad by various means. But every time Prahalad was saved. Whenever he was in danger, Prahalad simply fixed his mind on the Lord and chanted His name. Hiranyakashipu became wild with anger. He demanded to know where this Lord was. Prahalad said He is everywhere. Hiranyakashipu then shouted that he would kill this Krishna. He swung his sword, striking a nearby pillar. When the pillar broke, a ferocious form of the Lord, half-man and half-lion, appeared. This was Lord Narasimha dev coming to protect His devotee.

Lord Narasimha dev fought with Hiranyakashipu and when the time was right, He took him onto His lap and killed him. Through all the trails his father had put him through; Prahalad had simply remembered the Lord, not fearing anything.

4. Pada Sevanam Story-Laxmidevi

(4) pāda-sevanam. According to one's taste and strength, hearing, chanting and remembrance may be followed by pāda-sevanam. One obtains the perfection of remembering when one constantly thinks of the lotus feet of the Lord. Being intensely attached to thinking of the Lord's lotus feet is called pāda-sevanam. When one is particularly adherent to the process of pāda-sevanam, this process gradually includes other processes, such as seeing the form of the Lord, touching the form of the Lord, circumambulating the form or temple of the Lord, visiting such places as Jagannātha Purī, Dvārakā and Mathurā to see the Lord's form, and bathing in the Ganges or Yamunā. Bathing in the Ganges and serving a pure Vaiṣṇava are also known as tādīya-upāsanam. This is also pāda-sevanam. The word tādīya means "in relationship with the Lord." Service to the Vaiṣṇava, Tulasī, Ganges and Yamunā are included in pāda-sevanam. All these processes of pāda-sevanam help one advance in spiritual life very quickly.

The goddess of fortune Laxmidevi appeared during the churning of the ocean of milk and she accepted Lord Viṣṇu as her husband. In the churning of the milk ocean pastime after Lord Śiva drank all the poison, both the demigods and demons took courage and resumed their activities of churning. Because of this churning, first a surabhi cow was produced. Great saintly persons accepted this cow to derive clarified butter from its milk and offer this clarified butter in oblations for great sacrifices. Thereafter, a horse named Uccaiḥśravā was generated. This horse was taken by Bali Mahārāja. Then there appeared Airāvata and other elephants that could go anywhere in any direction, and she-elephants also appeared. The gem known as Kaustubha was also generated, and Lord Viṣṇu took that gem and placed it on His chest. Thereafter, a pārijāta flower and the Apsarās, the most beautiful women in the universe, were generated. Then the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, appeared. The demigods, great sages, Gandharvas and others offered her their respectful worship. The goddess of

fortune could not find anyone to accept as her husband. At last she selected Lord Viṣṇu to be her master. Lord Viṣṇu gave her a place to stay everlastingly at His chest. Because of this combination of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, all who were present, including the demigods and people in general, were very pleased.

"Mother Laksmiji, the goddess of fortune, is well known for always massaging the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. She is an ideal wife because she takes care of Lord Narayana in every detail. She takes care not only of His lotus feet but of the household affairs of the Lord as well. She cooks nice foods for Him, fans Him while He eats, smooths sandalwood pulp on His face and sets His bed and sitting places in the right order. In this way she is always engaged in the service of the Lord, and there is hardly any opportunity for any other devotee to intrude upon His daily activities."

Some Pastimes relating to Pada sevanam

Arjuna & Duryodhana approaching Krishna

Krishna had one of the largest armies and was Himself a great warrior. Duryodhana and Arjuna thus both went to Krishna at Dwarka to ask for His help. Duryodhana arrived first, and found Krishna asleep. Being arrogant and viewing himself as equal to Krishna, Duryodhana chose a seat at Krishna's head and waited for Him to rouse. Arjuna arrived later, and being a humble devotee of Krishna, chose to sit and wait at Krishna's feet. When Krishna woke up, He saw Arjuna first and gave him the first right to make his request. Krishna told Arjuna and Duryodhana that He would give His mighty Narayani sena, 'opulent, Lordly army' to one side, and Himself unarmed to the other. Since Arjuna was given the first opportunity to choose, Duryodhana was worried that Arjuna would choose the mighty army of Krishna. When given the choice of either Krishna's army or Krishna Himself on their side, Arjuna on behalf of the Pandavas chose Krishna, unarmed on His own, relieving Duryodhana, who thought Arjuna to be the greatest fool. Later Arjuna requested Krishna to be his charioteer, and Krishna, being an intimate friend of Arjuna, agreed wholeheartedly, and hence received the name Parthasarthy, or 'charioteer of the son of Pritha'. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna returned satisfied.

Sri Caitanya entered into GayaDham. When he came to the temple of Gadadhar, but it is where the lotus feet of Vishnu are still present and when he saw those lotus feet he became ecstatic with spiritual joy and then He heard the Brahmins and the Pujaris all around glorifying the lotus feet of Vishnu. There were so many garlands decorating these lotus feet and there was incense burning and sandalwood everywhere. Such worship, such devotion, and the Brahmins were chanting. On these Lotus feet Lord Brhma meditates. It is by the touch of them that has made by Ganga so holy that you can purify all the three worlds and it is His lotus feet because they touch the Ganga that lord Shiva accepts the waters upon his head and these are the feet to which Bali Maharaj had surrendered everything. Anyone who hears the glories of these lotus feet will be relieved from all suffers of mutual existing.

In Ramayana story of Ahlaya getting relieved :-One night Indra who is afflicted to lust who enacted like Gautama saint and destroyed the loyalty to a husband of beautiful looking Ahalya, who is the wife of saint Gautama. On knowing this act saint wildered Gautama cursed Ahalya to become stone (even he cursed Indra also). By touching the stone of Ahalya Sri Rama blessed her with previous body with all wearing dresses and jewels as it is.

5. Arcanam Story-Prithu Maharaj

(5) Arcanam. After pāda-sevanam comes the process of arcanam, worship of the Deity. If one is interested in the process of arcanam, one must positively take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master and learn the process from him. There are many books for arcana, especially Nārada-pañcarātra. In this age, the pañcarātra system is particularly recommended for arcana, Deity worship.

Deity worship means following the rules and regulations precisely. That will keep one steady in devotional service. Generally householders have children, and then the wives of the householders should be engaged in caring for the children, just as women acting as teachers care for the children in a nursery school.

Gṛhastha devotees must adopt the arcana-vidhi, or Deity worship according to the suitable arrangements and directions given by the spiritual master. Regarding those unable to take to the Deity worship in the temple, there is the following statement in the Agni Purāṇa. Any householder devotee circumstantially unable to worship the Deity must at least see the Deity worship, and in this way he may achieve success also. The special purpose of Deity worship is to keep oneself always pure and clean. Gṛhastha devotees should be actual examples of cleanliness.

