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Bhima Slays The Demon Bakasura

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Sita's Wedding

The Ramayana

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A collection of 88 transcendental dramas assembled and presented for the pleasure of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Archiving and editing by Radha Damodara Das

Editing and typesetting by Dasarath Suta Das

Gaura Purnima 1997

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Resources For Additional Play Scripts

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Kãñëa Ksetra Das

Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir

Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist. Nadia

West Bengal, India

He collected many plays and had them roughly typed onto computer by Bengali devotees, thus forming the initial basis for this eventual publication.

Radha Damodara Das

Nataka Candrika Dasi

P.O. Box 1056

Alachua, Florida 32615-1056

904-462-5247

They have collected over 200 play scripts and have much experience in production of these dramas as well as Krishna conscious puppet shows.

Dasarath Suta Das

Nectar Books

P.O. Box 574

Union City, Georgia 30291

Collected many scripts from various persons and assembled this volume. Serves as a distributor of the book as well as additional plays on diskette.

Sankirtan Das

RD 1 NBU 19

Moundsville, WV 26041

304-845-6840

The author of the famous play "Nandulal" and performer in the ITV video "Kãñëadasa Kaviraja." Currently involved with dramatic story-telling in temples, schools and colleges.

Phani Bhusana Das

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Talented playwright and performer with Festival of India Players. Will consult on direction and production, especially regarding the plays he has contributed to this volume.

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904-462-1372

Maintains a number of devotional scripts and has much experience in direction and production of plays.

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RR 1 Box 96-A

Sandy Ridge, NC 27046

910-593-9888

She has collected many original play scripts and has worked extensively with children's productions.

The Bhaktivedanta Players

Jaya Krishna Das

Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath

Watford, Hertfordshire

WD2 8EP U.K. / day # 192 385 7244

night # 181 386 9144

He has about 58 play scripts for sale individually, which are accompanied by the play narrated on cassette tape.

Other devotees who originally presented plays for Çréla Prabhupāda's pleasure:

Nanda Kishor Das, Jahnava Dasi, Prajapati Das, Shatarupa Dasi, Lohitaksha Das, Rasajna Dasi, Nayanabhirama Das, Madhu Pandit Das, Vishnujana Swami, and others.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Obeisances unto the late Lohitaksha Das, Loka Mangala Das and Sudama Das, who both had performed many plays for the personal pleasure of their spiritual master, Çréla Prabhupāda.

Notes About This Anthology

by Dasarath Suta Das

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by Dasarath Suta Das

The authors of the plays collected in this book are mentioned whenever known, and effort was made to gain their permission. Many other plays were recently contributed specifically for this volume. It is understood that these scripts are public domain devotional offerings, and may freely be performed for non-profit purposes. Some of our sources were old manuscripts that did not preserve the names of the original authors, and so we offer our obeisances to these unknown mahatmas.

This anthology does not necessarily represent the best versions of the popular devotional plays, but only reflects the ones we could readily obtain on diskette as contributed by various authors. You may know of other plays penned by different devotees. If you have a better version of a particular play, please send it to us on diskette so it can be shared with others.

We have adopted the phonetic spelling system in this book for two reasons: first, having files devoid of diacritic systems makes the project more universally applicable; and secondly, many devotees still mispronounce many Sanskrit words and names, even when marked with diacritics. Some of these spellings may appear unusual, such as Shachi, Yudhishtira, etc., but this is how their names are actually pronounced.

Editing Standards Recommended For Play Scripts

by Radha Damodara Das

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- (1) Title is bolded and centered.
- (2) Author of script, if known, is given below title.
- (3) A list of cast required may be included next.
- (4) Scene numbers are bolded, centered, capitalized and spelled out.
- (5) Character's names are bolded, followed by a colon.
- (6) Use one space after a period, exclamation point, question mark, colon or semi-colon. NOTE: Old-fashioned typing standards called for two spaces after periods, but in the modern age of computer typesetting only one space is used.
- (7) Emphasized words should be underlined.
- (8) Stage directions and notes to the cast and director should be bolded and set in parentheses.
- (9) One line of space should be left between each character's lines.
- (10) The page number is centered at the bottom of each page.
- (11) Care should be taken that sentences and paragraphs are as brief as possible.
- (12) The details of scriptural stories should adhere closely to the original text.

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Çréla Prabhupāda On Krishna Conscious Plays

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* Dramatic Performances Are Important For Preaching

* Instructions Regarding Proper Presentation

* Regarding Krishna Conscious Puppet Shows

* Regarding Hayagriva Prabhu's "Lord Chaitanya" Play

* Regarding Girish Ghosh's "Age Of Kali" Play

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NOTE: As we know, Çréla Prabhupāda gave different instructions to different disciples according to time, place and circumstance. The following quotes are presented as a selection of his various comments in relation to drama, and not to engender blind conformity based on some of these personal references.

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Dramatic Performances Are Important For Preaching

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Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, 4.15.19 TRANSLATION

"The demigods who always travel in outer space gave King Prithu the arts to perform dramas, sing songs, play musical instruments and disappear at his will. The great sages also offered him infallible blessings. The ocean offered him a conchshell produced from the ocean."

Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, 1.11.20 TRANSLATION

"Expert dramatists, artists, dancers, singers, historians, genealogists and learned speakers all gave their respective contributions, being inspired by the superhuman pastimes of the Lord. Thus they proceeded on and on."

PURPORT

"Even one hundred years ago in India, all dramatic performances were centered around the superhuman activities of the Supreme Lord. The common people would be verily entertained by the performances of dramas, and yatra parties played wonderfully on the superhuman activities of the Lord, and thus even the illiterate agriculturist would be a participant in the knowledge of Vedic literature, despite a considerable lack of academic qualifications. Therefore, expert players in drama, dancers, singers, speakers, etc., are required for the spiritual enlightenment of the common man."

Kāñëa Book, Chapter Forty-four,

Kāñëa Recovers the Son of His Teacher

"Krishna and Balarama learned... how to set up a theatrical stage, how to decorate dramatic actors with cloth and with flower ornaments over the ear, and

how to sprinkle sandalwood pulp and water to produce a nice fragrance. They also learned... how to rehearse and act out a drama.”

Room Conversation,

Vrindaban, November 13, 1976 (761113RC.VRN)

Prabhupāda: “Take prasadam, see drama, read books, chant Hare Krishna. Bas. And if you like, you can live with us. So where is the difficulty? Anandamayo 'bhyasat.”

Kāññea Book, Chapter Seven,

Salvation of Trnavarta

“The conditioned soul has a natural aptitude to hear something about other conditioned souls in the form of fiction, drama and novel. That inclination to hear something about others may be utilized in hearing the pastimes of the Lord. Then one can immediately evolve to his transcendental nature. Krishna's pastimes are not only beautiful; they are also very pleasing to the mind. If someone takes advantage of hearing the pastimes of the Lord, the material contamination of dust, accumulated in the heart due to long association with material nature, can immediately be cleansed.”

Prabhupāda's Lectures,

Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, Los Angeles,

August 13, 1972 (720813SB.LA)

“You have got a tendency for reading book or hearing about somebody, but, generally, for our sense gratification, we hear some man and woman making love affairs and that is the subject matter of a drama or a fiction or a story. The same tendency, if you transfer for hearing about Krishna, you get liberation. It is so nice thing.”

Caitanya-caritamṛta,

Madhya-līla, 11.95 PURPORT

“There are many professional chanters who can perform congregational chanting with various musical instruments in an artistic and musical way, but their chanting cannot be as attractive as the congregational chanting of pure devotees. If a devotee sticks strictly to the principles governing Vaishnava behavior, his bodily luster will naturally be attractive, and his singing and chanting of the holy name of the Lord will be effective. People will appreciate such kirtana without hesitation. Even dramas about the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya or Sri Krishna should be played by devotees. Such dramas will immediately interest an audience and be

full of potency. The students of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness should note these two points and try to apply these principles in their spreading of the Lord's glories.”

Room Conversation on Farm Management,

Hyderabad, December 10, 1976

“By prasadam, by chanting, by drama, somehow or other bring them. That is our mission. Congregational chanting. Always festival, and we shall spend for that. Immediately arrange. If there is scarcity of money, I shall pay... I came here to see that, not to sit down in a room peacefully. So there also we shall inform the meeting that we want to propagate this Krishna consciousness movement town to town, village to village, by attracting them with musical demonstration of sankirtana, dramatic play, movie, prasadam. Somehow or other they should come to the temple, to the pandal and congregationally chant Hare Krishna mahamantra, hear Bhagavad-gétä, Bhägavatam. For this purpose, whatever expenditure is required, that you should collect and spend. This is the scheme of Hare Krishna movement.”

Prabhupäda's Lectures,

May 25, 1975 Honolulu (750525SB.HAW)

“So this Prahlada-charitra play, drama, is very instructive. Although it is not played on a very nice stage, theatrical, but the feeling expressed by the devotees in playing this Prahlada-charitra has become very successful.”

Letter to Tamala,

January 12, 1970 Los Angeles

“Here in L.A. things are going very nicely. Last night I was present in the Temple. Vishnujana played a nice short drama about Kali Yuga and its entrance. It was very nice. There were about 100 guests besides our own men.”

Letter to Nayanabhirama,

September 18, 1972 Los Angeles

“Yes, I did not see your drama in New Vrindaban about the advent of Lord Krishna. But I have heard from others that it was done very nicely, so I am very much pleased. These kinds of dramas about Krishna, Krishna's pastimes, and also Lord Chaitanya's pastimes, are very much desirable for presenting to the public widely. So if you can organize your traveling party to present such dramas all over your country and other places that will be very much appreciated. Perhaps you can work together with Vishnujana for presenting our road show opera to the public also. I had opportunity to see that opera in Pittsburgh and it was very well done,

with a lot of drama and dancing as well. You may keep me informed from time to time what is the progress of your play-acting group, Vaikuntha Players.”

Letter to Nayanabhirama,

December 22, 1971 Bombay

“I am especially pleased to hear that our KC drama program is being developed by you nicely. We have got unlimited stock for such dramas, so go on in this way, improving more and more, and Krishna will give you direction so that one day, very soon, your all dreams will come true and you will be acting our KC dramas on the Broadway.

“Everyone enjoys play-acting, only there is at present a dearth of proper material for elevating the general mass of people to the proper standards. Practically, the whole world is going to hell. There is no decency, no gentleman anywhere. So we have to portray to the people of this fallen Age of Kali-yuga what is the right standard for their behavior. When they see that, Oh, here is such nice activity, such nice people, they will automatically become changed, simply we have to engage their senses in the right taste. So this drama-playing is very good presentation for attracting their attention and displaying Krishna Consciousness very beautifully. Make everything very simple, without too much fancy costumes, and the real message will come out very nicely.

“I am encouraged to hear from you that our Delhi pandal festival was seen on TV in America and other places. We can become famous for such shows, and at the same time utilize them for giving people good information about what is the real goal of life and how to achieve it. So in combination with the others you go on thinking how to improve these KC plays and dramas and how to give the public more and more of Krishna Consciousness. That is real preaching work.”

Letter to Jayadharmā,

December 13, 1972 Ahmedabad

“I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated November 10, 1972, and I have noted the contents, along with the drama-script from Çrémad-Bhāgavatam. It is very nice. This kind of play-acting is wanted. Now introduce it to your country-men very nicely presented. Emphasis should be given to the words of Bhāgavatam, they are spiritual and will have powerful effect if someone only hears them with attention. Do not be very much enamoured by fancy costumes and stage-decorations, they will only distract. Real acting art is to know how to speak. The greatest dramas, even in your western culture, they can be played without any extra equipment. Just like your Shakespeare — sometime I saw they were playing one drama, I think Hamlet or something like that, and only two men were there on

the bare stage and everyone was praising. So the art is catching their ears. Now in that spirit go on with your work and try to do something wonderful.”

Instructions Regarding Proper Presentation

Instructions Regarding Proper Presentation

Letter to Madhudvisa,

July 29, 1972 Amsterdam

“Regarding the dramas, my point is not to deviate from gravity and compromise or distract from the situation. Keep this point in vision and continue. That is a very good proposal to stage one play based upon Lord Chaitanya. Read Teachings of Lord Chaitanya on the stage, just like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is giving instruction to Sanatana Goswami, and the actors may speak little philosophy, without need for special costumes or other things. Then kirtana. There must be always kirtana. Dialogue, kirtana; then again dialogue, again kirtana; again repeat; like that. No humor should be there, just philosophy and kirtana. If it is successful, then the same dialogue-kirtana may be followed by other sankirtana parties in Europe and America.”

Letter to Madhudvisa,

July 8, 1972 London

“Regarding your question of dancing-show, whatever it may be, it may not deviate from the real Krishna Consciousness program. We are Hari-kirtana men, that's all. We can attract people by some gorgeous show, but inside there must be strict purity and seriousness, otherwise, we shall be attracted by the gorgeous show only. There are two energies always working simultaneously, and Maya means when we diminish the spiritual energy, then automatically we become attracted to

the external dress of Maya. So I do not care very much for these plays and dramas unless they are coming directly from the Vedas. If we can recite from Bhagavad-gétä the first chapter without any need for elaborate scenery or stage-props and gorgeous dresses, that is best. Just like your Shakespeare. Macbeth may be recited by two men, without anything else, and simply by their acting ability and the meaningful words alone, they can very easily capture the entire audience and give them real substance. We have so many stories, like Jagai-Madhai, Krishna departing for Mathura, like that. Satire will not help us. Our message is very grave, and because it is the Absolute Truth, it will work without any artificial presentation.”

Letter to Vrindban Chandra,

July 23, 1971 Brooklyn

“So far these plays are concerned, they are not meant for ordinary people and if they laugh, then that is a great offense. Just like in your play “Putana Killed” there was so much laughing. So these plays are not meant for the public showing unless they are very nicely done. The audience must give grave attention. If they laugh, that is the greatest offense. Lord Chaitanya never played before ordinary men. Only before devotees. But for you to put on such plays for devotees only is not so practical. So plays of Krishna-lila should be avoided, unless it is very gravely performed. Some instructive stories from Bhägavatam may be played before the general public.”

Letter to Kirtananda,

November 6, 1971 Calcutta

“Plays will be very successful and Vrindaban Chandra is very expert in this connection. One thing, though, is that nice plays should be written for showing in the villages. The plays should be done seriously so that they will not laugh.”

Prabhupäda's Lectures,

Çrémad-Bhägavatam,

Los Angeles, June 17, 1972 (720617SB.LA)

“You have got so many books. Either chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, or read books, discuss amongst yourself. Don't waste your time by so-called drama and play. It is simply waste of time. Don't waste your time in that way. If you have got inclination to enjoy some drama, then you should take hint how that drama should be written or played. Don't manufacture. You are not so expert that you can manufacture things. That is illegal... So don't waste your time. Simply always pour in, give aural reception to the message of Urukrama.”

Regarding Krishna Conscious Puppet Shows

Regarding Krishna Conscious Puppet Shows

Letter to Harer Nama,

December 1, 1968, Los Angeles

“It is very nice that you are preparing these puppet stories of Çrémad-Bhägavatam. Such program will not fail to have an uplifting effect upon the viewers as well as the players. So do this nicely, it shall be very good.”

Letter to Harer Nama,

December 21, 1968 Los Angeles

“I was very happy to read how you are keeping nicely engaged in giving lectures at schools and preparing for a puppet show of Krishna Consciousness stories. This is very nice and if you continue to accelerate with engagements such as these, then I am sure that you will be very successful in propagating this movement of Lord Chaitanya. When Krishna sees that we are trying very sincerely to preach His message to others, He becomes very pleased and showers all blessings upon the devotee. So please continue to progress in this spirit and I am sure that Krishna will arrange to see that your future in Krishna Consciousness will be very nice.”