In the process of worshiping the Deity it is sometimes enjoined that one worship the Deity within the mind. In the city of Pratiṣṭhāna-pura, long ago, there resided a brāhmaṇa who was poverty-stricken but innocent and not dissatisfied. One day he heard a discourse in an assembly of brāhmaṇas concerning how to worship the Deity in the temple. In that meeting, he also heard that the Deity may be worshiped within the mind. After this incident, the brāhmaṇa, having bathed in the Godāvārī River, began mentally worshiping the Deity. He would wash the temple within his mind, and then in his imagination he would bring water from all the sacred rivers in golden and silver waterpots. He collected all kinds of valuable paraphernalia for worship, and he worshiped the Deity very gorgeously, beginning from bathing the Deity and ending with offering āraṭi. Thus he felt great happiness. After many years had passed in this way, one day within his mind he cooked nice sweet rice with ghee to worship the Deity. He placed the sweet rice on a golden dish and offered it to Lord Kṛṣṇa, but he felt that the sweet rice was very hot, and therefore he touched it with his finger. He immediately felt that his finger had been burned by the hot sweet rice, and thus he began to lament. While the brāhmaṇa was in pain, Lord Viṣṇu in Vaikuṅṭha began smiling, and the goddess of fortune inquired from the Lord why He was smiling. Lord Viṣṇu then ordered His associates to bring the brāhmaṇa to Vaikuṅṭha. Thus the brāhmaṇa attained the liberation of sāmīpya, the facility of living near the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Dhruv Maharaj being terribly insulted by his step mother, went to the forest in order to understand what is God? With a hope that God would give him the benediction of a Kingdom greater than his father and grand father. However he came in contact with Narada Muni and was willing to follow the process of *Bhakti* and due to the process of *Bhakti* he became purified completely of all other intentions and desires and simply became the Lord's surrendered devotee. But the Lord, although giving him pure unmotivated love and devotion to his lotus feet and that of the *Vaiṣṇavas* instructed Dhruva to perform his duty in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and he became the King. And his eldest son was named Utkala, but Utkala following in the footsteps of his father was completely detached from kingdom or family life & became a *Brahmachari*, he just wanted to hear and chant the glories of the Lord, the kingdom was given to another son. who was actually a relatively deserving to be the king. And in this way the descendents of Dhruv Maharaj were very great and powerful kings and one of them was the name Anga.

Maharaj Anga was very exalted devotee and he ruled the kingdom in pure God consciousness but had no son, so he was performing *Yagna* with the help of great *Brahmins* in order to have a son. Later by the

inconceivable will of the Lord, she became pregnant and after sometime she gave birth. Sunita gave birth to a child whose name was Vena. Maharaj Vena, from his childhood he was a very evil and very corrupted person. So the sages came together with *Brahmins* and they began to chant special mystical mantras. And those mantras killed Maharaj Vena. So Sunita, Mrutyu's daughter was too much attached to Vena. She took Maharaj Vena's body and she put it in preservatives in different oils to keep it in state of a dead corpse and the sages left they performed their duty but then again the world was out of king and rogues and the thieves they just started plundering everyone and everything the whole planet was in turmoil and the earth herself was being so much exploited. So they decided there has to another king, So they decided this king should be a descendant of Brahma's Svayambhuvamanu, Uttanapada, Dhruva Maharaj so they decided by their mystic powers to get a son from body of Vena. And by chanting mantras they began to first churn the thighs of the legs of Maharaj Vena, they got his body from his mother Sunita and by churning the thighs the very mysterious personality came out. Black complexion, his hair was copper colored, black nose, he was very short, he had a protruding belly, red eyes and his name was Bahuka then they began to churn his arms, as they churned his arms two most illustrious beautiful personalities emerged, one was Maharaj Prithu - who was the incarnation of Lord Vishnu and other was the incarnation of Goddess of fortune whose name was Arci. They were so beautiful, so full of all good qualities. That the sages decided to immediately coronate him as king and Arci as queen and the sages and Brahmins told the reciters of hymns to begin to praise them.

After the coronation the people of the kingdom approached him and when Maharaj Prithu saw them, he was so compassionate toward them, because everyone in the world was skinny, because there was nothing to eat, they came before Maharaj Prithu and said: "We are starving, there is no food anywhere, there is no rain coming, there is no seeds coming from the earth, we are all in the verge of death, you are our king, we are coming to you for protection, please help us". Maharaj Prithu was very thoughtful after he heard what they had spoken for sometime he just stood in deliberation of meditation on what could be done to serve his citizens. And he became very angry and he took his bow and arrow, he pointed it to the earth and he explained the earth because "you are hiding the seeds, the herbs and the plants and the food grains that Lord Brahma has impregnated within you and you are not giving it to the citizens you are transgressing the principles of compassion and therefore you deserve to be destroyed". And the Goddess of earth began to tremble in fear and just to protect herself she came in personified form of a cow and she started to run away and Prithu Maharaj with his bow and arrow ready to shoot he started chasing after her and this cow was a celestial cow, earth herself, she ran all over the earth and she went to the higher planets and was running in and between the different heavenly planets and wherever she went Prithu was right behind her with his bow and arrow and when the Mother goddess earth understood there was nowhere she can go where Prithu was not there, she turned to him and she said that: "You should not harm me, because it is the duty of a king to protect women and I am a female and besides that a cow is the symbol of religion and the king will never will hurt cow so please it is not right that you to threaten me in this way". King Prithu in great anger he replied: "Because you are sinful and because you are cheating others and causing pain to others therefore you deserve to die" and she said "but consider, I am maintaining everyone on this planet, if you kill me this whole planet will go back into the Garba ocean and everyone will drown". And Prithu replied: "By my own power I will support and maintain the planet earth. You are not performing your service and it is the duty of the king to make sure everyone performs their duties". So mother earth in the form of a cow became very humble and she said to Maharaj Prithu: "It is not that I want to hide all the herbs and grains but I have no choice, because I am a devotee of Lord Vishnu, I am the property of Vishnu, when Brahma created me, it was in a service to Lord Vishnu, this whole material existence is simply the property of Vishnu for the satisfaction of Vishnu and whatever grains, fruits, vegetables, whatever comes from me, whatever

minerals and jewels that I provide, I am offering them all to the Lord and human society is meant to take these gifts from and on my behalf offer them to God but they are not doing that. Maharaj Vena was king, he stopped all *yagna*, he was exploiting everything I had and using it for his own personal selfish interest, he was using everything I had to cause pain to others and after Vena left this whole world for long time has been simply run by thieves and rogues and irreligion has been prominent I cannot give anything if it is not offered to the satisfaction of the Lord”

So mother earth explained: “That I will give you everything because you are truly a devotee of the Lord”. So Prithu Maharaj bought Svayambhuva Manu to take the role of a calf and he himself with his cupped hands he placed it under the udder of mother earth and then all the grains and foods and herbs, fruits, vegetables started flowing from her and then all different classes of living beings all wanted to get the benedictions of the earth, the sages they had Brahaspathi take the form of calf and then she started giving all nice ghee for sacrifice and she gave religious principles and teaching of Vedas to the Sages in this way Bhagavatam gives long discussion of all class of people and how she satisfied all their desires because the King Maharaj Prithu who was such a compassionate of God consciousness, she felt confident, in this way Maharaj Prithu was so satisfied with mother earth and mother earth was so satisfied with Maharaj Prithu and the blessings of the Lord were upon everyone in the kingdom.

Then Maharaj Prithu decided for the benefit of all his citizens he would perform one hundred *Ashwamedha Yagnas*, Srila Prabhupada says that in the age of kali, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has revealed from the scriptures that there is only one sacrifice that is allowed and effective and that is the congregational chanting of the *Mahamantra*:

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Because this sacrifice will purify the heart and the Lord will descend in the sound of his name and when offered with devotion in the mood of service and bring all auspiciousness to the whole world therefore the propagation of the Holy name of Krsna is the most necessary form of welfare in the whole human society and people are freed from greed, when people are compassionate, when people develop godly qualities to the chanting of the Holy names, they want to serve. Because it is the service to the Lord, is compassion to others that pleases the Lord and the chanting of Holy name cleans the hearts to have these qualities and we have to have these qualities

So Maharaj Prithu performed ninety nine *Ashwamedha yagnas*, so Indra the king of heaven, he was famous throughout the universe as the only person who has ever performed one hundred *Ashwamedha yagna* and this is very, very prestigious position. So Indra became envious, he saw that Prithu Maharaj was about match him, he did not want that, he wanted to be the exclusive greatest for everyone to adore. So what he did is when the hundredth *yagna* was about to be performed, Indra disguised himself and stole the sacrificial horse. And Atri muni happened to see it and he told Maharaj Prithu that “Indra has stolen your horse, you must get it back, he must be punished, he should be killed for what he is doing, and he is so envious”. So the son of Maharaj Prithu went on his chariot, he started chasing after Indra and the horse and when Indra saw that he was about to be killed by Prithu Maharaj’s son, he changed his form into that of a *Sanyasi*, he was wearing saffron clothes and he had matted hair and Prithu Maharaj’s son trained by his father to honor *Sadhus*, so he started bowing down to Indra. And then he let him go and then Atri Muni said: “he is Indra, he is cheating, he pretending to be a Sadhu,”. So then the son of Prithu Maharaj became very angry again by Atri muni’s words and he started chasing after Indra and Indra disappeared and left the horse. So the horse was brought back and everyone praised the son of Prithu Maharaj and they gave him the name *Vijitasva* – which means one who is victorious, successful. But Indra kept stealing the horse and Atri muni was very, very upset

because he saw that Prithu Maharaj was a compassionate selfless soul and Indra was envious of him, so he should be punished. So finally Prithu Maharaj himself, attacked Indra and he took the horse Prithu just said: “You deserve to die, you will be punished for this irreligious activity” So at that time the great sages, when they saw that Prithu was about to punish Indra, they said “actually this *yagna*, you are only supposed to kill a horse, you are not suppose to kill Indra, so please you will spoil the whole *yagna*, if you kill him”, they said: “we will kill him ourselves, in a non-violent way, we will just chant the mantra and through this mantra he will be forced to enter into the fire of *yagna* and burn”, so Prithu said: “Alright”. And the sages started chanting their mantras and when they were just about to offer the oblation which will make Indra fall into the fire that moment, Lord Brahma appeared. And Lord Brahma told the sages and told Prithu Maharaj: “You should not harm Indra”. So for the sake of co-operation and unity, so Maharaj Prithu accepted Lord Brahma’s suggestion and he stopped any attempt to perform one hundredth Ashwamedha Yagna. And Lord Krsna, Vishnu was so pleased by this renunciation of Prithu Maharaj that Vishnu personally appeared on his bird carrier Garuda and congratulated Maharaj Prithu. He explained to Maharaj Prithu that: “I am so pleased with you Lord Vishnu said: “You will become more famous than Indra for not performing the *yagna* than he is for performing all these *yagnas*”. Prithu Maharaj ki Jai!!!!.

After this Vishnu left after giving him so many blessings upon the Lord and all human society and after Vishnu left Prithu Maharaj after sometime he decided to perform a different type of *Yagna* not *Ashwamedha yagna*, different type *yagna* and in this *yagna*, he took of all his kingly robes and put on robes of a mendicant & serving the *Brahmins* and he began to explain and that time before *Kumaras* descended, effulgence from the sky they just descended into the *yagna* and Prithu Maharaj worshipped the four *Kumaras*. He first in great humility he bowed his head at their feet and he sat them in a nice place, washed their feet and offered beautiful prayers to them, and Prithu Maharaj began to extol the glories of the *Kumaras* who were so merciful that they had come just to purify and sanctify his life and his kingdom. Prithu Maharaj offered prayers to *Kumaras*, the four *Kumaras* after hearing beautiful prayers of Prithu Maharaj gave him benediction, the Supreme and only goal of life is to always fix your mind on the Lotus feet of Lord Hari, and the only way to properly worship the feet of Hari is to become the servant of the devotees, to serve the *Brahmins*, to serve the *Vaishnavas* is the highest service to the Lord and after bestowing their ultimate benedictions descended to the heavens and after receiving this wonderful benediction, Prithu Maharaj began to instruct all of his citizens, he said that: “Everyone has to follow their particular duties according to *Varna* and *Ashram*. The *Varnashram Dharma* system must be very carefully practiced by all members of the society. And whatever *Varna* or *ashram* we have, we should always be done for the purpose of the ultimate goal of life and that is the satisfaction of Krsna. And satisfaction of Krsna can only be done when there is love and respect for his devotees and those who are dear to him and compassion to all living beings”.

The Arati Ceremony

Arati is one aspect of *archanam*. In temples it is the only function of *archanam* the public can view. All other worship is conducted behind closed doors. The Lord kindly comes

In a full *arati*, incense, a flame (ghee lamp), a conch shell with water, a cloth, flowers, a *camara* (yak-tail fan), and a peacock fan are waved before the deity. While doing so, the devotee chants mantras appropriate for each article and rings a bell with the left hand. In a short *arati*, one or more of the articles used in the full *arati* may be offered.

The *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, a guidebook for devotees written by Sanatana Gosvami, one of Lord Caitanya’s main disciples, says that the articles of *arati* represent the material elements in their pure form and

correspond to the sense objects. The conch shell blown at the beginning and end of each *arati* drives away inauspicious elements. The sound of the bell is dear to the Lord and embodies all music. Flowers and incense provide beautiful aromas for the Lord's pleasure. The ghee lamp represents lighting someone's way. Offering water in the conch shell represents offering *arghya*, a mixture of auspicious items offered above or touched to the head of an honored guest as part of reception. It is a way to welcome the Lord and make Him feel at home. The handkerchief represents offering new cloth.

The yak-tail *camara* and the peacock fan are both aspects of kingly service. The *camara* keeps flies away, while the peacock fan provides a cooling breeze. *Aratis* must be accompanied by the singing of the Hare Krishna mantra. Srila Prabhupada taught that chanting was the most important part of deity worship..

6. Vandanam Story-Akrura

(6) Vandanam. Although prayers are a part of Deity worship, they may be considered separately like the other items, such as hearing and chanting, and therefore separate statements are given herewith. The Lord has unlimited transcendental qualities and opulences, and one who feels influenced by the Lord's qualities in various activities offers prayers to the Lord. In this way he becomes successful. In this connection, the following are some of the offenses to be avoided: (a) to offer obeisances on one hand, (b) to offer obeisances with one's body covered, (c) to show one's back to the Deity, (d) to offer obeisances on the left side of the Deity, (e) to offer obeisances very near the Deity.

Early in the morning on the day after Kamsa had ordered him to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā, Akrūra prepared his chariot and set off for Gokula. As he traveled, he thought as follows: "I am about to attain the great good fortune of seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, which are worshiped by Brahmā, Rudra and the other demigods. Although Kamsa is an enemy of the Supreme Lord and His devotees, still, it is by Kamsa's grace that I will get this great boon of seeing the Lord. When I first catch sight of His lotus feet, all my sinful reactions will be destroyed at once. I will descend from my chariot and fall at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and even though I have been sent by Kamsa, the omniscient Śrī Kṛṣṇa will certainly harbor no animosity toward me." As Akrūra thus thought to himself, he arrived in Gokula at sunset. Alighting from his chariot in the cowherd pasture, he began rolling about in the dust in great ecstasy.

Then Akrūra continued on to Vraja. When he saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma he fell at Their lotus feet, and both the Lords embraced him. Afterward They brought him to Their residence, inquired from him about the comfort of his trip and honored him in various ways—offering him water for washing his feet, *arghya*, a seat and so forth. They relieved him of his fatigue by massaging his feet and served him a delicious banquet. Mahārāja Nanda also honored Akrūra with many sweet words.

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma offered Akrūra great respect and comfortably seated him on a couch, he felt that all the desires he had reflected on while traveling to Vṛndāvana were now fulfilled. After the evening meal, Kṛṣṇa asked Akrūra whether his trip had been peaceful and whether he was well. The Lord also inquired about how Kamsa was behaving toward their family members, and finally He asked why Akrūra had come.