Letter to Mr. Jim Doody,

February 8, 1969 Los Angeles

“Please inform Gurudasa that in Los Angeles temple, Vishnujana, Shilavati, and her son, Birbhadra played a puppet show yesterday on the occasion of my Spiritual Master's Advent Day. The subject of demonstration was the story of Prahlada. It was so very nice and perfect that everyone enjoyed to the fullest extent, and everyone joined in chanting Hare Krishna. I hope that some time in the future they will be able to demonstrate many such spiritual themes for puppet shows, and people will be greatly benefited.”

Letter to Tamala Krishna,

June 1, 1969 New Vrindaban

“I have seen the pictures of your recent Festival, and it is very, very nice. I have enjoyed the pictures so nicely that I am looking always to them; although I have seen three, four times, still I am not satisfied. It is very nice. In all Festivals, if you make such puppet show, then you will be able to attract so many people.”

Prabhupāda's Lectures,

Çrémad-Bhāgavatam,

March 21, 1969 Hawaii (690321SB.HAW)

“This [Prahlada] story you know. In our Los Angeles temple they have made very nice puppet show, and people are appreciating very much. Even they are selling ticket at the rate of one dollar fifty cent, still, people are coming. Last Sunday I was present, and they invited, distributed pamphlets, and more than a hundred people came, and they participated with the kirtana very nicely, they heard the lecture, and the function was for two hours. Still, they kept very busy themselves in eating prasadam, in seeing the puppet show and the cinema of Ratha-yatra. So many things. It was very successful. And they collected about more than 150 dollars. So things have to be organized.”

Letter to Subala,

July 31, 1969, Los Angeles

“This Monday I returned from San Francisco where they performed the Ratha-yatra Ceremony, and it was tremendously successful. There were about 10,000 people who joined us for the day, beginning from 12:00 in the afternoon, and lasting till around 10:00 at night. All through the day these people were feeling the bliss of Krishna Consciousness through chanting, dancing taking prasadam, watching puppet stories about Krishna, and hearing us speak on Bhagavad-gétā. The local papers printed nice pictures and stories about our Festival.”

Regarding Hayagriva Prabhu's “Lord Chaitanya” Play

Regarding Hayagriva Prabhu's “Lord Chaitanya” Play

(Note: Çréla Prabhupāda's handwritten outline for this play is reprinted in Section Two)

Letter to Hayagriva,

May 6, 1967, New York

“You have nicely done Lord Chaitanya drama 1st Act. It is nicely done literature but when playing you will have to make it cut short otherwise it will take too long a time. I have given it over to Rayarama for reading.”

Letter to Kirtanananda,

April 7, 1967, San Francisco

“I have given a note of direction to Hayagriva for writing a drama on Lord Chaitanya and if he can deliver us a nice drama for staging in your different parts of the State it will be a great stride for our mission and I hope it will help us financially a great deal. Just you encourage Hayagriva to write this drama very nicely in so that they can be sung in western tone all over America and Europe and staged everywhere to cover our expenses.”

Letter to Hayagriva,

July 10, 1968, Montreal

“I am just organizing a Sankirtana party and if you come here, then we can make a rehearsal of the Chaitanya drama which you have already made. My idea is,

Sankirtana with some dramatic demonstration, by the members, will be attractive to the people in general. So I am trying to concentrate the idea at the present moment here in Montreal, because in the temple, we have got sufficient space and if the Sankirtana party is successful here, as we shall try to make some experiment in the local expo grounds, then we shall make a program to go to Europe, starting from London, and make demonstrations of this drama and Sankirtana in different places. I do not know how much you will appreciate this idea, but if you think it proper, you may come and join us here.”

Letter to Hayagriva,

August 12, 1968, Montreal

“They are all ready for opening up a center there, so we are going to try to make it as successful a venture as Krishna desires. While they are here, we are having rehearsal of kirtana daily, and I want also that they shall practice rehearsal of your play, about Lord Chaitanya's activities. So if you can send a copy of your drama as soon as possible, they will begin rehearsing how to do it. Please send it immediately if possible, and I shall keep you informed how they are progressing in their presentation of it.”

Regarding Girish Ghosh's “Age Of Kali” Play

Regarding Girish Ghosh's “Age Of Kali” Play

Letter to Aksayananda Maharaja,

January 13, 1976

“Dramas are alright if you can perform them nicely. Even if you don't speak them in English, they can be rendered into Hindi on the microphone while the drama goes on. But the puppet shows should be stopped. It is nonsense.

“What are those Bengali dramas that Nitai is working on? He should work on Archana-paddhati, not divert his attention here and there.”

Letter to Nitai,

January 24, 1976, Mayapura

“Please continue to work on the Archana-paddhati and finish it. We can not be sure that Pradyumna will come in time. Also, you can go on translating the drama of Girish Ghosh. Everyone here has appreciated it. As you translate the scenes, there should be people rehearsing it.”

Comments on Play,

New York, July 12, 1976 (760712BG.NY)

Prabhupāda: Yes, nice.

Sudama: Ghosh. He's a playwright. In Mayapura we received two scenes from the entire play translated in Vrndavana — in January when we were there together.

Prabhupāda: Satish Chandra or Girish Chandra?

Devotees: Girish Chandra.

Prabhupāda: Girish Chandra Ghosh.

Sudama: It is incomplete. It is only the first two scenes, and the rest of the drama is four acts of Chaitanya-lila. So we are waiting anxiously for the rest of the drama to come. Presently it is incomplete.

Prabhupāda: So how'll you show the incomplete?

Sudama: In Mayapura you were interested to see the first... or see the scene of the enemies — anger, lust, greed, envy — so we have worked on it.

Prabhupāda: Hmm. Kali, Kali-yuga.

Sudama: Yes, Kali. So as the scenes come we are planning to work on them in that succession.

Prabhupāda: You have already worked?

Sudama: Yes, on the first two scenes. ... The precedence of our work, Çréla Prabhupāda, should definitely be that the message of Krishna consciousness is clearly understood by all, is that correct?

Prabhupāda: Along with it, if you, the same thing, more demonstrative, if you put some movies...

Bali-mardana: Slides.

Prabhupāda: Slide or movie, that will be...

Sudama: Mixed media. That is also very much appealing to the public. Our future projection plan is to work on the advent of Lord Krishna for Janmastami, which is about an hour production to an hour and a half. And then we were planning to work on the Ramayana, if it was suiting or agreeable by Your Divine Grace...

Prabhupāda: So do your best, try your best. That is very good.

Sudama: Thank you, Prabhupāda.

Devotees: All glories to Çréla Prabhupāda. Jai!

Prabhupāda: Jai! (end)

Morning Walk,

Mayapur, January 17, 1976 (760117MW.MAY)

Bhavananda: Çréla Prabhupāda, I had one question about this play by Girish Ghosh. The Girish Ghosh was a debauchee, and wouldn't it be better to take, make dramas from your Çrémad-Bhāgavatam? Then the sound vibration is coming from pure source. Or does that not matter? If the man was...

Prabhupāda: No, no. First of all you see how it can be utilized, whatever translation is there. Then we shall purify it. Anukulyena kṛsnanusilanam. Just like this microphone. It is prepared by the meat-eaters. How we are utilizing it? Everything has got a proper process to purify it.

Lord Chaitanya's Involvement With Dramas

Lord Chaitanya's Involvement With Dramas

Caitanya-caritamṛta, Ādi-līla, 10.13

TRANSLATION

“Acarya-ratna was also named Sri Candra-sekhara Acarya. In a drama in his house, Lord Chaitanya played the goddess of fortune.”

PURPORT

“Dramatic performances were also enacted during the presence of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, but the players who took part in such dramas were all pure devotees; no outsiders were allowed. The members of ISKCON should follow this example. Whenever they stage dramatic performances about the lives of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu or Lord Krishna, the players must be pure devotees. Professional players and dramatic actors have no sense of devotional service, and therefore although they can perform very artistically, there is no life in such performances. Ṣṛéla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvaté Öhäkura used to refer to such an actor as yatra-dale narada, which means “farcical Narada.” Sometimes an actor in a drama plays the part of Narada Muni, although in his private life he is not at all like Narada Muni because he is not a devotee. Such actors are not needed in dramatic performances about the lives of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Krishna.

“Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu used to perform dramas with Advaita Prabhu, Srivasa Öhäkura and other devotees in the house of Chandra-shekhara.”

Prabhupāda's Lectures,

Çrémad-Bhägavatam,

Los Angeles, September 22, 1972 (720922SB.LA)

“When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu played this play, Mohini role... Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was playing drama. So Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was very beautiful. He took the part of this Mohini Murti. And she was dancing with the pot of nectar. So all the devotees, they offered their obeisances, because Mohini Murti means God's incarnation.”

Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila, 10.53

PURPORT

“Sri Madhava Ghosh performed a drama known as “Dana-khanda” with the help of Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Gadadhara Dasa. This is explained in Chaitanya-bhagavata, Antya-khanda, Fifth Chapter.”

Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila, 11.17

TRANSLATION

“Çréla Gadadhara dasa was always fully absorbed in ecstasy as a gopi. In his house Lord Nityananda enacted the drama Dana-keli.”

Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila, 10.135-136

PURPORT

“Once a friend of Bhagavan Acharya's from Bengal wanted to recite a drama that he had written that was against the principles of devotional service, and although Bhagavan Acharya wanted to recite this drama before Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Svarupa Damodara, the Lord's secretary, did not allow him to do so. Later Svarupa Damodara pointed out in the drama many mistakes and disagreements with the conclusion of devotional service, and the author became aware of the faults in his writing and then surrendered to Svarupa Damodara, begging his mercy. This is described in the Antya-lila, Chapter Five, verses 91-166.”

Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila, 2.7

TRANSLATION

“In this way Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu always expressed bewilderment and lamented in separation from Krishna. At such times He used to read the slokas from Ramananda Raya's drama known as Jagannatha-vallabha-nataka.”

Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila, 13.116-118

TRANSLATION

“While dancing and singing, all the devotees in front of Lord Jagannatha kept their eyes on Him. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then went to the end of the procession with the sankirtana performers.

“His eyes and mind fully absorbed in Lord Jagannatha, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began to play the drama of the song with His two arms.

“When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was dramatically enacting the song, He would sometimes fall behind in the procession. At such times, Lord Jagannatha would come to a standstill. When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu again went forward, Lord Jagannatha's car would slowly start again.”

Drama Performances In India

Drama Performances In India

Letter to Nayanabhirama,

January 28, 1973 Calcutta

“Here also in India we are making drama, and at our Bombay Pandal on the last evening we had one drama about Krishna and the gopis in which the gopis gave the dust of their feet for curing Krishna's headache. This was very much appreciated by the audience. So in this way we can present the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness very nicely for everyone to relish.”

Room Conversation,

Mayapur, March 1, 1977 (770301R2.MAY)

Prabhupāda: Yes. We can do everything for Krishna—for Krishna, not for personal sake. So your drama is going on.

Gargamuni: Yes, I heard about it.

Prabhupāda: Last night it was very successful.

Hridayananda: I think in India the people never become tired of Ramayana. The people here never becomes tired of seeing Ramayana.

Room Conversation,

Bombay, March 30, 1977 (770330RC.BOM)

Gopala Krishna: The drama was very appreciated last night. Samayadi was watching it with us, and he said he would like to arrange a big program in his house.

Prabhupāda: Old Samayadi or his son?

Gopala Krishna: His son. He liked the drama very much.

Lokanatha: It has become one of the main attractions of the public, this Vaikuntha Player performance. After... two nights after the program, I inquired from the public on the microphone, "Do you like this drama?" Immediately everybody raised their hands: "Yes!"

Prabhupāda: They were asking me whether they are professional men. "No, no, these all my disciples."

Gopala Krishna: They're actually much better than any of the professional men.

Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. We played Chaitanya-lila in our younger days. So we brought one very famous man, Amritlal Bose. He is one of the three chief men who started theatrical performances in Bengal. Amritlal Bose, Girish Chandra Ghosh, and one some Pathan. This Amritlal Bose was a big author also, for writing comic books. And very expert lecturer. So somehow or other, we contacted him, and we used to call him, Dada-mahashaya. Dada-mahashaya means grandfather. He was of our grandfather's age. In the evening he was drinking. Very luxurious. So when he came, he said, "Yes, I will give you direction. You are all aristocratic family. But you must know that what is the difference between this professional and this aristocratic family." So he explained that "Chaitanya-lila, in the public theater, anyone can pay eight annas." That eight annas was third-class ticket. Eight annas, one rupee, two rupees and five rupees. "So they can see Chaitanya-lila. Then where is the difference between your playing and their playing?" So he explained that "There must be some difference, that the public, after seeing your playing, they should appreciate so much that they will agree they will never see. So I want to train you like that. Are you prepared?" His first condition. So we were boys at the time... "Yes, sir. Yes. Whatever you say." Then he said, "Then I take charge of training you."

So his next condition was that "You cannot play unless I say it is all right." So we practiced for more than one year. Still, he did not say that "You are all right." He did not say. By force, practically, that "Now we shall play, sir." "All right, you can play, but it is not to my perfectional ideas." So I had the part of Advaita Acharya. So on the stage, when we saw, all the public, they are crying, the audience. Regularly crying. We could not understand how they are crying, because we are dry; we have learned how to play, that's all. But he has trained in such a way that we could appreciate everyone was crying by seeing Chaitanya, everyone was hanker to play, act. So it was due to training. He trained in such a way that we could not understand how we are playing, but the audience, they appreciated so much. Every one of them was crying. And another effect was... Because sometimes there were need of proxy. Some player has not come, and the rehearsal is going on. So the result was that each and every one of us learned the play of others. There was no scarcity of duplicate.

So that was the first and last of playing in dramatic drama in my life. Chaitanya-lila. We had own club, Indian, Indian, like that... That was the point he stressed, that "You are from the selected aristocratic family of Calcutta. You shall play, and the public theater is also playing. What should be the difference?" That was his point. So that he gave us. They were so gorgeously played. And we received so many invitations: "Please come and play in our house."

Letter to Vrindaban Chandra,

April 13, 1971, Bombay

“So you have got some talent for writing and producing dramas and now Krishna has given you the opportunity for dovetailing your talents in His service. Very good. When I go there I shall be very glad to see these dramas enacted. Yes, I acted the part of Advaita Prabhu in one such drama. I organized that theater performance in my youthhood. My friends were trained up and we performed and it was very much appreciated by the highest class of men in Calcutta. We were invited to many places to perform the drama. Lord Chaitanya inaugurated these Vaishnava dramas, it is true, but where to obtain such copies of these plays I do not know. I shall try to find out in Calcutta when I go there. While performing such dramas, always the actors must be Vaishnavas. Outsiders may help but devotees should have all the major roles. So you may perform such plays conveniently. It is a very nice program, but do not sacrifice other programs on account of it.”

Letter to Gurudasa,

May 23, 1968, Allston, Massachusetts

“A few days ago I received one letter from you in which you desired to send me one manuscript for Nimai Sannyasa drama, written by some Mr. Chatterji. Generally these dramas are sentimentalism. Those who are devotees of Lord Chaitanya, they do not discuss much about the Lord's renouncing the householder life, but there are certain persons who floodlight the renouncement of Lord Chaitanya in a materialistic sentimental way. I have seen such drama, written by Mr. Dilip Roy, and that was nearly nonsense. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu decided to accept this renounced order of life in a moment, and the business was finished in a day. But these people, in order to create a scene, they adulterate the Lord's renouncement in so many ways. So I guess in the drama of Mr. Chatterji similar such things may be included. Any drama or book written by unauthorized persons should not be indulged in.”

Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, 1.3.37

TRANSLATION

“The foolish with a poor fund of knowledge cannot know the transcendental nature of the forms, names and activities of the Lord, who is playing like an actor in a drama. Nor can they express such things, neither in their speculations nor in their words.”

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Plays

Plays

Modern Preaching Plays

The Frog In The Well

The Frog In The Well

* * * * *

CAST: Frog 1, Frog 2.

Frog 1: Ah-h-h. What a wonderful well I have! Who is there more fortunate than I am? I have my walls and my water, my walls and my water, my walls and my

water, walls, water... waw... waw... waw. (as 1 turns in all directions, praising the beauty of his wello, his babble degenerates into the mere croaking of a frog)

Frog 2: (excited—hopping into the well) My dear friend frog! Oh, my dear friend!

Frog 1: Hello. Well, where have you been?

Frog 2: I have just been to see the great ocean! And it's so-o-o big—you cannot imagine!

Frog 1: What? What is this great ocean? It couldn't possibly be as big as my well, could it?!

Frog 2: Oh, it is much bigger.

Frog 1: Come on.

Frog 2: Yeah!

Frog 1: Is it twice as big as my well?

Frog 2: MUCH bigger.

Frog 1: Is it five times as big as my well?

Frog 2: Much, MUCH bigger.

Frog 1: Is it ten times as big as my well?

Frog 2: It's much bigger than that.

Frog 1: Is it a hundred times as big as my well?

Frog 2: My dear friend frog. The great ocean is so vast that you cannot possibly imagine it. Why don't you go and see for yourself?

Frog 1: Why should I go? (irritated, begins to puff himself up) Is it—this big?

Frog 2: No, no. BIGGER.

Frog 1: THIS BIG?

Frog 2: NO, NO, NO.

Frog 1: (puffing himself up even larger) IS IT THIS BIG-G-G?!

Frog 2: No, No... oh NO!

Frog 1: IS... IT... THIS... B... I... I... (Frog 1 explodes and dies as a balloon pops offstage)

(Purport: lecture about how Prabhupāda compared the modern scientists to such frogs, who imperfectly attempt to understand what is beyond their own experience)

The End

The Drowning Man

a very popular play for street theater

The Drowning Man

a very popular play for street theater

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CAST: Man, Wife, Social Worker, Narrator.

(A man is thrashing about on stage as if drowning in the water)

Man: Help! Help! Help! I'm drowning!!! Someone please save me! Help!

Wife: Oh, no! It's Marvin! Someone help him! Please! My husband is drowning!

(Social Worker appears on the scene)

Social Worker: Don't worry, ma'am! I'll save that poor guy! I'm a social worker! Saving people is my business. Look, when people are hungry, they come to me! If they need a shirt on their backs, they come to me! If the sheriff throws them out on the street, they come to me! If they need a...

Wife: Please hurry—or it'll be too late!

(the Social Worker tears off his jacket, takes off his tie, takes off his shoes and “dives” into the imaginary lake. He “swims” over to the drowning man, grabs him and starts pulling him back to the “shore.” The victim struggles the Social Worker subdues him with a punch. At this point, the drowning man slips out of his jacket and the Social Worker “swims” back to land with the jacket. Upon reaching the shore the Social Worker yells:)

Social Worker: Everything's okay, ma'am! I told you I'd take care of him! Here he is, ma'am! I told you! I told you I'd save him!

Wife: Marvin? AAAHHHHHH!!! You fool! You didn't save Marvin! You just saved his coat! (she cries and wails over the empty coat)

Narrator: The moral of this story is that while a social worker can alleviate a person's material problems (or save his coat) he can't begin to help the real person living inside the body (the soul). Only by taking up a spiritual process can we do that. Then we can realize our spiritual nature and see the spiritual nature of others. In this age, the easiest and most recommended process of spiritual realization is to chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

The End

The Yogi's Dilemma

The Yogi's Dilemma

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Yogi, Rat, Cat, Cow, Wife, Child.

(SCENE: Yogi sitting center stage, in lotus position, absorbed in chanting Hare Krishna. Sitar music plays in background)

Narrator: Once, in the enlightened Age of Satya, deep in a sacred forest, a powerful mystic Yogi was engaged in meditation on the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna. The Yogi lived very simply, and his only possessions were his two pairs of underwear. Each day he would very meticulously wash out the used pair and hang them up to dry on a nearby bush. But then one day... (rat sneaks up and snatches the Yogi's underwear from bush, thus disturbing Yogi. Music stops)

Yogi: What's this? Someone has taken my other pair of underwear! Probably a roving rat! I must do something about this... I know! By my mystic power, I will conjure up a cat to keep away the rat who wants my underwear. Om Namō cat! (amidst thunder and flashing lights a cat appears, meowing)

Yogi: Now I can resume my sublime meditation. (music resumes, then cat meows loudly, scratches and disturbs Yogi)

Yogi: (disgusted) O my God, I forgot that a cat needs food! Well, I had better produce a cow to feed the cat, to keep away the rat that wants my underwear. Om Namō cow! (thunder/flashing lights, cow appears, swinging head and mooing)

Yogi: Ah! Now I can get back to my practices. (music resumes, then cow moos loudly, nudges Yogi, breaking his trance, stopping music)

Yogi: How stupid I am! The cow needs someone to milk her, to feed the cat, to keep away the rat, that wants my underwear. Well. By my unlimited power, I will have to create a wife. Om Namō wife! (thunder/flashing lights. Wife appears, folds hands and speaks)

Wife: O my dear, powerful Yogi, how may I serve you?

Yogi: Just milk the cow!

Wife: Yes, yes. Anything you want, my dear master.

Yogi: Now I can return to my meditation, with all my problems finally solved. (music resumes, interrupted by Wife beginning to cry)

Yogi: What's the matter?!

Wife: You don't love me! (erupts in loud crying)

Yogi: (to audience) Maybe I don't know the extent of my own power! (to Wife) You're just supposed to milk the cow! (she cries more) Alright! Alright! What do you want?

Wife: You know... (moves arms like rocking baby) Rock-a-bye...

Yogi: (gasps, turns pale) SEX! I'm a Yogi! This is too much!! (Wife cries more, Yogi surrenders reluctantly) Just so you'll leave me alone. Alright. By my divine power, I will create a child to please my wife, who milks the cow to feed the cat, to keep away the rat who wants my underwear. Om Namoh Shivaiah! (thunder/flashing lights. Child appears, smiling, very cute)

Yogi: At last! Now I can resume my yogic exercises. (music resumes, interrupted by child pleading and disturbing Yogi)

Child: (whining) Daddy, Daddy, Daddy Yogi! Daddy, I want something. I want something, I WANT something, Daddy! (cries, jabs Yogi)

Yogi: Leave me, child! Wife! Take care of him. Give him... something.

Wife: ME give him something? You're the great Yogi around here! (child bites Yogi on hand)

Yogi: Ouch!!! How can I meditate like this?! Well, I guess I'll have to tolerate all this as one of the miseries of this material life. Alright, what do you want, my dear little one?

Child: I want a pet, Daddy. A pet, Daddy. Please, Daddy, please, please Daddy. wham one, Daddy, wham one...

Yogi: Okay. I'll get you a pet. Okay, okay!!! I'll wham one for you. By my power, I summon a little dog for my son, to please my wife, who milks the cow to feed the cat, to keep away the rat who wants my underwear. Om Namoh Shivaiah! (thunder/flashing lights, dog appears)

Yogi: (looks around at all his new possessions) Finally, I can concentrate on self-realization. (music resumes, then dog approaches, growls, shakes head, puts bone in Yogi's lap, points to mouth with paw)

Dog: Uh ra ruh, Uh ra ruh!

Yogi: (sarcastically) Oh no, man's best friend? (dog points to mouth more emphatically, nudges Yogi)

Dog: Uh ra ruh, Uh ra ruh!!!

Wife: He's hungry, stupid! You never feed him, or me, or Baby Yogi here. All you do is sit around and meditate. Why don't you get a job! And since you're making so many things appear by your mystic power, I want a new tiger skin meditation mat, and some new shoes, and... and... and WHEN are we going to move out of this little dirt hut, anyway?! You bum, you social parasite! (dog growls, cat meows and menaces, cow moos)

Child: (whining) Daddy, I want another doggy, another doggy... and... and... (all animals and people press on Yogi, Wife kicks him in side)

Yogi: Enough! Enough! Enough! Om Namó SCRAM! (thunder/flashing lights. All disappear, leaving Yogi alone)

Yogi: (contemplating) This material life is too entangling. I was much happier with only two pairs of underwear. (music resumes, Yogi resumes chanting and meditation)

Narrator: This eternal dilemma, as experienced by the Yogi, demonstrates how material life cannot bring real lasting happiness, as all our plans for material

enjoyment are frustrated by the temporary and difficult nature of this world. Only when one becomes serious about the higher pleasure of Krishna consciousness can he become permanently relieved from the miseries of this world. All the fully God-conscious persons of the past have therefore accepted and taught the path of simple living and high thinking. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

(Yogi seen in meditation, rat again appears and steals underwear)

Yogi: (shrugs shoulders) Material life!

(suggested musical ending: Hansadutta Swami's "Seeing God Is Not So Easy" or Mangalananda's "Simple Living," or both)

The End

Again Become A Mouse

Punar Mushiko Bhava

by Jahnavi, age 8

Again Become A Mouse I

Punar Mushiko Bhava

by Jahnavi, age 8

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Sage, Mouse (Dog, Tiger).

Narrator: There once lived a Sage who was very pious. One day, a little mouse that was being chased by a cat entered the house of the Sage. (the Sage is studying a book as the Mouse enters)

Sage: What is the matter, my dear mouse?

Mouse: Dear sir, a cat is chasing me!

Sage: Well, why then are you coming to me?

Mouse: Dear sir, can you please change me into a cat?

Sage: Alright, you want to be a cat? I will turn you into a cat.

Mouse: YOU WILL?!

Sage: Certainly! Get ready! (swings a stick around) ABRA KADABRA BABALU!!!
MAY YOU BE A CAT!!!

Mouse: Wow! Now that I am a cat, no one can disturb me!

Narrator: The cat now thought that he was the greatest, and would climb up trees and run back down. He thought that he was the fastest, and was enjoying running all around. One day, however, a dog came and started to chase the cat.

Dog: RUFF! RUFF! RUFF!!! (Cat runs into the hut of the Sage)

Cat: Dear sir, dear sir, please help me, please help!

Sage: Now why are you here? I've helped you already; what is your problem now?

Cat: My dear sir, now a dog is chasing me. Can you make me into a dog?

Sage: You want to be a dog? Why a dog? Very well, if you really want to be a dog then I will make you into a dog. Now get ready! 1, 2, 3... (Sage makes motions)
ABRA KADABRA BABALU! MAY YOU BECOME A DOG!!!

Dog: Ha, Ha, Ha... now I am a dog! I can go anywhere and no one can agitate me. I can chase cats and eat mice!

Narrator: The dog thought that he was God, and that he could enjoy forever and would never die. But one day the dog saw a lion, and the lion started chasing the dog.

Lion: Roar-r-r-r-r! Roar-r-r-r-r!

Narrator: The dog went to the Sage once again.

Dog: Dear sir! Dear sir! Help me! Now a lion is chasing me. Could you please make me into a lion?

Sage: You want to become a lion? Ha, ha, ha! First you wanted to become a cat, then a dog, and now a lion. I can't believe it!

Dog: Can you please just change me into a lion, please?! This will be the last time, because there is no one that can defeat a lion.

Sage: Okay, I guess I will make you into a lion. Now get ready! ABRA KADABRA BABALU! MAY YOU BECOME A LION!!! (the lion looks at the Sage with a hungry face, and walks slowly toward the Sage. The lion roars very quietly and slowly) What is the matter, my dear Lion?

Lion: I am very hungry and you are the only food that I can find, so now I want to eat you.

Sage: I've given you the power to become a lion, and now you are going to eat me? Well, PUNAR MUSHIKO BHAVA!!! AGAIN BECOME A MOUSE! (Mouse is ashamed and runs back into the forest)

Narrator: (preaches about the moral of the story) The living entities are promoted and degraded by the laws of nature, but if one is very, very fortunate, by association with saintly persons he gets the seed of devotional service and thereby becomes successful. But, if one does not take advantage of that saintly association but simply desires a temporary material benefit, then one simply descends into a degraded and uncertain future. Hare Krishna!

The End

Again Become A Mouse II

Punar Mushiko Bhava

based on stories told by Çréla Prabhupāda

dramatized by Dasarath Suta Das

Again Become A Mouse II

Punar Mushiko Bhava

based on stories told by Çréla Prabhupāda

dramatized by Dasarath Suta Das

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NOTE: The dialogue for this play has been directly extracted from the transcriptions of Çréla Prabhupāda's spoken words in the following lectures:

* Çrémad-Bhāgavatam lecture—1.15.20, L.A., November 30, 1973

* Çrémad-Bhāgavatam lecture—7.12.2, Bombay, April 13, 1976

* Çrémad-Bhāgavatam 10.10.13, purport

CAST: Narrator, Saintly Person, Mouse (Dog, Tiger).

Narrator: The living entities are promoted and degraded by the laws of nature, but if one is very, very fortunate, by association with saintly persons he gets the seed of devotional service, and his life becomes successful. In this connection there is an instructive story called Punar Mushiko Bhava, which means “Again Become a Mouse.”

Once upon a time, a mouse was very much harassed by a cat, and therefore the mouse approached a saintly person with a request. People generally go to saintly persons for some material profit. That is the nature, animalistic nature. Why should you go to a saintly person for some material benefit? No. You go there to learn what is God. That is the real business. Anyway, saintly persons sometimes receive such requests. Just like Lord Shiva, his devotees are all like that mouse—they want something.

Mouse: Sir, I am very much troubled. I have come to you for some favor.

Saint: What is that?

Mouse: Now, I am a mouse. The cats give me much trouble. I cannot live peacefully on account of the cats.

Saint: So what do you want to become?

Mouse: I want to become a cat.

Saint: All right, you become a cat.

Narrator: So by the saintly person's mystic power, the mouse became a cat. Then after a few days, he again came back.

Cat: Sir, I am still bothered.

Saint: Why is that?

Cat: The dogs, they bother me very much.

Saint: Then what do you want?

Cat: Now I want to become a dog.

Saint: All right, you become a dog.

Narrator: Then after a few days, he again came back. One after the other... That is nature's arrangement—one is weak, one is strong. That is nature's arrangement. Thus after some time, he again came back:

Dog: Still they bother me, sir.

Saint: Who is that now?

Dog: The tigers are giving me much trouble.

Saint: What do you want?

Dog: I beg you to make me a tiger.

Saint: All right, you become a tiger.

Narrator: So after all, he wanted to become a tiger. By the grace of the saintly person, he became a tiger. And when he became a tiger, he began to stare at the saintly person in a particular manner, so the saintly person asked him:

Saint: What do you mean by this?

Tiger: I shall eat you!

Saint: You want to eat me?

Tiger: Yes!

Saint: Oh, you shall eat me? All right—Punar Mushiko Bhava: then you may again become a mouse. If by my grace you have become a tiger, and you simply want to eat me, so I will again condemn you to become a mouse.

Narrator: So you American people, you have become tiger now. But if you don't feel obliged to the higher power that has made you powerful, then you will again be degraded. It is proper acknowledgement if the tiger feels obliged that, "By the grace of the saintly person, I have come to the stage of becoming a tiger. I must be very much obliged to him..." But instead of becoming obliged, if you simply want to eat him, then again you become a mouse. If the saintly person has got the power to make you from mouse to tiger, then he can convert you again from

tiger to mouse. You must always remember this. So by the grace of God, Krishna, you have become so powerful a nation—rich, beautiful, educated. By the grace of Krishna you have become such, but if you forget Krishna, then you are again going to become a mouse. Remember that. Nobody will care for you. Just like the Englishmen. The Englishmen, they established the British Empire—great, powerful, the most powerful nation in the world. But now they are not so, because they misused their power. So you get power and opulence by the grace of Lord Krishna. And if you misuse it, then you become again degraded. That is happening. That is the nature's law. Nature's law.