Akrūra described how Kamsa had been persecuting the Yādavas, what Nārada had told Kamsa and how Kamsa had been treating Vasudeva cruelly. Akrūra also spoke of Kamsa's desire to bring Kṛṣṇa and

Balarāma to Mathurā to kill Them on the pretext of Their seeing the bow sacrifice and engaging in a wrestling match. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed out loud when They heard this. They went to Their father, Nanda, and informed him of Kamsa's orders. Nanda then issued an order to all the residents of Vraja that they should collect various offerings for the King and prepare to go to Mathurā.

The young gopīs were extremely upset to hear that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would be going to Mathurā. They lost all external awareness and began to remember Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Condemning the creator for separating them from Him, they began to lament. They said that Akrūra did not deserve his name (a, "not"; krūra, "cruel"), since he was so cruel to be taking away their dearest Kṛṣṇa. "It must be that fate is against us," they lamented, "because otherwise the elders of Vraja would have forbidden Kṛṣṇa to leave. So let us forget our shyness and try to stop Lord Mādhava from going." With these words the young cowherd girls began to chant Kṛṣṇa's names and cry.

But even as they wept, Akrūra began taking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā in his chariot. The cowherd men of Gokula followed behind on their wagons, and the young gopīs also walked behind for some distance, but then they became placated by Kṛṣṇa's glances and gestures and pacified by a message from Him that said "I will return." With their minds completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd girls stood as still as figures in a painting until they could no longer see the chariot's flag or the dust cloud being raised on the road. Then, chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories all the while, they despondently returned to their homes.

Akrūra halted the chariot at the bank of the Yamunā so Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could perform a ritual of purification and drink some water. After the two Lords had gotten back into the chariot, Akrūra took Their permission to bathe in the Yamunā. As he recited Vedic mantras, he was startled to see the two Lords standing in the water. Akrūra came out of the river and returned to the chariot—where he saw the Lords still sitting. Then he returned to the water to find out if the two figures he had seen there were real or not.

What Akrūra saw in the water was four-armed Lord Vāsudeva. His complexion was dark blue like a fresh raincloud, He wore yellow garments and He lay on the lap of thousand-hooded Ananta Śeṣa. Lord Vāsudeva was receiving the prayers of perfected beings, celestial serpents and demons, and He was encircled by His personal attendants. Serving Him were His many potencies, such as Śrī, Puṣṭi and Ilā, while Brahmā and other demigods sang His praises. Akrūra rejoiced at this vision and, joining his palms in supplication, began to pray to the Supreme Lord in a voice choked with emotion.

Akrūra prayed, "Brahmā, who created this visible world, emanated from the lotus navel of the Supreme Lord. The five elements of physical nature, the five corresponding objects of perception, the ten senses, the ego, the total nature, the primeval creator and the demigods all originate from His bodily limbs. He cannot be known by sensory knowledge, and thus even Brahmā and the other demigods are ignorant of His real identity.

"Different classes of people worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead in different ways. Fruitive workers worship Him by performing Vedic sacrifices, philosophers by renouncing material work and pursuing spiritual knowledge, yogīs by meditating, Śaivites by worshiping Lord Śiva, Vaiṣṇavas by following the injunctions of such scriptures as the Pañcarātra, and other saintly persons by worshiping Him as the original form of the self, of the material substance and of the controlling demigods. Just as rivers flow from various directions into the ocean, the worship of those who dedicate themselves to these various entities finds its ultimate purpose within the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu.

"The form of the total universe, the Virāṭ-rūpa, is imagined to be the form of Lord Viṣṇu. Like aquatics moving about in water or like tiny insects burrowing in an udumbara fruit, all living beings move about

within the Lord. These living beings, bewildered by His Māyā, wander along the path of material work, falsely identifying with body, home and so forth. Under the sway of illusion, a foolish person may overlook a reservoir of water covered by grass and leaves and instead run after a mirage. Similarly, living beings caught in the grip of ignorance abandon Lord Viṣṇu and become attached to their bodies, homes and so on. Such faithful servants of their senses cannot take shelter of the Supreme Lord's lotus feet. Only if, by His mercy, they get the association of saintly devotees will their material entanglement end. Only then can they develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness by serving the Lord's pure devotees."

7. Dasyam Story-Hanuman

(7) Dāsyam. There is the following statement in regard to assisting the Lord as a servant. After many, many thousands of births, when one comes to understand that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, one can deliver others from this universe. If one simply continues to think that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, even without performing any other process of devotional service, he can attain full success, for simply by this feeling one can perform all nine processes of devotional service.

Birth of Hanuman

Hanuman is originally the son of Vayu, the air god. And he is also an expansion of Lord Shiva. the great mountain Sumeru, which by the grace of Sun it was Golden Mountain. His father was Kesariraj, who was the king of monkey race and his mother was Anjana who previously was an apsara

Swallowing the sun pastime

Once Hanuman asked Anjana devi ,What will I eat?" She was looking around, and it was sunset so she said, "Any fruit which is as red and as ripe as the sun planet, you can eat it." Then she left, and he was very hungry. He thought and then said, "Why as red as sun and as ripe as sun? Why not just eat sun?" So he jumped up, and straight away went to the sun planet and jumped on the chariot of Lord Suryadeva. He was extending his hands, and he took the whole sun planet and reduced it to a small ball and put it in his mouth. Just then he looked and saw Rahu coming. "I am going to eat the sun," Rahu said. Rahu always says this but he only ever half eats it. So then Anjaneya said, "Oh you are going to eat the sun? Well I have already eaten the sun and now I will eat you also." So then he swallowed Rahu. Indradeva had been sitting in his seat discussing politics, but suddenly everything had become dark. Agni was there, so due to his light he could see. He asked Agni, "Why is this? Why is there no light?" Agni replied, "Somebody has taken the sun away." "What? Somebody has taken the sun away?" Agni said, "Why are you wondering who has taken it? Just use your shabda-viddhi." Shabda-viddhi means that just by hearing the sound you shoot your weapon. So he threw his vakra. While throwing it he was already jumping on his white elephant, Airavata, and he was coming. Anjaneya looked this way and that and he saw that everything was dark, and then he saw this white elephant coming. "Oh, I will eat that also," and then he jumped on Airavata. While he was jumping on Airavata, the vakra came, and hit Anjaneya on his teeth. Anjaneya quickly caught hold of it. Indra turned around and saw Anjaneya holding the vakra, and he thought, "This must be some big Vishnu avatar. I'd better keep quiet. Out of living entities, only Indra can hold this thunderbolt, so he must be some incarnation with a tail." So Indra went back. Now Anjaneya had the sun, Rahu and this vakra weapon, and he went back to his place in Kishkinda to eat it. He sat down looking at this vakra, and thought, "Should I bite it or chew it?"

At that time everyone went to Brahma and asked him, "What is happening in this universe? Rahu is gone, sun is gone." Brahma said, "Don't worry. This is the potency of Lord Shiva, and this person is a great devotee of Lord Rama." Brahma lives for a long time, and so many Ramayanas are happening. So he knows that it is almost the same every time, but the pastime is a little different in each kalpa. So he said, "This is Hanuman. All of us have to go there and touch his feet and beg him. If you do that you will get the sun, otherwise no sun." So all the demigods came, thirty three crores of them. They all came there with folded hands. "Please Anjaneya, open your mouth." He was upset because Indra's vadra had hit him on his teeth. "You have already broken my jaw. If I open my mouth you will just break my other jaw."

So then Brahma said, "My dear boy, I will give you anything you like. You can live as long as I live." Anjaneya was not satisfied. Then Agni came forward and said, "Fire will not burn you." Still he was not satisfied, so Indra came forward. "You are already holding my Vadra, so what benediction can I give you? But I tell you this, you will become the most famous, as famous as me." Still not satisfied. Then Vayu came. "You will be as fast as me." He smiled a little bit. One by one they all came and offered benedictions, and after everyone came and offered benedictions, still Anjaneya was not satisfied. Brahma said, "Don't worry, I will use my mystic powers." And he read Anjaneya's mind. Anjaneya was thinking "Why is there no fruit in this world?" Brhaspati came to know of his desire and he came forward and said, "Anjaneya, I will give you all the fruits in this world, and I will give you the knowledge of Ayurveda by which you will know all the fruits, all the plants, and all the trees. Any plant in the creation, you will know it, and what is the use of it you will know, and what is the medicinal effect of it you will also know. This is my benediction to you." Then Dhanvantari spoke, "I will be at your command. You put any medicine on anyone and they will come alive." So Anjaneya opened his mouth, and the Sun-god was there, and the demigods were very much satisfied. So then Brahma called him "Hanuman." Hanuman means one who has got some kind of a defect in his teeth. That is the meaning of Hanuman. Hanuman is also known as Vajranga, which means the same thing. Vajra means teeth and anga means missing one part. One other name for him is Marut-suta, the son of the wind god. He is known as Anjaneya, the son of Anjana. And lastly he is known as Mahavira, or a great king. These are some different names of Hanuman.

And then Brahma gave him a diamond necklace, and told him, "This is the highest benediction you can get. You will be the eternal servant of the eternal Lord, and only the eternal Lord will be able to recognize this necklace. That means you will be recognized by him, and he will be recognized by you as the one who recognized the necklace."

Hanuman loses his powers

After the sun-swallowing pastime there were so many other pastimes. He used to take elephants and tigers and play with them. A rishi gave Hanuman a curse that limited his strength. "Why did you curse me like this?" Hanuman asked. "This is only good for you. You are having your strength controlled so you can use it only for the Lord's service. And when the service is coming, the Lord will arrange for someone to remind you."

Hanuman's education

He learnt from Sun God Yajur-veda, Rg-veda, Sama-veda and Atharva-veda

The Sun-god said, "Very good, but you have to give me some dakshina." Hanuman said, "Well what do you want? Do you want Indra's crown? You tell me anything and I will get it for you in a second." The Sun-god said, "No, I don't want any of that. Only one guru-dakshina I need from you. I have a monkey

friend. You must become his minister. You must always protect his life." Hanuman said, "Oh? You have a monkey friend, and I should protect him? This is only glory for me. I will do it, I will protect him as my life." And then the Sun-god told him who was that monkey. It was Sugriva.

Crossing the Ocean to reach Lanka

They searched everywhere without any clues. Ultimately they got a good lead from Sampati, the brother of Jatayu, who had really good vision that he could actually see Srilanka and he could see Sita there. He told them that is where she was. That is where Ravana's Kingdom was. But it was 800 miles of ocean. How to get there? Each of the different monkeys was expressing their own power and their strength. One said, "I could jump one yojana". Another said, "I could jump two yojanas". Another said, "I could jump three yojanas but that's my capacity". Angada the son of Bali, when Bali was dying entrusted under the care of Rama and Sugriva. Angada said, "I could jump it but I won't be able to jump back". They said, "No, you are our commander. You should not go". Then there was silence because there was nobody who could make it.

It was that moment that Jambavan spoke. Jambavan he said, "Hanuman, when you are a little boy, you went to eat the sun and you are hit by the Indra's thunderbolt. After that by the power of your father Vayu, Brahma came down and you got all these boons. You could do anything. But then you became so much mischievous the great risis they gave you the different kinds of boons that you would forget unless somebody chanted your glories. Hanuman, when I was young I could circumambulate the world without any problems but now I am an old man I cannot do it. But Hanuman for you to jump over this ocean is nothing". Then he started extolling beautifully the powers of Hanuman.

When Hanuman heard it, as far as we understand, he was reminding it since he got the curse. He said, "Yes, see what I'll do". He expanded himself to be 50 times his size. Then he climbed the mound Mahendra and roared and called out to the Angada and to the others "I'll jump right now to Srilanka. I'll annihilate the entire rakshasa dynasty and I'll kill Ravana. I'll exterminate every one of his soldiers. His entire armies and I'll bring Sita back. Just tell me I'll do it now". Then Angada said, "All you are asked to do is give Sita the message. Just give her the message and come back and tell us what happens".

Then Hanuman with folded palms, he chanted the name of Rama with pure love and devotion in his heart and completely surrendering to Rama's instruction feeling totally empowered by Rama's mercy and he jumped. When he jumped the whole mountain began to go into the earth. Then the pressure started forcing snakes from under ground to come out and started - out. Lions and tigers were coming out in screaming because they did not know what was happening. The whole mountain was shaking. As he flew away the velocity of the wind was like the leaves and the flowers were started following with him from the whole mountain. In this way he leaved across the Indian Ocean to Srilanka.

On his way the mountain that was stuck down by the Indra along ago was under the ocean. That was the mountain of gold. Actually came up for the first time in honor of Hanuman to give him a resting place. Because he had jumped and he had already been a long way. The mountain came up in his personified form and said, "Please rest for sometime in your service to Rama". Hanuman was determined. He offered respects and touched the mountain and said, "Until I fulfill the mission of my lord, I have not time to rest". Then he carried on and out from ocean came Surasa. She was the mother of the Nagas. She told Hanuman, "I have been given a benediction by Brahma that no one can pass me without being eaten by me". So she opened her mouth to eat Hanuman but Hanuman expanded his size and she expanded her mouth. He expanded his size and she expanded her mouth. That was yojanas. She

had a big mouth. Hanuman just kept growing bigger and bigger and her mouth became bigger and bigger. Then Hanuman became the size of a thumb instantly and her mouth was already enormous yojanas wide. So he became a little form and he walked in quite ways and then he came out. He said, "The benediction has been fulfilled. You ate me". Then Suras came to her normal size again and she with great love and devotion said, "Hanuman you are very intelligent. I was testing you. The god's send me to test you. I blessed you, may you be successful in the service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Rama".

After offering his respect to Suras, he continued on. "trnad api sunicena". Hanuman conquered her by taking one's spiritual life. Actually bhakti is trying to rescue Sita, who is bhakti devi from Ravana, from the greed and lust of maya. We are trying to rescue Sita, our innate devotion from the captivity of the Ravana the exploitative tendencies, selfishness, egoism. So there will be many obstacles. But false pride is the greatest obstacle. Hanuman showed in this situation, how taking a very humble position feeling oneself very insignificant, one can easily overcome the obstacles of material energy of Maya in order to find Sita and to rescue the love of god within our hearts.

As he was air jumping suddenly he could not move. He was stocked in the air and nothing moved. Then he looked down and he saw there was a rakshasi named Sihmika. Sihmika, she had the mystic power where she could grab a person's shadow and capture them through that process and then eat them. So Hanuman confronted her. She opened her mouth to devour Hanuman and she also had a very big mouth. She was really a rakshaysi. She swallowed Hanuman. Hanuman again took a small form and just went down her throat and went into her body and then hard like a diamond. He took his claws and started ripping her organs and then went right to her heart and ripped it to threads. Then Simhika opened her mouth and grinned and died. Then Hanuman came out over mouth and watched to fall into the ocean. Hanumanji ki jay.