The End

The Adventures Of Gopal Bon

based on stories told by Çréla Prabhupāda

dramatized by Dasarath Suta Das

The Adventures Of Gopal Bon

based on stories told by Çréla Prabhupāda

dramatized by Dasarath Suta Das

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NOTE: The dialogue for this play has been directly extracted from the transcriptions of Çréla Prabhupāda's spoken words in the following conversations:

* Morning Walk, Calcutta, January 30, 1973

* Room Conversation, August 11, 1973, Paris

* Morning Walk, February 10, 1975, Los Angeles

* Morning Walk, June 4, 1976, Los Angeles

* Room Conversation, June 28, 1976, New Vrindavan

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CAST: Narrator, Gopal Bon, Nawab, Minister.

Narrator: There was once a famous joker in ancient Bengal named Gopal Bon. He was jester in the court of Raja Krishna Chandra, during the period of Mohammedan rule. Formerly kings used to keep one funny man because the kings are always full of anxiety, and the court jester would give them a laugh to help them relax. Sometimes the joker even insults the king, and the king enjoys that insult. So here we will see how our Gopal Bon gets into mischief with the Mohammedan Nawab (Governor) who ruled over the kingdom of Bengal in days of yore.

Nawab: Gopal Bon, I have heard you are very expert. Can you write a book similar to the Mahabharata, but about me and my kingdom?

Gopal: Oh, yes! I'll engage many panditas, and we will make a grand Mahabharata that narrates your activities, your glories, everything. Just give me one hundred thousand rupees, and we will begin.

Nawab: All right, here, you can take it.

Narrator: A week later, Gopal Bon returned to the Nawab for more money.

Gopal: Dear Nawab, the work on your Mahabharata is going on very nicely. Just give me another ten thousand rupees.

Nawab: All right, here, you can take it.

Narrator: A week later, Gopal Bon returned to the Nawab for more money.

Gopal: Dear Nawab, the work on your Mahabharata is going on very nicely. Just give me another ten thousand rupees.

Nawab: All right, here, you can take it.

Narrator: A week later, Gopal Bon returned to the Nawab for still more money.

Gopal: Dear Nawab, the work on your Mahabharata is going on very nicely. Just give me another ten thousand rupees.

Nawab: Gopal Bon, when will the book be finished? You have already taken so much money!

Gopal: Yes, yes, it is just on the verge of being finished. It will take only a few days more. Just give me another ten thousand rupees.

Nawab: All right, here, you can take it.

Narrator: A few days later, Gopal Bon returned to the Nawab for more money.

Gopal: Dear Nawab, the work on your Mahabharata is going on very nicely. Just give me another ten thousand rupees.

Nawab: Gopal Bon, you told me the book would be finished in just a few days! You have already taken so much money, now where is my Mahabharata?

Gopal: Now, sir, everything is already prepared. Only one last bit of information remains that is very essential. You must give me those details, and then the Mahabharata will be finished.

Nawab: What is that information?

Gopal: The one missing detail is—you have to tell me how many husbands your wife has.

Nawab: Huh?

Gopal: How many husbands does your wife have?

Nawab: This is very insulting! What kind of nonsense are you asking?!

Gopal: Well, that is the main subject matter of the Mahabharata. Draupadi had five husbands, but you are such a great person, your wife must have at least one dozen.

Nawab: That is the subject matter of the Mahabharata?

Gopal: Yes, that is the only subject matter, that Draupadi had five husbands. You are such a big Nawab, your wife must have at least one dozen husbands. So please give me their names. Otherwise, how can I finish your Mahabharata?

Nawab: (becoming very angry) Don't talk all this nonsense! No, no, I don't want you to write something like that. I am the only husband of my wife!

Gopal: Then I cannot finish your Mahabharata. How can I write it without this central feature?

Nawab: Here—take another ten thousand rupees, just stop all this nonsense. Tell me, Gopal, what is the difference between you and an ass?

Gopal: (immediately measures the distance from the Nawab to himself) It is three feet only, sir. The difference is only three feet. (everyone begins to laugh)

Nawab: Very funny! Now get out of here! (Gopal leaves, giggling with a smirk)

Narrator: So Gopal Bon's great Mahabharata, supposedly glorifying the puffed-up Nawab, was never finished... if it was ever started in the first place!

Nawab: Minister, I just have to get even with that rascal, Gopal Bon. Perhaps you would be willing to help me fulfill my wish. I hear that Gopal Bon is constructing a new house. And because the house is not yet established according to traditional rituals, no activities like passing stool are permitted therein. But if you go to his house and somehow evacuate before the opening ceremony and thus pollute the new construction, then I'll give you one thousand rupees.

Minister: Yes, Your Majesty, I'll go and do it. I won't fail you, I promise. (he goes to Gopal Bon's house) Gopal Bon! Oh! I am very much called by nature. Kindly show me where your privy is. I have to pass stool.

Gopal: (aside to audience) Now why has this man come here just to evacuate? I can understand that something suspicious is going on! (addresses Minister) Yes, yes, dear Minister, come in, come in, come in. My new privy is just in here. (he opens the door and brings in a big stick)

Minister: Why you have brought that big stick?

Gopal: The door must stay open. You pass stool there, and I'll just see that you pass only stool. Yes, you can pass stool, but if you pass one drop of urine, I'll kill you!

Minister: How is it possible to pass stool but not pass even a drop of urine?

Gopal: No, it is possible! You can pass stool, but you cannot pass urine. If you pass urine, then I shall kill you!

Minister: Aren't you being a bit absurd with such an unusual request?

Gopal: Certainly not! You said you came here to pass stool; that you can do here, but I forbid you to pass urine.

Minister: Well, I don't think I can follow your ridiculous rule!

Gopal: If it is not possible, then I cannot allow you to pass anything in my new house! Yes, this is my policy. Have a nice day!

Commentary by Çréla Prabhupāda

Commentary by Çréla Prabhupāda

Narrator: These are some of the historical anecdotes of ancient Bengal narrated to us by Çréla Prabhupāda. Of course, His Divine Grace always quoted these stories in support of some point of Krishna conscious philosophy that he happened to be preaching at the moment. For example, he told the story of Gopal Bon's bogus Mahabharata in relation to his criticism of the rascal scientists, who attempt to produce life by chemical manipulation but still manage to earn financial support by their empty promises of future success. Prabhupāda said during a Room Conversation, June 28, 1976, in New Vrindavan:

So these rascal scientists are doing like that. They are writing Gopal Bon's Mahabharata, and the rascal government is paying them. At the end, they ask how many husbands your wife has got. They'll never be able to produce anything. When you challenge them, they reply "That we cannot say." As soon as you say "Make an egg," they reply "That we cannot say." And they'll chant "Chemical evolution, chemical evolution" and get Nobel Prize. Rascals. But how the people are so foolish that they believe in this?

Regarding the incident of the King's man trying to evacuate in Gopal Bon's unfinished house, Çréla Prabhupāda compared this to his own position of constantly traveling around the world, but still having no permanent residence. He stated during a Morning Walk, February 10, 1975, in Los Angeles:

Krishna has given me hundreds of such places but His order is “You cannot stay.” (laughter) I'll tell you one humorous story in this connection. It is a little long. I don't wish to divert your attention. Very interesting story. That is also mentioned in the Bhagavad... aniketa. One may have many nice places to live; still, he should think that “I have no place to live.” That is one of the spiritual items... [then he tells the story] ... (laughs) So that is my position. “You may have hundreds of places, but you cannot live anywhere.” That is Krishna's order.

He used this same anecdote another time in reference to some meeting where apparently he was invited to speak, but wasn't provided a microphone that was necessary for the people in the room to hear him. He said during a Room Conversation, August 11, 1973, Paris:

So these, these foolish scientific men, “You can speak, but if you use microphone, then I'll kill you.” Yes. The Gopal Bon's policy. They would not say: “Not allow.” But in a different way. For political diplomacy. Not directly: “No.” But creating such position, it is not.

Regarding the insult delivered by Gopal Bon comparing the king to an ass, Çréla Prabhupāda extensively related the following topics during a Morning Walk in Calcutta, January 30, 1973:

Although Krishna is not conquerable, but He likes to be conquered by His devotee. That is the position. Just like He willingly placed Himself to be conquered by Mother Yashoda, to be conquered by Radharani, to be conquered by His friends. Krishna became defeated and He has to take His friend on the shoulder. Practically sometimes we see that a king keeps a joker amongst his associates, and sometimes the joker insults the king, and the king enjoys. The joker sometimes... Just like there is a famous joker, Gopal Bon, in Bengal. So one day the king asked him, “Gopal, what is the difference between you and an ass?” So he immediately measured the distance from the king. He said, “It is three feet only, sir. The difference is only three feet.” So everyone began to laugh. And the king enjoyed that insult. Because sometimes it is required.

So Krishna also... Everyone praises Him in exalted position. Everyone. That is Krishna's position—the Supreme Lord. In Vaikuntha, there is only praising. There is no such thing as insult. But in Vrindavan Krishna is free to accept insult from His devotee. The people do not know that, what is Vrindavan life. So devotees are so

exalted. Radharani orders, "Don't allow Krishna to come here." Krishna cannot come in. He flatters the other gopis: "Please allow Me to go there." They reply: "No, no. There is no order. You cannot go." So Krishna likes that.

The End

The Wedding Party

by Sada Ruchi Das

The Wedding Party

by Sada Ruchi Das

* * * * *

CAST: Man, Wife, Boatman.

Boatman: All aboard! All aboard! 5 rupees.

Man: Right this way, dear. We will take this boat to the other side of the river and soon we will be at our wedding party.

Wife: Oh, it sounds so romantic and adventurous!

Man: How much for the boat ride, mister?

Boatman: 5 rupees.

Man: 5 rupees! That's way too much! What do you think? We are rich or something?

Boatman: Alright, then. For you, I make no profit.

Wife: Don't be such an old miser, dear. Give the poor man what he wants.

Man: Whatever you say, my love. Here you are, Boatman—5 rupees. Now get us across the river before nightfall. We are going to our own wedding party.

Boatman: Well come aboard, then. The sooner we leave, the sooner we will get to our destination. (Boatman starts rowing, and a minute or two later lights go down)

Wife: (after a pause) It sure is taking a long time getting across this river. How much longer will it take? I told you, George—we should have just taken that bridge down the road.

Boatman: We should be there very soon. It's either the wind or the current flowing against us.

Man: (after another pause) For crying out loud! Just how long does it take to get across this river? You've already been rowing for hours.

Boatman: Just take it easy and relax. We are almost there.

Man: I could probably have made better time by swimming across.

Boatman: Sir, we will surely be there by tomorrow. So please relax and leave the rowing to me. (the man and woman fall asleep, then the lights come on)

Man: We are not there yet? Boatman, what have you been doing all night? We should have been on the other side hours ago! Have you been rowing the boat in circles? It looks like we are at the same location we were in when we first started! Well? What do you have to say for yourself? (wife starts to cry, man turns to her) What's wrong with you, why are you crying?

Wife: We had to spend our whole wedding night on this stupid boat, and we're still getting nowhere!

Boatman: I don't understand this. There must be some logical explanation. Wait a minute! What is that rope doing hanging over the side of the boat?

Man & Wife: You forgot to untie the rope from the dock!

Man: How can anyone be so stupid as to try to leave with the boat still tied to the dock? You simply wasted our valuable time!

Wife: Mister, you have no intelligence! Let's go back, George, and start over again.

Boatman: When it comes to doing business, you can't become attached.

(Man and Wife exit, then one returns to give the purport)

The Analogy

The Analogy

What you just saw was an analogy to show what happens to a living entity who takes to the spiritual path while still maintaining material attachments. Since the boat was still tied to the dock, it could not make it to its destination. So similarly, the living entity who is trying to reach the spiritual world of Lord Sri Krishna will not succeed as long as he is holding onto material attachments. Lord Sri Krishna clearly explains in the Bhagavad-Gétä:

vita-raga-bhaya-krodha

man-maya mam upasritah

bahavo jnana-tapasa

puta mad-bhavam agatah

“Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me—and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.” (4.10)

So, if we simply attach ourselves to the chanting of the holy names of Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, then we will be able to give up our sense gratification and material attachments. Thus we may ultimately attain transcendental love for Krishna. Thank you very much. Hare Krishna!

The End

The Sage's Story (#1)

by Sakshi Gopal Das

The Sage's Story (#1)

by Sakshi Gopal Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Sage, Sannyasi, Brahmachari, Prince, Butcher.

(Narrator reads the poem as Actors act it out and speak their own lines in time)

(1)

A gifted sage with mystic sight once walked along a road,

Unattached to hearth and home—the world was his abode—

He came upon a mendicant, a sannyasi by his dress,

Who greeted him with shining face. The sage addressed him “Yes,

O noble soul, you've realized the goal of human life—

And left behind the mortal world of fleeting gain and strife.

You wander and enlighten men, and with your every breath

You glorify the Supreme Lord, who dwells in every breast.

A paramahansa such as you—MAY EITHER LIVE OR DIE—

Because you know the Supreme Truth, there's never cause to sigh,

To hanker or lament for nought, except to serve the Lord—

The constant sight of Whom for you is in itself reward.”

And with a bow he left him, having nothing more to say.

With dusty road beneath his feet, he went upon his way.

(2)

His footsteps led him to a stream and through a leafy wood.

And seeing there a saintly youth he stopped and asked him, “Should

You wander in these forest groves of thorns and wild beasts?”

“I search for fruit,” the youth replied. “For roots and herbs to eat,

To offer to my guru, whom I've served for many years.

Please, won't you come and be his guest—his ashram's very near?”

“I thank you for your kindness and your hospitality.

I see that you're a humble monk of much austerity.

Your vow of brahmacharya and your service to your master

Will bring you great reward when you depart for the hereafter.

Because your life is so surrendered—YOU MAY DIE TODAY—

So you can taste the nectar that awaits, without delay.”

And with a smile he left him, having nothing more to say.

With sun and sky above his head, he went upon his way.

(3)

The roadway wound around a hill and down towards a town

From where an entourage approached, a prince of wide renown,

Who left his horse and, bowing low, addressed the humble sage,

“My Lord, we're blessed to meet you here—your wisdom and your age

Can guide all men along the path of righteousness and glory.

Pray, will you please narrate to us some transcendental story?”

With folded hands he stood before the sage, who knew the lives

Of royal men, whose opulence of palaces and wives

Remain a source of blind attachment, sin and degradation—

Which lead the soul to lower births and hellish incarnation.

“Because you now enjoy the best this fleeting world can give

Without a thought for future lifetimes—BEST YOU ALWAYS LIVE.”

And then he turned and left him, having nothing more to say.

With mind intent upon the Lord, he went upon his way.

(4)

Some houses, soon the sage passed by, and in the fading light

Beheld a man with blood-soaked clothes—a truly dreadful sight.

With hardened eyes and sharpened knife he stood there on the street—

A butcher selling carcasses of chickens, goats and sheep.

“A sadhu!” scoffed the butcher as the humble sage drew near—

Until the sage addressed him in a voice both grave and clear,

“What suffering you daily cause to creatures such as these!

You slaughter them to cut them up and sell them, as you please.

But you should know that punishments await you soon in hell

That you can scarce imagine now, 'though I may try to tell.