Then he continued on his journey. There he saw Srilanka, magnificent Ireland with Trikuta Mountain and the top of the mountain was actually Srilanka the city. Practically everything was made out of pure gold. So Hanuman saw this spectacular city and he landed. He was greeted by Lankini, who is the goddess of Srilanka, the presiding deity. When she saw Hanumanji approaching that time Hanumanji was in a smaller in size. She said, "You cannot come. Who are you? You are a monkey. You cannot come in". Hanuman said, "I want to go in". Then she started blaspheming him and chastising him. This is the city of Ravana and the rakshasas. Without my blessings and consent you cannot enter. She started threatening to punish and kill Hanuman. So Hanuman, he did not like to do these things but he was for Rama. He slapped on her face. He could it done not worse because she was a mataji, he just slapped her. She was demoniac in that sense. She was an obstacle. She felt to the ground and then she got up and she became ecstatic. She said this is very good. I was given the benediction that nobody would ever have the power to come by me. But I was told that some day someone is going to come and slap you and you are going to fall down. When that day comes you should know that that person is going into Srilanka and the entire Rakshas dynasty is going to be destroyed. So she blessed Hanuman, "Now you go in and perform your mission. You have all my blessings". Hanumanji took a very small form about the size of cat because he wanted to investigate everything about Srilanka because he assumed that the war will soon come.

Hanuman was always eager to serve with his heart, soul, and life. He is the very personification of bhakti. No obstacles could stand before him. Not because of his strength but because of his love.

8 Sakhyam Story-Arjuna

Sakhyam. In regard to worshiping the Lord as a friend, the Agastya-saṁhitā states that a devotee engaged in performing devotional service by śravaṇam and kīrtanam sometimes wants to see the Lord personally, and for this purpose he resides in the temple. Elsewhere there is this statement: “O my Lord, Supreme Personality and eternal friend, although You are full of bliss and knowledge, You have become the friend of the residents of Vṛndāvana. How fortunate are these devotees!” In this statement the word “friend” is specifically used to indicate intense love. Friendship, therefore, is better than servitude. In the stage above dāsyā-rasa, the devotee accepts the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a friend. This is not at all astonishing, for when a devotee is pure in heart the opulence of his worship of the Deity diminishes as spontaneous love for the Personality of Godhead is manifested. In this regard, Śrīdhara Svāmī mentions Śrīdāma Vipra, who expressed to himself his feelings of obligation, thinking, “Life after life, may I be connected with Kṛṣṇa in this friendly attitude.”

Ch 58 in Krishna Book : Five Queens Married by Kṛṣṇa

From first paragraph to 13th para he became their determined enemy : For Sakhyam

As mentioned in the last chapter, there was a great rumor that the five Pāṇḍava brothers, along with their mother Kuntī, had died, according to the plan of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, in a fire accident in the house of lac in which they were living. But then the five brothers were detected at the marriage ceremony of Draupadī, so another rumor spread that the Pāṇḍavas and their mother were not dead. It was a rumor, but actually it was so; they returned to their capital city, Hastināpura, and people saw them face to face. When this news was carried to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa wanted to see them personally, and therefore He decided to go to Hastināpura.

This time Kṛṣṇa visited Hastināpura in state, as a royal prince, accompanied by His commander in chief, Yuyudhāna, and by many other soldiers. He had not actually been invited to visit the city, yet He went to see the Pāṇḍavas out of His affection for His great devotees. He visited the Pāṇḍavas without warning, and all of them got up from their respective seats as soon as they saw Him. Kṛṣṇa is called Mukunda because as soon as one comes in constant touch with Kṛṣṇa or sees Him in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one immediately becomes freed from all material anxieties. Not only that, but one is immediately blessed with all spiritual bliss.

Receiving Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas were enlivened, just as if awakened from unconsciousness or loss of life. When a man is lying unconscious, his senses and the different parts of his body are inactive, but when he regains his consciousness the senses immediately become active. Similarly, the Pāṇḍavas received Kṛṣṇa as if they had just regained their consciousness, and so they were very much enlivened. Lord Kṛṣṇa embraced every one of them, and by the touch of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the Pāṇḍavas immediately became freed from all reactions of material contamination and were therefore smiling in spiritual bliss. By seeing the face of Lord Kṛṣṇa, everyone was transcendently satisfied. Lord Kṛṣṇa, although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was playing the part of an ordinary human being, and thus He immediately touched the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma because they were His two older cousins. Arjuna embraced Kṛṣṇa as a friend of the same age, whereas the two younger brothers, namely Nakula and Sahadeva, touched the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa to show Him respect. After an exchange of greetings according to the social etiquette befitting the position of the Pāṇḍavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa was offered an exalted seat. When He was comfortably seated, the newly married Draupadī, young and very beautiful in her natural feminine gracefulness, came before Lord Kṛṣṇa to offer her respectful greetings. The Yādavas who accompanied Kṛṣṇa to Hastināpura were also very respectfully received; specifically, Sātyaki,

or Yuyudhāna, was also offered a nice seat. In this way, when everyone else was properly seated, the five brothers took their seats near Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After meeting with the five brothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa personally went to visit Śrīmatī Kuntīdevī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, who was also Kṛṣṇa's paternal aunt. In offering His respects to His aunt, Kṛṣṇa also touched her feet. Kuntīdevī's eyes became wet, and, in great love, she feelingly embraced Lord Kṛṣṇa. She then inquired from Him about the well-being of her paternal family members – her brother Vasudeva, his wives and other members of the family. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa also inquired from His aunt about the welfare of the Pāṇḍava family. Although Kuntīdevī was related to Kṛṣṇa by family ties, she knew immediately after meeting Him that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. She remembered the past calamities of her life and how by the grace of Kṛṣṇa she and her sons, the Pāṇḍavas, had been saved. She knew perfectly well that without Kṛṣṇa's grace no one could have saved them from the fire “accident” designed by the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. In a choked-up voice, she began to narrate before Kṛṣṇa the history of their life.

Śrīmatī Kuntī said, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, I remember the day when You sent my brother Akrūra to gather information about us. This means that You always remember us automatically. When You sent Akrūra, I could understand that there was no possibility of our being put in danger. All good fortune in our life began when You sent Akrūra to us. Since then, I have been convinced that we are not without protection. We may be put into various types of dangerous conditions by our family members, the Kurus, but I am confident that You remember us and always keep us safe and sound. Even ordinary devotees who simply think of You are always immune to all kinds of material danger, and what to speak of ourselves, who are personally remembered by You. So, my dear Kṛṣṇa, there is no question of bad luck; we are always in an auspicious position because of Your grace. Yet although You have bestowed a special favor on us, people should not mistakenly think that You are partial to some and inattentive to others. You make no such distinction. No one is Your favorite and no one is Your enemy. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are equal to everyone, and everyone can take advantage of Your special protection. The fact is that although You are equal to everyone, You are especially inclined to the devotees who always think of You. The devotees are related to You by ties of love. As such, they cannot forget You even for a moment. You are present in everyone's heart, but because the devotees always remember You, You respond accordingly. Although a mother has affection for all her children, she takes special care of the one who is fully dependent. I know certainly, my dear Kṛṣṇa, that being seated in everyone's heart, You always create auspicious situations for Your unalloyed devotees.”

Then King Yudhiṣṭhira also praised Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality and universal friend of everyone, but because Kṛṣṇa was taking special care of the Pāṇḍavas, King Yudhiṣṭhira said, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, we do not know what sort of pious activities we have executed in our past lives that have made You so kind and gracious to us. We know very well that the great mystics who always engage in meditation to capture You do not find it easy to obtain such grace, nor can they draw any personal attention from You. I cannot understand why You are so kind to us. We are not *yogīs*; on the contrary, we are attached to material contaminations. We are householders dealing in politics, worldly affairs. I do not know why You are so kind to us.”

Being requested by King Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa agreed to stay in Hastināpura for four months during the rainy season. The four months of the rainy season are called Cāturmāsya. During this period, the generally itinerant preachers and *brāhmaṇas* stop at a certain place and live under rigid regulative principles. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is above all regulative principles, He agreed to stay at Hastināpura out of affection for the Pāṇḍavas. Taking this opportunity of Kṛṣṇa's residence in Hastināpura, all the citizens of the city got the privilege of seeing Him now and then, and thus they merged into transcendental bliss simply by seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa face to face.

One day, while Kṛṣṇa was staying with the Pāṇḍavas, He and Arjuna prepared themselves to go to the forest to hunt. Both of them sat down on Arjuna's chariot, which flew a flag with a picture of Hanumān. Arjuna's special

chariot is always marked with the picture of Hanumān, and therefore he is also named Kapidhvaja. (*Kapi* means Hanumān, and *dhvaja* means “flag.”) Thus Arjuna prepared to go to the forest with his bow and infallible arrows. He dressed himself with suitable protective garments, for he was to practice for the time when he would be killing many enemies on the battlefield. He specifically entered that part of the forest where there were many tigers, deer and various other animals. The reason Kṛṣṇa went with Arjuna was not to practice animal-killing, for He doesn't have to practice anything; He is self-sufficient. He accompanied Arjuna to see how he was practicing because in the future he would have to kill many enemies. After entering the forest, Arjuna killed many tigers, boars, bison, *gavayas* (a kind of wild animal), rhinoceroses, deer, hares, porcupines and similar other animals, which he pierced with his arrows. Some of the dead animals that were fit to be offered in sacrifices were carried by servants and sent to King Yudhiṣṭhira. The ferocious animals, such as tigers and rhinoceroses, were killed only to stop disturbances in the forest. Since there are many sages and saintly persons who are residents of the forest, it is the duty of the *kṣatriya* kings to keep even the forest in a peaceful condition for living.

Arjuna felt tired and thirsty from hunting, and therefore he went to the bank of the Yamunā along with Kṛṣṇa. When both the Kṛṣṇas, namely Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, reached the bank of the Yamunā (Arjuna is sometimes called Kṛṣṇa, as is Draupadī), they washed their hands, feet and mouths and drank the clear water of the Yamunā. While resting and drinking water, they saw a beautiful girl of marriageable age walking alone on the bank of the Yamunā. Kṛṣṇa asked His friend Arjuna to go forward and ask the girl who she was. By the order of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna immediately approached the girl, who was very beautiful. She had an attractive body, nice, glittering teeth and a smiling face. Arjuna inquired, “My dear girl, you are so beautiful with your raised breasts. May I ask you who you are? We are surprised to see you loitering here alone. What is your purpose in coming here? We can guess only that you are searching after a suitable husband. If you don't mind, you can disclose your purpose. I shall try to satisfy you.”

The beautiful girl was the river Yamunā personified. She replied, “Sir, I am the daughter of the sun god, and I am now performing penance and austerity to have Lord Viṣṇu as my husband. I think He is the Supreme Person and just suitable to become my husband. I disclose my desire thus because you wanted to know it.”

The girl continued, “My dear sir, I know that you are the hero Arjuna; so I may further say that I shall not accept anyone as my husband besides Lord Viṣṇu, because He is the only protector of all living entities and the bestower of liberation for all conditioned souls. I shall be thankful unto you if you pray to Lord Viṣṇu to be pleased with me.” The girl Yamunā knew it well that Arjuna was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and that if he would pray, Kṛṣṇa would never deny his request. To approach Kṛṣṇa directly may sometimes be futile, but to approach Kṛṣṇa through His devotee is sure to be successful. She further told Arjuna, “My name is Kālindī, and I live within the waters of the Yamunā. My father was kind enough to construct a special house for me within the waters of the Yamunā, and I have vowed to remain in the water as long as I cannot find Lord Kṛṣṇa.” Arjuna duly carried the message of the girl Kālindī to Kṛṣṇa, although Kṛṣṇa, as the Supersoul in everyone's heart, knew everything. Without further discussion, Kṛṣṇa immediately accepted Kālindī and asked her to sit down on the chariot. Then all of them approached King Yudhiṣṭhira.

After this, Kṛṣṇa was asked by King Yudhiṣṭhira to help in constructing a suitable house to be planned by the great architect Viśvakarmā, the celestial engineer in the heavenly kingdom. Kṛṣṇa immediately called for Viśvakarmā and made him construct a wonderful city according to the desire of King Yudhiṣṭhira. When this city was constructed, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira requested Kṛṣṇa to live with them a few days more to give them the pleasure of His association. Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted the request of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and remained there for many days more.

In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa engaged in the pastime of offering the Khāṇḍava forest, which belonged to King Indra. Kṛṣṇa wanted to give it to Agni, the fire god. The Khāṇḍava forest contained many varieties of drugs, and Agni

required to eat them for rejuvenation. Agni, however, did not touch the Khāṇḍava forest directly but requested Kṛṣṇa to help him. Agni knew that Kṛṣṇa was very much pleased with him because he had formerly given Him the Sudarśana disc. So in order to satisfy Agni, Kṛṣṇa became the chariot driver of Arjuna, and both went to the Khāṇḍava forest. After Agni had eaten up the Khāṇḍava forest, he was very much pleased. At this time he offered Arjuna a special bow known as Gāṇḍīva, four white horses, one chariot and an invincible quiver with two special arrows considered to be talismans, which had so much power that no warrior could counteract them. When the Khāṇḍava forest was being devoured by the fire god, Agni, there was a demon of the name Maya who was saved by Arjuna from the devastating fire. For this reason, that former demon became a great friend of Arjuna, and in order to please Arjuna he constructed a nice assembly house within the city constructed by Viśvakarmā. This assembly house had some corners so puzzling that when Duryodhana came to visit this house he was misdirected, accepting water as land and land as water. Duryodhana was thus insulted by the opulence of the Pāṇḍavas, and he became their determined enemy.

More details about Arjuna

Pāṇḍava Arjuna: The great hero of the Bhagavad-gītā. He is the kṣatriya son of Mahārāja Pāṇḍu. Queen Kuntīdevī could call for any one of the demigods, and thus she called Indra, and Arjuna was born by him. Arjuna is therefore a plenary part of the heavenly King Indra. He was born in the month of Phalguna (February–March), and therefore he is also called Phalguni. Vasudeva, the father of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the maternal uncle of Arjuna, sent his priest representative Kaśyapa to purify Arjuna by all the prescribed saṁskāras, or reformatory processes. His saṁskāra of being given a name was performed in the presence of the ṛṣis, residents of Śatasṛṅga. He married four wives, Draupadī, Subhadrā, Citraṅgada and Ulūpī, from whom he got four sons of the names Śrutakīrti, Abhimanyu, Babhruvāhana and Irāvān respectively.

During his student life he was entrusted to study under the great professor Droṇācārya, along with other Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus. But he excelled everyone by his studious intensity, and Droṇācārya was especially attracted by his disciplinary affection. Droṇācārya accepted him as a first-grade scholar and loved heartily to bestow upon him all the blessings of military science. He was so ardent a student that he used to practice bowmanship even at night, and for all these reasons Professor Droṇācārya was determined to make him the topmost Bowman of the world. He passed very brilliantly the examination in piercing the target, and Droṇācārya was very pleased. Royal families at Maṇipur and Tripura are descendants of Arjuna's son Babhruvāhana. Arjuna saved Droṇācārya from the attack of a crocodile, and the Ācārya, being pleased with him, rewarded him with a weapon of the name brahmaśira. Mahārāja Drupada was inimical toward Droṇācārya, and thus when he attacked the Ācārya, Arjuna got him arrested and brought him before Droṇācārya. He besieged a city of the name Ahichhatra, belonging to Mahārāja Drupada, and after taking it over he gave it to Droṇācārya. The confidential treatment of the weapon brahmaśira was explained to Arjuna, and Droṇācārya was promised by Arjuna that he would use the weapon if necessary when he (Droṇācārya) personally became an enemy of Arjuna. By this, the Ācārya forecasted the future battle of Kurukṣetra, in which Droṇācārya was on the opposite side. Mahārāja Drupada, although defeated by Arjuna on behalf of his professor Droṇācārya, decided to hand over his daughter Draupadī to his young combatant, but he was disappointed when he heard the false news of Arjuna's death in the fire of a shellac house intrigued by Duryodhana. He therefore arranged for Draupadī's personal selection of a groom who could pierce the eye of a fish hanging on the ceiling. This trick was especially made because only Arjuna could do it, and he was successful in his desire to hand

over his equally worthy daughter to Arjuna. Arjuna's brothers were at that time living incognito under agreement with Duryodhana, and Arjuna and his brothers attended the meeting of Draupadī's selection in the dress of brāhmaṇas. When all the kṣatriya kings assembled saw that a poor brāhmaṇa had been garlanded by Draupadī for her lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa disclosed his identity to Balarāma.