In life you cause great suffering—in death you'll surely cry,

So best for you, and all concerned—YOU NEITHER LIVE NOR DIE.”

Without a glance he left him, having nothing more to say.

With Krishna's name upon his lips, he went upon his way.

The End

The Sage's Story (#2)

“The King Who Sought The Absolute”

by Phani Bhusana Das

The Sage's Story (#2)

“The King Who Sought The Absolute”

by Phani Bhusana Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, King, Priest.

Narrator: A glorious sacrifice was performed to sanctify the country and the earth on which we all reside. The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead have been sung, along with numerous other Vedic mantras. The entire atmosphere has been cleansed, and charity is prepared for distribution to all in attendance, The king has taken a humble seat beside the presiding priest. Smoke rises from the fire as the offered grains and fruit combined with ghee produce a pleasant air of purity for everyone's mind and soul.

King: (to priest) Before dispensing the wealth amassed in the form of a feast to the people at large, I beg that you bestow your blessings upon the immediate participants who have witnessed this rite. Will you not bestow upon each your special gifts of good wishes?

Priest: My dear ruler of the land, if it pleases you, I shall bless these individuals as I see fit. Kindly be attentive and try to comprehend my intentions.

King: We will do so. (looks about)

Priest: First, your son the Prince—I bless him that he should live but he should not die. (everyone assumes pleased expressions) And here, the son of the brahmana—I bless him that he should die immediately. (everyone looks about in astonishment) This hunter, the animal slaughterer—I bless him that he should not live and that he should not die. (more amazement and confusion on their faces) And the Vaishnava, the devotee of Lord Krishna—he is blessed that he should either live or die. (all fall silent)

King: My dear Priest, I have attempted to understand your prayers, but I am incapable of doing so. I believe the others are also feeling some confusion as to the meaning of your words. Though clear, the thoughts behind them remain beyond us. Kindly explain the inner purpose of your blessings.

Priest: Yes, yes, my King. I shall, I shall. The Prince lives a life of luxury, enjoying all the pleasures of a worldly man. At your expense, his senses are gratified in every conceivable way. Yet when death comes, so does the karma—his karmic reactions will be equivalent to his pleasures. He will suffer great distresses after the demise of this royal form. Therefore I said that he should live, but he should not die.

Next, the son of the austere brahmana—this boy is undergoing the same difficulties as his aspiring father, performing great voluntary tribulation in this life. The result of this pious lifestyle and all his penances is a great reward. In his next life, he will be awarded a place among the demigods in a heavenly abode. So that he reaps the benefits as soon as possible, I said that he should die immediately.

As for the butchering hunter—his life is hellish in itself, full of cruelty and bloodshed. Intense pain and fear are always at hand. And such a person's afterlife repays him fully, misdeed by misdeed. Thus I blessed him that he should not live and that he should not die.

Now, the devotee of Sri Krishna—the humble Vaishnava is always bowing down before God and chanting His glories. He is humbler than a straw in the street, more tolerant than a tree. He is ready to offer all respects to every living entity, yet is not expecting any respect in return. In such a state of mind, the devotee is fully engaged in transcendental devotional service to Lord Krishna twenty-four hours a day. For such a devotee, with his life surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, death brings no change, for his mood of ecstatic

service carries him closer to his object of worship with every act, and with each recitation of Krishna's holy name. Therefore, O King, I've blessed the devotee that he may either live or die.

King: We thank you for your blessings, and even more, for the lessons they hold.

Narrator: There are caste divisions and orders of life designated by actions of occupational duty and progress on the path of self-realization. Yet, if one can become a devotee, a soul situated in transcendence, he is freed from all material conceptions. One may immediately come to the sublime state of God-consciousness by chanting Krishna's holy names. As stated in the Brihan-Naradiya-Purana:

harer nama harer nama

harer namaiva kevalam

kalau nasty eva nasty eva

nasty eva gatir anyatha

“In the iron age of Kali, there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way, but to chant the holy names, chant the holy names, chant the holy names of the Lord.”

King: I realize now that Lord Sri Krishna is Himself the Absolute Truth. (begins kirtan)

The End

Birdcage (#1)

by Sakshi Gopal Das

Birdcage (#1)

by Sakshi Gopal Das

* * * * *

CAST:Narrator, Bird, Antique Dealer, Lady, Lady's Friends.

(Narrator reads the poem as Actors act it out and speak their own lines in time)

1 Exquisitely the cage was wrought with pillars carved in jade

And perches made of ivory, all beautifully inlaid

With semi-precious stones and pearl that glittered in the light

Reflected off the marble floor—a truly royal sight.

2 She saw it through the doorway as she passed by on the street—

Standing in the corner of the shop that sold antiques.

She went inside and asked the man “That cage is very nice,

But tell me where it's come from—and I want to know the price.”

3 “The Queen of Sheba owned it once,” the man replied with haste.

“A very rare and fine antique for people who've got taste.

A bit of polish here and there will bring it up a treat—

But don't forget the bird inside, he also needs to eat.”

4 She took it home that very day and placed it in the hall,

Beside the walnut writing desk that stood against the wall.

It sparkled as the evening sun shone through the open door

For she'd washed it down and polished it until her arms were sore.

“Feed me! Feed me!” sang the bird. “Feed me please!” he cried—

But the lady only saw the cage and not the bird inside...

5 That night when she lay down to sleep, she dreamt of royal cages,

The kind enjoyed by kings and queens and princes through the ages.

She dreamt of Chinese Mandarins, of Rajahs and of Sheiks—

But no one had a cage to match her newly found antique.

6 When at last the sun arose she woke up from her sleep,

And 'though she wasn't washed or dressed she ran to take a peep

And stood there in the hallway gazing at her new possession—

But didn't hear the plaintive call, so great was her obsession.

“Feed me! Feed me!” called the bird. “Feed me please!” he cried—

But the lady only saw the cage and not the bird inside...

7 She thought a party would be nice—in honor of the cage.

So, going through her address book she went from page to page,

Inviting all the people whom she wanted to impress

To come for tea on Saturday—"Repondez S'il Vous Plais."

8 She hardly could contain herself while sending out the cards,

For thinking curtains would be nice—so purchased several yards

Of silk brocade to make the cage more beautiful than ever—

And stayed up sewing all night long, so great was her endeavor.

9 On Thursday night she started making all the preparations—

From currant buns to angel cakes, in great anticipation

Of all the guests who said they'd come to see the new antique—

The Vicar, Mrs. Balderdash, and all her social clique.

10 She cleaned the cage on Friday 'till it sparkled like a pin,

But never saw the starving bird who begged for food within.

And then—forgotten far too long—he tumbled from his perch,

Yet managed, with his dying breath, a final, feeble chirp—

“Feed me! Feed me!” gasped the bird. “Feed me please!” he cried—

And then, without another word, he breathed his last... and died.

11 On Saturday she cleaned the cage and polished it with pride,

Quite unaware the bird was dead and lying there inside,

But by the time the doorbell rang the smell was growing strong.

She thought, “Although I've cleaned the cage, there's something very wrong!”

12 In two's and three's the guests arrived and gathered in the hall,

Around the polished birdcage as it stood against the wall.

But all agreed it smelled so bad it really was absurd,

That only one with half a brain would fail to feed the bird.

13 Shocked at her shortsightedness they asked her why she'd never

Thought to give the bird some food, enquiring "Is it clever

To only see the cage and not the bird who lives within?

You've killed it with your negligence—it really is a sin."

14 "The cage, my dear, is very nice, as anyone can see,

And shouldn't be neglected by the likes of you and me,

But what a dreadful thing you've done—so foolish and absurd—

To think the cage is everything, and never feed the bird!"

15 So great was her embarrassment she tried to run and hide,

But slipped upon the Persian rug and fell upon her side—

Into the antique birdcage which then toppled to the floor

And broke into a thousand pieces, some say even more.

16 Exquisitely the cage was wrought with pillars carved in jade

And perches made of ivory, all beautifully inlaid

With semi-precious stones and pearl that glittered in the light,

Until it smashed upon the floor—no more a royal sight.

17 For those who haven't understood, we'll leave you with a clue:

The pampered cage is flesh and bone, the woman really you

Who think this body all in all, who kill the soul inside,

And waste the chance of human life—misled by foolish pride.

The End

Bird In The Cage (#2)

Bird In The Cage (#2)

* * * * *

CAST: American Tourist, His Wife, Son, Devotee, Shopkeeper, Bird.

PROPS: Bird cage, assorted antiques, book-bag and a book for devotee, and also props for individual players.

(Family is walking along the street)

Devotee: Excuse me, sorry to trouble you, we're asked to pass out these nice books today. (Shopkeeper takes one) It's all about God and the Soul. (Shopkeeper slams the book shut, hands it straight back to the devotee)

Shopkeeper: I am not interested in this kind of rubbish. Now, will you excuse me? I am late in opening my shop... Why don't you go and get a job, anyway? (And he stomps off, opens his shop door and goes inside. Enter Yank, his wife and son)

Devotee: Excuse me, Sir, sorry to trouble you. I am just passing out these nice books today. They are all about yoga.

Son: Daddy, What's yoga?

Yank: Yoga, well, that's what you get down at the grocer's.

Devotee: Have a look at the pictures inside.

Yank: Hey, this is a mighty impressive book you have here. What did you say it's all about?

Devotee: It tells all about God and the Soul. This book tells you how we are not this body, but we are the Soul within the body. (Wife grabs book, gives it straight back to devotee and says to her husband:)

Wife: You don't want that, honey, you want me!

Yank: (to Devotee) Sorry, son, better luck next time! (Devotee shrugs shoulders, says Hare Krishna and walks off)

Wife: (to Husband) Sure is swell to be here in little old London and see all these wonderful historic places!

Yank: Yes, I think we have seen just about everything — Madame Tussauds, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square. It's been real educational.

Wife: Hey, honey, what are we going to bring home for the folks as a souvenir from our holiday?

Yank: I don't know! What do you think we should get?

Wife: What about Buckingham Palace?

Son: Can we, daddy, can we get Buckingham Palace, daddy?

Yank: I don't know if the Queen wants to sell it. I think we should get something else.

Wife: I know, what about St. Paul's Cathedral?

Son: Yes, yes, let's get it, let's get it, let's get the Cathedral!

Yank: Well, I heard they sold it to the Communists. Hey look, honey, there's one of those antique shops. Of course, we can find something to take home there. (finally Yanks enter shop. The Shopkeeper is engrossed in polishing, decorating the cage, completely absorbed in cleaning meditation)

Wife: (to Husband) Hey, honey, look at these wonderful antiques! Isn't this place fantastic? (Shopkeeper gets up and goes to greet the customers with a very posh accent)

Shopkeeper: Hello, good morning, very pleased to meet you, welcome to our humble establishment "PONSON DAY, PONSON DAY & SMITHERS" — Antique dealers to the royal family. I am very pleased to meet you.

Yank: Very pleased to meet you, Sir. We're looking for some little knick-knack souvenir to bring home for the folks, something with culture, a little bit of old England.

Shopkeeper: Oh, yes, I am sure we can find you something. We have very fine antiques here. (Wife sees the birdcage)

Wife: Honey, that's just what we want — look at that cage, it's fantastic! We've gotta have it!

Yank: Well, that's a mighty fine cage, I am sure that will look real nice in our living room back in Texas.

Son: Yes, can we have it daddy, can we have it?

Shopkeeper: Ah... actually, ah... That's very special... I wasn't thinking of just selling that... Perhaps I could interest you in something else, such as this guitar. This is the original, used by William Shakespeare to sing love songs to Queen Elizabeth I, and it is over 100 years old. These are the original strings on it and it's in perfect condition. I think this is what you want.

Wife: We want this cage. This cage is beautiful. Just look at all the decorations and this shiny gold border. This is fantastic!

Yank: My honey wants this cage, we are not interested in any of these fiddles, you know... guitars! We want this cage. It's really beautiful!

Shopkeeper: Ah... well... ah... Hang on just one moment. (he finds a plate) Now, if you are really after some history — this plate was used by William the Conqueror, after he won the battle of Hastings in 1066, and this has been used by great kings throughout the ages. It is solid gold. I am sure this is just what you are looking for.

Wife: (to Husband) Even our dogs eat off better plates than that. I want this cage. This cage will look real swell in our living room. We gotta have it! We gotta have it!

Yank: My honey wants this cage — you know we gotta have it. You just tell me the price and we'll take it.

Shopkeeper: Ah... well... actually... ah, I am rather fond of this cage. It's been in my possession for the last 20 years. I am quite fond of it, you know. (laughs a little) Anyway, this is rather special. It has quite a history, you know. It was carved

in 1843 for Queen Anne. It had been in the royal household since that time. In the 1930's it was given to my father, and we have had in our family ever since... ah, just see the exquisite craftsmanship on this cage. Each bar has been hand-carved to display dancing peacocks and then has been inlaid with brass and silver decorations all over. Just see these noble lion's feet here. Such exquisite carving! This perhaps is the only one of it's type. It is overlaid with gold leaf that was brought all the way from the Orient, and the entire structure is made from African mahogany, the rare tree found in the Nagaria forest, chopped down by the natives, carried by elephants for 2,000 miles to the coast and shipped to Britain. One has to marvel at the ingenuity.

There are three doors in the cage which can be closed by a very clever mechanism here and here, and the whole thing is able to fold up and be put into it's own carrying case. It's such a fantastic antique. Just as I say, I have been looking after it for so long, so, really I am very reluctant to part with it after so many years. I... I... since the cage came to me, I... have cared for it lovingly. I repair any of it's problems and have nursed it through good and bad times. Even in the last war, during the time when the bombs were dropped, we took the cage down to the bomb shelter and looked after it to see that it was alright. Yes, Sir, this cage means a lot to me... I just don't know how I can sell it after so many years.

Wife: We've gotta have it, we've gotta have it!!!

Yank: My honey wants this cage, and we are willing to pay anything. Anything you want, we will pay.

Shopkeeper: Ah, well, okay, I am afraid this cage is going to cost at least a quarter million pounds.

Yank: It's nothing, it's chicken feed! (during all this time, bird in the cage has been chirping and complaining very vigorously and demanding food, trying to catch the Shopkeeper and Yank's attention, bouncing up and down, rattling the bars, trying to reach out, trying to eat the bars, etc.)

Honey, it's well worth it, you know, it is a wonderful cage with history in it. It's so beautiful. We've gotta have it to take back to Texas. Okay, if you want it then we just gotta have it. It is a mighty fine antique. (takes out his money and hands it over to Shopkeeper) Okay, wrap it up and we'll take it with us. (Bird groans loudly and dies)

Son: Hey daddy, there's a dead bird in the cage!

Shopkeeper: Ah... ah... We can just sweep him out of there. The cage is perfectly alright. We can just take the bird out of there. Nothing to worry about.

Yank: You better get that bird out of there. We don't want a dead bird in our cage. (Shopkeeper pulls the bird out)

Son: Look, daddy, the cage has suddenly gone all dull.

Yank: The cage doesn't look like it used to. Are you sure you are selling me a genuine antique?

Shopkeeper: Ah, yes... it should be perfectly alright. You mean... fancy... ah, lost its color like that. Very strange. Anyway, I'm sure it's going to be alright; just polish it a little bit more. (Shopkeeper tries to polish cage)

Yank: You don't seem to be having the right effect on it. (Shopkeeper polishes harder, gold plating comes off on his hand, then whole thing just falls apart)

Yank: I think your cage is beginning to fall apart, there, Sir.

Shopkeeper: I used to do this for years and years and it has always been in good condition before now... first time the cage completely disintegrated.

Yank: I don't thing much of your cage, you know. I don't think it's a real antique at all.

Wife: Come on, honey, lets go see the change of the guards, perhaps we can buy a regiment or two to take home to Mangy Ranch! (they exit in a clamor)

Devotee: (comes on and preaches the philosophical moral of the story to the audience)

The End

The Striking Of The Body Parts

by Phani Bhusan Das

The Striking Of The Body Parts

by Phani Bhusan Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Head, Eyes, Mouth, Nose, Arms & Hands, Legs & Feet.

Narrator: Ladies and gentlemen. The following play is based upon examples given by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Çréla Prabhupāda, Founder-

Acharya of ISKCON, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, as found in his books on bhakti-yoga.

Nearly every day, in the newspaper, on the radio and T.V., we hear of organizations of people going on strike when they feel they are being treated unfairly. There are teacher strikes, student strikes, police strikes, union strikes, garbage men strikes. So now the story of quite an unusual strike will be told—The Striking of The Body Parts!

* * * * *

Narrator: Once upon a time, all the body parts called a meeting. They were dissatisfied with the arrangement of things. Each part claimed it was working so hard, yet the stomach was reaping all the benefits. They could all agree that this was unfair.

Everyone: Unfair! Unfair! Unfair!

The Hands: We're picking. We're choosing. We're doing so much work. We use our skill to cut and clean and deliver, but the stomach takes everything—and we're left empty-handed.

The Arms: Yeah! We're carrying everything, too.

Narrator: The eyes, the nose, and the mouth put forth their pleas.

The Eyes: I always look for the most attractive items, but it's just a flash in the pan for me—because the stomach always gets it in the end.

The Nose: I'm in charge of quality control—without me, the stomach wouldn't know what was good as what was bad.

The Mouth: Yeah! I chew, and it's true. I get to taste a little, but soon it's gone down there to the stomach. Taste and chew that's all I do; but soon it's through. I'm fed up with this!

Narrator: The lower half set up a faction and spoke in unison.

The Legs and Feet: You think you all got it bad? Well, we're carrying the weight of the whole operation. We're standing long hours in the kitchen, and walking all around and standing in long lines at the grocery store. Then, after the stomach is happily filled to capacity, we're expected to keep dragging the stomach all around. The evidence stands on its own merit. We must strike!

Everyone: Strike! Strike! Strike!

Narrator: ...And all fell silent. And thus, the parts of the body went on strike against the stomach. But they didn't get what they wanted. No, quite the contrary. They all began to feel weak and shaky; but out of stubbornness, they continued their strike against the stomach.

The lower half refused to work for the stomach, but was feeling very tired...

The eyes wouldn't even look at any more food...

The nose simply held itself away from all fragrant edibles...

The mouth, in protest, remained silent and refused to chew anything...

The hands, holding the strongest grudge against the stomach, didn't even care that they were becoming weaker and weaker... In fact, one time the hand went out on its own and tried to enjoy by itself... but its attempts were fruitless. All fruitless...

After that, the body parts decided to call another meeting. For it seemed to them that the stomach, though not being fed, was still as fired up as always. It was as if the stomach was actually benefitting from the rest, while the other parts felt great fatigue.

The Leg: I don't mind doing my part as long as I get some energy back.

Narrator: The head spoke for the group this time.

The Head: I don't know if I'm coming or going—let's break this strike!

Narrator: The arms and hands were raised in surrender.

The Legs and Feet: Let's break this strike!

Narrator: The hand pointed out:

The Hand: Just see what happened when I tried to enjoy by myself. Look what mess I made of everything!

Everyone: We must serve the stomach. It's the only way we can survive. Yeah. Break, break! Serve the stomach, serve the stomach, break the strike!

Narrator: So the strike was broken when the body parts again took up their constitutional positions in service to the stomach. Just as the various parts of the body are rightly situated in service to the stomach, since the stomach is the source of energy which extends to every part of the body; or, just as pouring water on the root of a tree energizes its leaves, twigs and branches—similarly, the individual spirit soul is rightly situated in his constitutional position as servant to Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the cause of all causes, source of all sources, the supreme enjoyer and maintainer of all that be.

We invite you to re-establish your constitutional position simply by chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

For further information, consult the Bhagavad-Gétä As It Is, translation and purports by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Çréla Prabhupäda. Thank you very much.

The End

The Revolt Of The Parts Of The Body

by Brajendra Nandana Das

The Revolt Of The Parts Of The Body

by Brajendra Nandana Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Hand, Foot, Ear, Eye, Nose, Mouth, Brain.

Narrator: Once upon a time, long, long ago—a meeting took place between various parts of the Body, to discuss their complaints about the stomach. They each worked hard all day to supply the stomach with foodstuff—but all he did was kick back and enjoy. It seemed unfair. One by one they began to speak.

(All the parts present should be in costumes depicting their identity. SCENE—All body parts facing audience in a semicircle, discussing amongst themselves:)

Hand: I know I'm a little TOUCHY, but I FEEL things are getting out of HAND. We do all the work around here, and the stomach just sits back and enjoys.

Foot: (stepping up) Yeah! Let's KICK up a ruckus. This stomach's a real HEEL—he ain't got no SOLE. Why should we do all the work?

Ear: I HEAR ya' brother. SOUNDS unfair to me.

Eye: I SEE what you mean.

Nose: (holding nose to speak nasally) Yeah! This situation STINKS. Let's go on strike!

Brain: (steps forward to interject—speaks with great erudition and authority, although no one really cares—kind of British accent) I would like to postulate, as the brain amongst you, that serious repercussions might be incurred by embarking on a course born of impulse...

Mouth: (interrupting) Oh, BITE your tongue. (to other parts) I don't know about all of you, but I'm not going to let him speak for me. Let's go on strike!

Everyone: Yeah! Strike, strike, strike! Down with the stomach! (protesting and chanting anti-stomach slogans)

“There is not a good excuse

for gastro-intestinal abuse!”

Narrator: So they decided to protest and strike. They continued in this way for several days—refusing to provide any food to the stomach. But as they continued, something very strange began to happen. All the parts themselves became very, very weak.

Hand: (slowly and feebly) I've got to HAND it to the stomach. Now I can GRASP the truth. We can't be happy without feeding him.

Foot: (slowly and feebly) Yeah. I can't KICK this feeling of lethargy.

Ear: (slowly and feebly) Speak up. I can hardly HEAR you.

Eye: (slowly and feebly) I'm beginning to SEE things differently.

Nose: (nasally) How long we can go on like this—God only “KNOWS.”

Brain: (wearily steps forward again, speaking slowly) Though I'm troubled by brain death, I would like to propose that we again provide consumable nutrients through the alimentary canal to our associate, the stomach. Such a gesture would...

Mouth: (interrupting angrily, though weak) Alright, already! You've convinced us. I'm TONGUE-TIED and SPEECHLESS. Let's call off the strike. Let's summon the stomach and tell him we're ready to begin serving him again.

(They all cry out individually, “Stomach, stomach! Please come back. Forgive us.” etc. Suddenly the stomach enters stage left, appearing majestic, plump, round, and with a smile of great satisfaction. Dramatic music—“Hallelujah” chorus or Vedic equivalent—would be a great touch, adding humor and drama as stomach enters. All the parts of the body offer obeisances and begin to feed the stomach—reviving their own strength simultaneously)

Narrator: So by serving the stomach, all the parts of the body again became strong and happy, and they lived happily ever after—all cooperating to feed the stomach. Çréla Prabhupāda's lesson is: If we refuse to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, we grow weak and suffer in the material world. But if we cooperate to serve Him in devotional service, we become joyful and happy eternally.

The End

The Scholar And The Boatman #1

adapted from an essay in Back To Godhead magazine Volume 11.11

The Scholar And The Boatman #1

adapted from an essay in Back To Godhead magazine Volume 11.11

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CAST: Scholar, Boatman.

(Scholar is in an intellectual huff and approaches Boatman by the side of a river)

Scholar: Boatman! Take me across!

Boatman: Yes, sir. Climb aboard!

Scholar: Boatman, the water is becoming rather choppy. While you're out here, have you ever thought about the relationship between total torque and cross-current impact?

Boatman: No, sir, I can't say that I have.

Scholar: For one thing, a more streamlined apparatus should likely yield a greater mechanical advantage. But then, I don't suppose you've studied much about physics, have you?

Boatman: None at all, sir. I just row this boat across the river.

Scholar: Hmmm. Boatman, it appears that you've wasted 25% of your life.

(they proceed on for a few moments)

Scholar: Boatman, Have you ever looked into statistics and probability? I'm thinking here of Gaussian or possibly Poisson distribution. With all these dark clouds coming in over us, do you have any idea what a graph of storm probability would look like?

Boatman: No, sir, I never have studied whatever it is you're talking about. I don't know what you mean.

Scholar: You mean you've never studied advanced mathematics? Ah, then, my dear fellow, you should know that you've surely wasted 50% of your life.

Boatman: You're probably right, sir. I just row this boat across the river. By the way, there seems to be a big storm coming.

Scholar: Tell me, Boatman, do you know anything about gauging deviations from the STP — standard temperature and pressure — to forecast wind velocity in a storm center?

Boatman: I'm sorry, sir, I really don't.

Scholar: You're a bit dense, Boatman, aren't you? Are you telling me that you've never learned anything about meteorology?

Boatman: I guess I haven't, sir.

Scholar: Well, then, you've wasted a full 75% of your life! What do you have to say for yourself?

Boatman: I just row this boat across the river... say, hold on tight! It's really raining and blowing hard!

(boat capsizes, Boatman swims and starts heading for shore while Scholar flails about, reaching out with umbrella handle but hooking nothing)

Scholar: Boatman!

Boatman: Sir! We'll have to swim the rest of the way!

Scholar: But... I can't swim!

Boatman: Then it looks as though you've wasted 100% of your life!

(Boatman swims on while Scholar drowns helplessly)

Moral of the story: Whatever else we may learn in our life's journey, there's one thing we all need to know: how to cross safely to the spiritual world when our material body "capsizes." Therefore, while the West's technological science can analyze things and perhaps make our voyage more comfortable, we need the East's spiritual science to make it more successful.

The End

The Boatman And The Scholar #2

The Boatman And The Scholar #2

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Professor, Boatman. PROPS: The professor wears a long coat and hat, small wire-framed glasses and carries a briefcase. In the briefcase is a copy of Çrémad Bhägavatam, Canto 1. He also carries an umbrella.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: Our scene opens on the bank of the Ganges river, opposite to the city of Benares. The professor is in a hurry to cross the Ganges in time for his scheduled lecture as a guest speaker at the prestigious Institute of Futurology.

Professor: (irritated, in a hurry, talking to himself) I can't believe it! The bridge is destroyed from the flood last week! Typically India! Typical, typical! How am I supposed to get across this blasted river now? I simply must be at the university on time! (sees Boatman sitting and mending something) Hey there, you! Tell me, how on earth and heaven is one supposed to get across this river when the bridge is out, huh?

Boatman: (detached) Well, you could take a boat.

Professor: A boat. Not a bad idea. (still irritated) And where might one find a boat under these conditions? No doubt there are thousands of people trying to get boat rides across the river under these conditions!

Boatman: Well, I've got a boat for hire.

Professor: Really? I do say? (feigning indifference) What's your price?

Boatman: One way, or round trip?

Professor: One way.

Boatman: One person?

Professor: One person. (emphasizes words in his impatience)

Boatman: Five rupees, fifty paisa.

Professor: (astonished) Five rupees, fifty paisa!? That's insane! Forget it. I'm not going to pay that much. In my country that's called thievery...

Boatman: As you like. (continues mending) But I don't think you'll find anyone cheaper. That's the price these days. A man has to earn a living to support his family...

Professor: Okay, okay, just show me your boat.

Boatman: Just five minutes and I'll be finished mending this life-jacket.

Professor: No! Let's go now! I'll be late for my appointment at the university. I must deliver a very important lecture... (looks at his watch) ...in exactly one hour.

Boatman: Alright. Here's my boat—please get in, sir.

Professor: (hesitant) Is this boat navigable?

Boatman: Navigable? What does that mean?

Professor: It doesn't leak?

Boatman: No, sir! I've had this same boat for twenty years. No problem!

Professor: (doubtful) Alright. Let's go.

Boatman: (holds out hand, expecting payment. Professor pays him hurriedly) You climb in, please, and I will push off. (Professor climbs in clumsily, forgetting his umbrella) Your umbrella, sir. (Boatman hands him his umbrella)

Professor: Oh yes, thank you. (Boatman pushes off, beginning to row, showing great endeavor) Tell me, boatman, if you don't mind my asking, what is your age?

Boatman: My age? Fifty-two last week.

Professor: Hmm, fifty-two, and I suppose you have been rowing boats across the Ganges your whole life, eh?

Boatman: That's right.

Professor: Did you ever consider investing in a motorboat?

Boatman: Invest?... Motor...?

Professor: Sure. If you had started saving money when you were young, by now you could have bought a first-class motorboat. Not only would you not have to work so hard in your old age, you could carry a lot more passengers and make a lot more money. And with that extra money you could buy more boats and rent them out... and by now you could be a rich man. Money makes money, they say!

Boatman: (gravely) Hmmm... money... I'm certainly not a rich man, but I get by. And whatever excess money I have, I use for Krishna-seva.

Professor: Krishna-what?

Boatman: Krishna-seva—service to Krishna. Worship of Krishna.

Professor: You don't mean to say you belong to that Hare Krishna sect, do you?

Boatman: My family has been worshipping Krishna for generations. I don't know what you mean by "sect." In Bhagavad-Gétä Krishna says "bhoktaram yajna tapasam, sarva-loka-mahesvaram"—He says, "I am the Supreme Lord, the Supreme enjoyer of all sacrifices." Therefore I worship Him. I simply accept the statements of Bhagavad-Gétä.

Professor: Ach! This religion nonsense! Nothing more than an opiate for the people, if you ask me! It is one thing I have to agree with Karl Marx about: "Religion is the opiate for the people." Have you ever heard of Karl Marx?

Boatman: He is a movie actor, isn't he?

Professor: (turns to audience) Just see! He doesn't know anything! He hasn't the slightest idea about economics, neither for his own economic advancement nor in theory. He has no idea about the great theories of economics, by which this whole world moves! Typically India! (turns to Boatman) I must say, Boatman, 25% of your life is wasted!

Boatman: Wasted?

Professor: Wasted! Simply wasted.

Boatman: Well, I wouldn't say "wasted." I may not be so well educated as far as book learning in school goes, but every evening I hear stories read by our village brahmanas from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. You have heard of these books, sir?

Professor: Of course, of course—mythology, all my-tho-lo-gy! Just some stories compiled for maintaining a stable and complacent society. As the rest of the world marches onward to greater and greater frontiers of advancement, India hobbles behind, worshipping her "sacred" cows. You probably don't even know that we have landed men on the moon, do you?

Boatman: Yes, someone was telling me about that, but quite frankly, I have my doubts.

Professor: (flabbergasted) DOUBTS!?

Boatman: Yes, doubts. After all, what did they find there? A few rocks, I heard.

Professor: Not “a few rocks”—a LOT of rocks!!!

Boatman: Okay, a lot of rocks. Anyway, according to the Vedic description of the moon, there is much more than rocks to be found there. Actually it is a very beautiful, heavenly place. The people there live for 10,000 years, with each day being equal to our six months. If you ask me, they didn't land on the moon. Maybe some other planet. Anyway, they couldn't stay there, so what is the use?

Professor: (indignant) Use? For advancement of human knowledge, of course! Man has an intrinsic need to explore the vast reaches of the unknown, to leave no stone unturned, as the saying goes.

Boatman: That's alright, but what is the use if you know so much about moon rocks and film stars, but do not know who you are?