He met Ulūpī at Haridvāra (Hardwar), and he was attracted by a girl belonging to Nāgaloka, and thus Iravān was born. Similarly, he met Citraṅgada, a daughter of the King of Maṇipura, and thus Babhruvāhana was born. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa made a plan to help Arjuna to kidnap Subhadrā, sister of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because Baladeva was inclined to hand her over to Duryodhana. Yudhiṣṭhira also agreed with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thus Subhadrā was taken by force by Arjuna and then married to him. Subhadrā's son is Abhimanyu, the father of Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the posthumous child. Arjuna satisfied the fire-god by setting fire to the Khāṇḍava Forest, and thus the fire-god gave him one weapon. Indra was angry when the fire was set in the Khāṇḍava Forest, and thus Indra, assisted by all other demigods, began fighting with Arjuna for his great challenge. They were defeated by Arjuna, and Indradeva returned to his heavenly kingdom. Arjuna also promised all protection to one Mayāsura, and the latter presented him one valuable conchshell celebrated as the Devadatta. Similarly, he received many other valuable weapons from Indradeva when he was satisfied to see his chivalry.

When Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was disappointed in defeating the King of Magadha, Jarāsandha, it was Arjuna only who gave King Yudhiṣṭhira all kinds of assurances, and thus Arjuna, Bhīma and Lord Kṛṣṇa started for Magadha to kill Jarāsandha. When he went out to bring all other kings of the world under the subjection of the Pāṇḍavas, as was usual after the coronation of every emperor, he conquered the country named Kelinda and brought in subjugation King Bhagdutt. Then he traveled through countries like Antagiri, Ulukpur and Modapur and brought under subjugation all the rulers.

Sometimes he underwent severe types of penances, and later on he was rewarded by Indradeva. Lord Śiva also wanted to try the strength of Arjuna, and in the form of an aborigine, Lord Śiva met him. There was a great fight between the two, and at last Lord Śiva was satisfied with him and disclosed his identity. Arjuna prayed to the lord in all humbleness, and the lord, being pleased with him, presented him the paśupata weapon. He acquired many other important weapons from different demigods. He received daṇḍāstra from Yamarāja, paśāstra from Varuṇa, and antardhana-astra from Kuvera, the treasurer of the heavenly kingdom. Indra wanted him to come to the heavenly kingdom, the Indraloka planet beyond the moon planet. In that planet he was cordially received by the local residents, and he was awarded reception in the heavenly parliament of Indradeva. Then he met Indradeva, who not only presented him with his vajra weapon, but also taught him the military and musical science as used in the heavenly planet.

When his inimical cousin Duryodhana was under the clutches of the Gandharvas, he wanted to save him and requested the Gandharvas to release Duryodhana, but the Gandharvas refused, and thus he fought with them and got Duryodhana released. When all the Pāṇḍavas lived incognito, he presented himself in the court of King Virāṭa as a eunuch and was employed as the musical teacher of Uttarā, his future daughter-in-law, and was known in the Virāṭa court as the Bṛhannala. As Bṛhannala, he fought on behalf of Uttara, the son of King Virāṭa, and thus defeated the Kurus in the fight incognito. His secret weapons were safely kept in the custody of a somi tree, and he ordered Uttara to get them back. His identity and his brothers' identity were later on disclosed to Uttara. Droṇācārya was informed of Arjuna's presence in the fight of the Kurus and the Virāṭas. Later, on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Arjuna killed many great generals like Karṇa and others. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, he punished Aśvatthāmā, who had killed all the five sons of Draupadī. Then all the brothers went to Bhīsmadeva.

It is due to Arjuna only that the great philosophical discourses of the Bhagavad-gītā were again spoken by the Lord on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. His wonderful acts on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra are vividly described in the Mahābhārata.

9 Atma Nivedanam Story-Bali Maharaj

(9) Ātma-nivedanam. The word Ātma-nivedanam refers to the stage at which one who has no motive other than to serve the Lord surrenders everything to the Lord and performs his activities only to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a devotee is like a cow that is cared for by its master. When cared for by its master, a cow is not in anxiety over its maintenance. Such a cow is always devoted to its master, and it never acts independently, but only for the master's benefit. Some devotees, therefore, consider dedication of the body to the Lord to be ātma-nivedanam, and as stated in the book known as Bhakti-viveka, sometimes dedication of the soul to the Lord is called ātma-nivedanam. The best examples of ātma-nivedanam are found in Bali Mahārāja and Ambarīṣa Mahārāja. Ātma-nivedanam is also sometimes found in the behavior of Rukmiṇīdevī at Dvārakā.

Once there was a great king named Bali Maharaj. He was Prahlāda Maharaj's grandson and was the king of the demons. He was very powerful and even had defeated Indra and conquered the heavenly planets. This worried Aditi and Kasyapa Muni, who were the parents of the demigods.

Aditi and Kasyapa worshipped the Lord so that their sons, the demigods, would be protected from the demons. Due to their prayers, the Supreme Personality of Godhead agreed to become their son. He appeared to them in His original form with conch, disc, lotus, and club. Then, in front of His father and mother He assumed the form of a brāhmana dwarf named Vamana.

Vamana heard that Bali Maharaj was performing a great sacrifice and went there to give Bali his Mercy. When He entered the sacrificial arena, Bali received Vamana and worshipped Him by washing His feet. Bali Maharaj asked Vamanadeva, "What is it that you wish, dear Brahman. I shall give you anything you ask for."

Vamana was pleased with Bali's attitude and said, "You are a worthy grandson of Prahalad. I see you are very generous and righteous. I only ask from you three steps of land. A wise man never asks for more than what he needs."

Bali Maharaj thought that Vamanadeva was not too intelligent because He only asked for three paces of land when He could have had much more. Bali agreed, "Ok, take whatever you like."

Sukracharya, Bali's Guru, tried to talk him out of it by saying, "No, this dwarf bramachari is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vishnu! He has come to help demigods! He has only asked you for three steps of land, but He will take everything!"

But Bali Maharaj replied, "I have already given my promise. How can I be a cheater and a liar?" To Vamanadeva, he said, "You may have your three paces of land."

Vamana readied Himself to take the first step. As Bali looked on in amazement, Vamana grew bigger and bigger. With His first step He covered the entire earth, sky and all directions. With His second step He covered the heavenly planets and the rest of the universe.

The demons were furious seeing that Bali had lost everything. They rushed forward to kill Vamana. Lord Vishnu's associates conquered them quickly.

Looking around, Vamana saw that there was no spot left for the third step. He asked Bali Maharaj where He should place His third step. Bali bowed his head and said, "Lord, if it is Your pleasure, place Your

foot on my head for Your third pace. I am Yours eternally. I had become proud of my power. But now I have lost my kingdom and have gained You instead.”

Lord Vamanadeva lovingly placed His foot on Bali’s head and spoke. “My son, I take away everything from those that I love. Riches and power make a man proud, disregarding Me. When you see a human who is not proud of wealth, youth, beauty, wisdom, and power, then you know that I am pleased by him.” In this way, Bali Maharaj surrendered his life to Vishnu.