Professor: (offended) You think I don't know who I am!? Of course I know who I am! I am the famous, one and only, Professor Swagalot, with degrees in several subjects, including Astro-physical-biology, Political-economic-simplistics, and Ontological-paleo-cryptology. And I've studied so many subjects thoroughly and written hundred of papers and articles and books and I'm so busy with speaking engagements, that I simply have no time...

Boatman: No time to consider who you actually are... after all, that is what human life is for. That is what the Vedas say—the goal of life is to realize who you really are—as an eternal spirit soul...

Professor: Look, Boatman, that's quite enough. And why are you slowing down? It is getting late. Hurry up, for God's sake!

Boatman: Yes, okay. (resumes rowing, singing quietly to himself the Hare Krishna mantra)

Professor: With your cows and Vedas and all that, you don't even believe that we have landed on the moon! Ha! I say 50% of your life is wasted! I... my God, I almost forgot, I have to prepare my address to the Institute of Futurology about human genetic perfection. Where is my notebook? (digs in his briefcase, pulls out Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 1) What is this book? Oh yes, some young lady sold me this book in the New York airport. I told her I wouldn't have time to read it, but she wouldn't take "no" for an answer. (opens book, reads one verse aloud) Hmm... Sanskrit—very old language... sṛvātam sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇāḥ... Ha! Krishna! I thought so! (addresses Boatman) You Krishnas are everywhere! (opens book randomly, reads aloud) "In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead. The purpose of performing sacrifice is to please Him. Yoga is for realizing Him. All fruitive activities are ultimately rewarded by Him only. He is supreme knowledge, and all severe austerities are performed to know Him. Religion (dharma) is rendering loving service unto Him. He is the supreme goal of life." That's 1.2.28 and 29. (forgets himself for a moment)

Boatman: Jai! Haribol, Haribol!

Professor: (resuming attitude of irritated impatience) Oh, no! Again this Krishna! Why me?! Anyway, look here Boatman, just get me across this accursed river, fast!

Boatman: Excuse me, sir, but this river is none other than the sacred mother Ganges, whose waters emanate from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. Please don't offend her in that way.

Professor: (exaggerated apology) Oh, I'm so sorry. And I suppose you want to tell me that the water is completely pure, huh? If you only knew how much disease-carrying micro-organisms these rivers in India carry! Sometimes I wonder what is the use of this country at all. After all that the British did for you, you still insist on keeping your antiquated ways. Boatman, tell me what you know about the British colonial time in India.

Boatman: Not a whole lot. I know they came and built railroads all over the place so that many people left the land and went to the cities to work in factories in squalorous, inhumane conditions...

Professor: 75% of your life is wasted! I say there, where did you hear this propaganda? What nonsense. Simply nonsense. If it weren't for the British... Hey, what's going on? (opens his umbrella) It's raining and getting cold and blowing like anything! (a little humble) Boatman, can't you be quicker?

Boatman: I'm trying my best. But the current is very strong. (rows intently, chanting "Jaya Govinda, Jaya Gopal, Keshava Madhava Dina-dayal") The weather is very unpredictable at this time of year. A heavy rainstorm can come at a moment's notice.

Professor: But, but hurry up... (shows panic) This can't be—I have to deliver my lecture on Futurology. Look, I'll even pay you five rupees extra to hurry up!

Boatman: That is all right. I don't think it will help at this point. You can keep your money. (takes off shoes, shirt)

Professor: What are you doing now?

Boatman: Getting ready to swim.

Professor: (panicking, tearful) Swim?! You are going to swim?

Boatman: What else is there to do? (boat capsizes) Excuse me sir, but we'll just have to swim for it now; it's not so far, but... can you swim, by the way?

Professor: Nooooooooooooooooooooo!

Boatman: Then 100% of your life is wasted!

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Narrator: The life of our unfortunate Professor was not actually 100% wasted. After all, he had read a verse from Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, heard the Hare Krishna mantra, and even drowned in the sacred Ganga—no doubt freeing him from all sinful reactions of his past misdeeds. As for his so-called advanced learning, we see that it was not sufficient to defend him from the jaws of death. Our simple boatman, on the other hand, despite his lack of book-knowledge on material subjects of so-called advancement, had sufficient knowledge not only to save himself from a physically dangerous situation, but also to bring him to realize the goal of life—going back home, back to Godhead.

We urge you to read the books mentioned in this play—the ancient Vedic literatures translated into English by His Divine Grace Çréla Prabhupāda. The Çrémad-Bhāgavatam and the Bhagavad-Gétā are available today from the devotees here. Thank you very much.

The End

The Wrong Bank Account

The Wrong Bank Account

* * * * *

CAST: George, Teller, Lady Teller.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

George: (enters bank) Good afternoon, sir. I'd like to open up an account in your bank.

Teller: Very well. Your name, please.

George: Millhouse, George Millhouse is the name.

Teller: Very well, Mr. Millhouse. And here's your account number.

George: And here's my deposit. Gotta think ahead now, you know, save for the future. I'm going to get married soon, send the kids to school, buy that house in the country. "Think Big" is my motto.

Teller: Glad to have your account, Mr. Millhouse. And just to show our appreciation, here's a little something from us to you.

George: Well, thanks a lot. Say, it's a... it's a crossword puzzle! I always wanted one of those. Well, I've got to be back at the office. I'll see you next week.

Teller: Good afternoon, Mr. Millhouse.

George: Good afternoon. (both exit)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(it is seven years later—both men enter dressed differently)

Teller: Good afternoon, George. On time, as usual.

George: Yes, it's been seven years now and I haven't missed a week yet. And here's my deposit.

Teller: Wel-l-l!

George: Yeah, I got a raise today. But it's all going in your bank, Frank, it's all going in your bank. I've really got to think of the future now, you know. The kids will be going to college before you know it. And the wife... well, she's got to have that fur coat. And the mortgage payments on the house—they have to be met. Come to think of it, I've been planning on getting a second job, maybe work nights.

Teller: Well, I like a man with your ambition, George. You really work hard for your money. But don't worry. It'll all come back to you one day. You'll see. Well, here's your book.

George: Thanks a lot. Say, that interest is really piling up. That's really nice. (looks at watch) Wow! It's really getting late. I gotta get back to work. Say listen, Frank, I'll see you next week.

Teller: Good afternoon, George.

George: Good afternoon.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(It is 25 years later—both men are middle-aged, with paunches)

George: Good afternoon, Frank. On time as usual. Haven't missed a week in 25 years. (counts out deposit) Here you are.

Teller: Thanks a lot, George. By the way, how are the kids these days?

George: I don't see much of them these days. The boy is away on business again, and the girls, they don't write very often. Well, that's life, I suppose. Say, isn't that a... isn't that a brand new...?

Teller: It's a gold watch. The company gave it to me for all these years on the job. Why, I'm going to retire soon. Gonna get that little place down in Miami. I'm going to enjoy life.

George: (starts coughing convulsively)

Teller: Say, maybe you'd better retire yourself soon, George. Your health hasn't been very good lately. Two jobs must really be rough on you now.

George: Oh, I'll be all right. I'll be all right! I'm going to take that trip around the world like I always wanted to. Besides, if I retire now, what's your bank going to do for money? (both laugh. George starts coughing again) Well, good afternoon, Frank.

Teller: Good afternoon, George.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(George is an old man. The old teller is no longer there, replaced by a brash lady newcomer)

George: Good afternoon, Frank. Am I on time today?

Teller: Frank? Frank? Do you need new glasses, mister?

George: Why, you're not Frank. Where's Frank? I always do business with him.

Teller: You mean that old guy? He dropped dead three days ago. Had a stroke on the way to work.

George: Frank? Dead? I can't believe it. He was going to retire next week.

Teller: (indifferent) Well, what are you going to do?

George: Frank! Dead! Just like that. My God... Say, wait a minute. Listen. Listen here, young lady! I want to withdraw my account now. Everything!

Teller: What's your number?

George: (trying to see the small print on his bank book) It's 9... 9-0... 9-0-3...

Teller: (snatches the book from George's hands) 9-0-3-3.

George: Yeah, 9-0-3-3. Poor Frank, he just made that last down payment on that house in Miami. He was going to move in a week and now—finished. Say, wait a minute. I'm getting old, too. I've got to take that trip around the world now. I've got to enjoy life!

Teller: hold on, mister. Something's wrong here!

George: What's that? What's wrong?

Teller: Your number's not 9-0-3-3. You're 9-0-3-5! (teller starts laughing hysterically) All these years you've been putting your money into the wrong bank account!

George: What? What? Now, you look here. I've been depositing in this bank now for fifty years. Do you hear me? Fifty years! And you mean to tell me that all these years, I've been putting my money, my money in the wrong, in the wrong... wrong... (George dies instantly of a heart attack)

(actors preach how the analogy of the wrong bank account refers to the materialists investing so much time and energy accumulating material treasures that are ultimately taken away by death. But by steadily depositing into the spiritual bank account by rendering devotional service, your treasures last eternally.)

The End

The Wrong Bank Account (#2)

“No Honey in the Money”

The Wrong Bank Account (#2)

“No Honey in the Money”

* * * * *

CAST: Frank, George, Guard, Young Teller.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(A young man enters a bank and approaches a young teller)

Frank: Well, hello sir, my name is Frank. How are you today?

George: Fine, thank you. I'd like to open a bank account, please.

Frank: Alright sir, will that be checking, savings, premium interest, double indemnity, mortgage security, planned installments, chocolate, strawberry or vanilla?

George: I beg your pardon?

Frank: How much would you like to deposit with us, sir?

George: Fifty dollars a week. I'm planning to take a trip around the world!

Frank: Around the world, eh? What you want is a travel savings account. Your name please, sir?

George: George Smythe.

Frank: Okay, George, just sign here — and here's your passbook.

George: Thanks, Frank.

Frank: Say, that's a familiar-looking ring you're wearing.

George: Yes, it's my high school ring. I graduated last year from Central Bulldog High.

Frank: Central Bulldog! I finished school there two years ago!

George: I thought you looked familiar!

Frank: My name is Bowser, Frank Bowser.

George: Bulldog Bowser! Now I remember you! Wasn't it you that planted the frog in Mr. Crotchety's podium — the one that hopped across the stage on my graduation day?

Frank: That's me! Did you ever see that old geezer's face get so red? Well, it's good to meet a customer from the old Alma Mater! Be sure to see me each week when you make your deposit!

George: Oh, I certainly will! You know, money doesn't come easy, Frank, but I've always wanted to make this trip and I'm going to save every penny I can until I've got enough to make it!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(It is twenty years later. George, now middle-aged, enters the bank)

George: Hi, Frank! How are things going?

Frank: Just great, George! How are you?

George: Oh, pretty good. My wife is getting surgery tomorrow.

Frank: Oh no, what happened George?

George: Nothing serious. Just getting some wrinkles tightened up. It's costing me a fortune, though.

Frank: Yeah, I'll bet, and you still haven't saved enough for that trip around the world.

George: I know, Frank, but I will. I'll do it just as soon as I pay off the loan on my house and my wife's plastic surgery bills.

Frank: Well, when you do go, I know you'll really enjoy it. Look, in the meantime, why don't you let me cheer you up? How about lunch today — on me? What do you say?

George: Frank, I'd really appreciate that. You're the best friend I've ever had!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(It is twenty years later. George is now a very old man, entering the bank)

Frank: Are you alright, George? Shall I get you a chair?

George: Naw, I'll just be a minute here.

Frank: I'm awfully sorry to hear about your wife, George.

George: Can you believe it? First she soaks me for forty years — credit cards, cosmetics, new clothes, a new house — then she runs off with her plastic surgeon!
(starts coughing)

Frank: Listen, George, why don't we go out on the town next week so you can forget about it. After all, I might never see you again! You'll probably end up on an island with some hula girl in a grass skirt!

George: Frank, that sounds great. When I come in to withdraw all my money next Friday, you and I will go out and whoop it up for old time's sake.

Frank: That's the spirit, George! See you next Friday at five o'clock!

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(One week later, the guard is ushering other customers to the door. A different Teller is at the counter)

Guard: I'm sorry sir, but we're about to close.

George: Listen sonny, I've been banking here for forty years, so get out of my way!

Teller: May I help you, sir?

George: Where's Frank? I only talk to Frank!

Teller: You mean that old trouble-maker? He died last Tuesday. Didn't you read about it in the newspaper?

George: Frank dead? No! How did it happen?

Teller: They caught him dipping his hands in the till. Seems he'd been embezzling for forty years. Last week he took a lunch break, went up to the fourth floor and jumped out the window. (George starts to cough, keels over) Are you alright, sir?

George: I want to withdraw my money. All of it.

Teller: You want to close your account, sir?

George: Yes, I have to take a trip around the world... before it's too late... I'm getting old...

Teller: Very well, sir. Let me see your passbook. I'll just be a few moments.

George: Frank! Who would have thought? Why, just the other day...

Teller: So, you're George Smythe, eh? Well, have I got news for you! I told you George had been embezzling for years — well, yours was one of the accounts he'd been taking from. The police were here this morning and checked it all out. As you didn't take out any insurance on the account, there's nothing we can do — you don't have a penny to your name, sir. (George has a heart attack and collapses)

Guard: (puts ear to George's chest) He's finished!

Frank: (entering from the side with suitcase) Good work, fellas! Get rid of this stiff and we'll be on the next plane to Rio!

(lecture about working for the wrong goals should follow)

The End

Liquid Beauty

limerick poetry by Brajendra Nandana Das

Liquid Beauty

limerick poetry by Brajendra Nandana Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Man, Woman.

Narrator: Many years ago in India there lived a foolish and vain man, who was hopelessly attracted by the bodily beauty of young women—and regularly tried to exploit them for his own enjoyment. One day, however, he met a young lady who taught him a lesson that changed his whole life... Let's watch. (enter Man, elegantly dressed and vain in demeanor)

Man: Oh, a handsome and strong man as I

The ladies all see me and sigh

Tonight I aspire

To fulfill my desire

With the first lovely woman I spy

Ah look! Just there she approaches

I will not be put off by reproaches

What a beauty is she

Now I'll let her meet me

I'm the greatest of all the "debauches"

(Woman enters and gets near the Man, who addresses her with a flourish and a bow)

Dear Madam, how are you today?

Your beauty takes my breath away

I cannot help gape

At your heavenly shape

With you, a man's morals could stray

Please won't you spend time with me

Together we'll go on a spree

We'll enjoy through the night

Till the morning's new light

What a wonderful time it will be

Woman: (annoyed, she chastises him)

My dear sir, I find you quite rude

Obnoxious and terribly crude

I do have my pride

Now please step aside

Your entreaties are tasteless and lewd

The fact is you're really in Maya

And cannot control your desire

With sincere introspection

And honest reflection

To true beauty within you'd aspire

Man: (imploringly and shamelessly)

Oh, please do not spur my advances

Or send me away with harsh glances

Please let us enjoy

I'm a lusty old boy

Now tell me, Ma'am, what are my chances?

Woman: (apparent reluctance and resignation)

Well sir—now since you persist

from badgering me you won't desist

In just one week from now

To my home I'll allow

You to come if you still should insist

Man: (in bliss)

Oh, dear lady my words cannot say

Just how happy you've made me today

I'll be counting the hours

And I'll bring you nice flowers

How my heart will be yearning that day

Woman: (in a warning tone)

I must warn you, though—don't be surprised

If my beauty's not what you've surmised

Yet, I promise you true

That I'll display for you

All my beauty in front of your eyes

Narrator: The young woman was no fool; she had a plan in mind. For one entire week, she fasted and took purgatives and laxatives—thus passing many foul substances from her body. As she stored these substances in a number of pots, each day she became more and more emaciated, until after seven days no longer resembled the beautiful woman she had been. Then the time for our lusty suitor to meet with her arrived... Let's see what happened. (enter Man with flowers, happily approaching Woman's home)

Man: Oh, today will be my lucky day

When the lady will give me a play

There's her house I believe

and I may never leave

Such good fortune is coming my way

(knock knock knock—Woman opens door, looking terrible)

Man: Oh, excuse me, I must be mistaken

Or the wrong road I've possibly taken

With a lady quite fair

This nice day I'm to share —

But you look most sick and forsaken

(Man starts to leave)

Woman: My dear sir—oh, please do not flee

The lady you're seeking is me

My beauty's preserved

Now don't be unnerved

When I bring it before you to see

(Woman brings out pots with urine, stool and vomit, etc.)

Man: (overwhelmed)

My God—oh, what is that smell?

These buckets must come straight from hell

Please do not deceive me

Begone now and leave me

Where's my beautiful lady—pray tell

Woman: (pointing to the pots)

But sir—all my beauty's in there

It's been passed from my body with care

You desired to find it

Now I hope you don't mind it

With you all my beauty I'll share

Man: (slowly and thoughtfully beginning to see the light)

I'm beginning to see my offense

Please forgive me for being so dense

By your kindness you tricked me

And did thus benedict me

Your words have begun to make sense

(with conviction and resolve)

Chaste lady—with thanks I depart

A great lesson you surely impart

True beauty's internal,

not flesh, not external

We are souls—seek the Lord in the heart

Woman: Dear sir—now I'm glad that you came

Your new wisdom removes all your shame

But to know the Lord's beauty

In this age it's our duty

To feelingly call out His Name

(she begins to chant, he joins in, then the audience also—Hare Krishna kirtan)

The End

Liquid Beauty

Liquid Beauty

* * * * *

CAST: Prince Mahabhoga the Third, Tapan the Servant, Govinda Dasi, Govinda Dasi's Father.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Servant enters, sweeping the path with a broom, then blows conchshell loudly)

Prince: (strutting in like a peacock) Ah! What a SPLENDID day! Who can be a happier man than me? Am I not the richest man, surrounded by thousands of loyal subjects?! So much is mine now, and I will have more in the future, according to my schemes! Dominion over all that I see! Tapan, would you or would you not agree, that today the sun shines just for me? Ah, what a SPLENDID day!

Servant: And of the splendid, you are the most splendid, my Lord! Who in this land is more opulent than you? You are full of beauty, full of wealth, full of strength, full of knowledge, full of... full of... full of...

Prince: Fame.

Servant: Fame! Yes, of course! How could I forget? Who is more famous than my Lord? (proceeds to kiss Prince's hand)

Prince: Now, now, Tapan, there's no need for that. We're all friends here. (Servant attempts to clean the spot where the Prince has wiped his wet hand, using the street broom) Not with the street broom, you idiot! I ought to break your neck... (beautiful girl enters, chanting) Oh, my word! What have we here? What my eyes perceive with pleasure, Heaven holds no greater treasure!

Servant: A sight divine!

Prince: Such beautiful eyes, thin waist, long hair... and shy—Ahhh! A king's prize! Go speak to her, Tapan, on my behalf. For in truth, I have never seen a greater beauty!

Servant: My dear lady, His Most Magnanimous Lordship, Prince Mahabhoga The Third, desires your hand, for he truly thinks that you are the greatest beauty in the kingdom.

Girl: Truly? Perhaps, my good man, we've become accustomed to seeking untruth in the name of truth, and maybe we don't have the eyes to see real beauty.

Servant: Shall I tell His Lordship that?

Girl: You may tell His Lordship that if he desires my hand, he must ask my good father. We live in nearby Kashmir Province. My father is the school teacher there. He may come tomorrow evening. Good day! (Servant tells Prince the good news)

Prince: Her father, eh? She's downright proper! There's wisdom in those lovely eyes, a certain mystical gaze. Of course, my purpose lies not in her eyes, for beauty is had in many ways. Come then, until tomorrow.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(The next day at the father's house—girl enters, singing)

Father: Chant, chant, chant! The Prince is coming today and all you can do is walk around chanting about God?!

Girl: Dear father, what would you have me do? This chanting gives me great joy.

Father: Still, you should prepare yourself! You know, dress up, think of pleasant things to say that will exhibit your many talents and accomplishments!

Girl: The Prince is not interested in me, father. All he desires is this bodily covering—as he perceives it—not me. I'm not this body, I am a spirit soul. His passion would not be so fired, were this body pale and old. (she hurries off)

Servant: Announcing, His Highness Prince Mahabhoga The Third!

Father: (bowing repeatedly) Oh, your Honorable Lordship, we are blessed by your presence!

Prince: Now, now, there's no need for that, we're all friends here.

Father: What may I offer you, my Lord?

Prince: An offering? How nice! My dear old fellow, I'd be a fool if I did not request your most precious jewel.

Father: Jewel? You want jewelry? I... I am a poor man, a simple man... I...

Prince: No, no, no, the family jewel!

Father: Oh, yes, yes of course, the family jewel. It would be a great honor to my family to give you my daughter's hand in marriage. I will go and bring her out immediately. (he meets his daughter at the far side of the stage) Govinda Dasi, it is done! You heard His Lordship, he desires your hand in marriage—what do you say?

Girl: Alas, if it were only my hand he desired, father! Please consider my plight! I have heard that this Prince is simply a materialistic man, interested only in money and sense pleasure. He does not have a bit of devotion to our Lord. I am not against marriage, but the man I marry must be a devotee of Lord Krishna!

Father: Now listen to me, you ungrateful young woman! I have given my word that you will serve the Prince as his wife. Do you understand?

Girl: (bows head) Yes, father—but tell him I must have a week to prepare myself for him, and then perhaps he will change his mind, if not... (Father goes back to Prince and pantomimes the message and parting words with Prince, as Govinda Dasi speaks to herself:) This Prince is very attached to the beauty of this temporary body, which is actually only composed of obnoxious and abominable substances like stool, urine, fat, mucous, bile, blood, bones, nails and hair. Therefore, when he returns I will make him a gift of these substances which he thinks are me.

In order to accomplish this, I will use these purgatives and laxatives. (she drinks from two bottles, makes sickly gestures and noises and struggles off stage)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(A week later, Prince and Servant return)

Servant: (blows conchshell and announces) The Prince! The finest Prince of all the land, Prince Mahabhoga The Third!

Prince: Today is the big day! Yes, today my life becomes perfect. Now, where is my beautiful wife-to-be? Govinda Dasi! Govinda Dasi! Your Prince awaits you!

Girl: Coming, my Prince! (she draws herself on stage, haggard and depleted. Actress may wear an old age or witch mask)

Prince: Ugh! Who are you, ugly wretch? Tapan, if this is my future mother-in-law, I may have to...

Girl: Why, my Prince, I am your beautiful bride-to-be.

Prince: No, you couldn't be! Where is your beauty, your glow?

Girl: Come in, I have saved it for you so that you can take it with you wherever you go. It is the liquid in this container. (she uncaps a bucket) Here—enjoy, enjoy!

Prince: My God! What is this putrid slop!

Girl: Oh, just a little mucus, some loose stools, urine, blood and a lot of vomit.

Prince: What sort of joke is this?

Girl: Up to now, you have been thinking, “What a beautiful woman,” but I am the same woman, except for the contents of this bucket, which are now separated from me.

Servant: I guess we could call it (turns toward audience and holds nose) LIQUID BEAUTY!!! (sticks tongue out in disgust) YUCK!!!

Prince: Well, if that's all there is to beauty, then what is the use of living?

Girl: Now don't become hopeless, Prince. You just haven't been looking in the right places for beauty. Look to Lord Krishna—His purely spiritual body is made of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

Prince: I have now learned my lesson, thank you, and real life has begun for me. There is so much more I have to learn. Come, my bride, we will still marry—and forever more I will be a devotee of Lord Krishna, ruling the kingdom only for His service. (they exit)

Servant: The Royal Couple! (blows conchshell) All Glories to Lord Krishna!

The End

Liquid Beauty (#3)

Liquid Beauty (#3)

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Prince, Jester, Govinda Dasi, Jagadish Das.

Narrator: The following drama is adapted from an essay called “Truth and Beauty,” written by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and published in one of his first issues of Back to Godhead magazine. We hope the audience will try to appreciate and understand the valuable message of this story, for it concerns all of us in our pursuit of truth and beauty. There may sometimes be arguments about whether truth and beauty are compatible terms. Indeed it appears that truth is frequently rather startling and unpleasant, so how is one to express truth and beauty at the same time? In reply, we may emphatically assert that the actual truth, which is absolute, is always beautiful. Truth is so beautiful that many sages, saints and devotees have left everything for the sake of the truth. And every one of us has the urge to search for truth alone, for the Truth is

not only beautiful, but also all-powerful, all-resourceful, all-famous, all-renounced and all-knowledgeable.

Unfortunately, 99.9 percent of the people have no information of the truth, and are pursuing untruth only — in the name of truth. We are actually attracted by the beauty of truth, but since time immemorial we have been habituated to love of untruth appearing like truth. Therefore, to the mundane person, truth and beauty are incompatible terms. This mundane idea of truth and beauty is explained in the following drama...

SCENE ONE

The Forest

SCENE ONE

The Forest

(Enter the Jester, blowing conchshell)

Jester: All glories to the Prince! The Prince! The Prince! The beautiful Prince! And here he comes now! Oh, just see the beauty of this Prince! He's just like the rising sun on a clear spring day. And just see the strength of this Prince! He's as strong as thousands of elephants! And just listen to the Prince sing...

Prince: La la la la la la!!!

Jester: Oh! He's just like a canary! And just see how rich he is... he... he may be the richest man in the world! And just see how famous he is... he happens to be

Kamaraja Puri The Third! (claps and get audience to applaud) And just see how much knowledge he has...

Prince: A mans ability to retain information is based on a variety of many important factors. The individual's mental apparatus is supplied knowledge in conjunction with birth, nationality, peer-group influence, intestinal fortitude, determination, and, of course, the weight of favorable and unfavorable activities in accordance with the modes of nature.

Jester: Oh! He's just like a walking encyclopedia! And just see how renounced he is... You're not attached to any of this, are you?

Prince: Of course not!

Jester: Oh! Isn't he wonderful?! The Prince... the Prince... the beautiful Prince!!!
(exits, blowing conch)

Prince: Being rightfully appreciated, I, handsome and distinguished Prince that I am, am also a young man. And as is the interest of all young and capable men, I desire a suitable spouse. Now, not just any ordinary woman will do; rather, she must possess the utmost in womanly qualities. Chastity, beauty, shyness, kind-heartedness, humility, ability to speak sweetly, intelligence, cleanliness, punctuality... are but a few of the necessary requirements of my bride-to-be. In a word, she must be perfect, and as comparable to me as is possible! Wherever will I find such a woman? (enter Govinda Dasi, chanting Hare Krishna)

Govinda Dasi: Simply by chanting Lord Krishna's glories, all the sinful contaminations, accumulated by contact with this material world, are immediately eradicated! Therefore, if one truly seeks unending happiness, then he will take to the process of bhakti-yoga or devotional service! Hare Krishna Hare Krishna...

Prince: Just see the power of sincere desire! Just as I go in quest of the most beautiful and suitable bride, the personification of womanhood appears before me. I must make haste, so as not to waste this opportunity to fulfill my life's

desire. (clears throat to attract her attention. She sees him and covers her head, turning away shyly) Excuse me, O most delicate and tantalizing lady. Oh, but I must inquire from you — what is your name?

Govinda Dasi: Surely, you are not asking me of my identity, O most distinguished gentleman! I am just an insignificant daughter of a cowherd man.

Prince: (aside) Not only is she beautiful, but modest as well... (aloud) O flower of the forest! Do not be coy with me... reveal to me your name! I happen to be Kamaraja Puri The Third, and I do not tolerate insubordination in my subjects!

Govinda Dasi: O Prince of the Puris, please do not be angry with me! I am greatly embarrassed by your aggressive inquiries. It is not at all proper for a young girl to be speaking so intimately with a young man if she has not been properly introduced to him by her parents or guardians. This is a Vedic injunction. If a woman neglects scriptural injunctions, she is considered to be no better than a prostitute. Besides, I don't even know if you are a devotee of Krishna!

Prince: Besides all of her other good qualities, she is chaste, clever, able to speak sweetly, and highly learned in Vedic instructions. I will do whatever is necessary to gain her hand in marriage... (at that moment, the Jester enters, blowing conch. Prince goes up behind the lady and surprises her, she flees to other side of stage. The Prince laughs and says) My dear lady, if you insist on being a difficult prize, I will gladly play your game!

Jester: Oh! The Prince — the beautiful Prince! (blows conch)

Prince: Jester! Jester, come here! I wish to have a word with you.

Jester: The beautiful Prince wants talk to me! (blows conch)

Prince: Jester! It's all right, my little friend! I have heard from reliable sources that you are acquainted with everyone in this village. Is this true?

Jester: Oh yup yup yup yup yup!

Prince: All right, my good man. I have one request to make from you. I wish to know the name of the beautiful maiden who is standing over there. (Jester walks right over to her to get a closer look)

Jester: Oh, that's easy! That's Govinda Dasi! She's the daughter of Jagadish Das, the farmer. He lives on the east side of town and... hoo hoo... he takes care of cows... hee hee, yup yup yup!

Prince: Very good! Very good! And to show my appreciation, here's a little token of my gratitude... (hands Jester some trinket, then exits)

Jester: (in amazement) Golly! Gold! All glories to the Prince! The Prince! The beautiful Prince! (exits, blowing conch)

SCENE TWO

At the home of Jagadish Das

SCENE TWO

At the home of Jagadish Das

(Jagadish is on stage. Enter the Prince)

Jagadish: My dear Prince! To what do I owe the pleasure of having you as my guest?

Prince: My dear Sir, are you not Jagadish Das, the farmer? The cowherd man?

Jagadish: I am he. How can I help you?

Prince: I have heard from reliable sources that you have one very beautiful daughter by the name of Govinda Dasi. Is this true?

Jagadish: She is my daughter. Has she done something wrong?

Prince: Oh, no! No, of course not! On the contrary, I find her to be very... pleasing. I'll come right to the point, my dear farmer — I have come here today to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage! If you oblige me, I will be permanently indebted to you. Indeed, all my wealth will be yours!

Jagadish: You need not tempt me with riches, O Prince! I would gladly consent to you wedding my daughter! I accept your proposal! Come back in one week and you may take my daughter as your bride! This will give her time to prepare for you!

Prince: My dear farmer, you have made me a very happy man! Thank you very much! Thank you!

Jagadish: Thank you! (Prince exits) Govinda Dasi! Govinda Dasi!

Govinda Dasi: Yes, father, what is it?

Jagadish: I wish to speak to you. Come here!

Govinda Dasi: How can I serve you, father?

Jagadish: My dearest daughter, I have wonderful news for you! Prince Kamaraja Puri The Third wishes to take you as his bride!

Govinda Dasi: Oh! But father, I have heard that this prince is simply a materialistic man, interested only in money and sense gratification. Not only that — he's not even a devotee of Krishna! I'm not against marriage, but at least my husband must be a devotee of the Lord.

Jagadish: (angrily) Listen to me, you ungrateful girl! It may be true the prince is a materialistic man, but he's a highly respected man within the community! Besides, I've given my consent to the Prince that you will become his bride. Now in one week, he is going to come and take you away as his bride, do you understand? Do you understand?

Govinda Dasi: Yes, father.

Jagadish: Now go and prepare yourself for the Prince. (exits cackling)

Govinda Dasi: Now what am I going to do? (tearfully) My father has arranged my marriage with a man who is interested only in materialism. How will I become Krishna conscious now? I have to prepare myself to be taken away by him in only one week! One week! Since this Prince is so attracted to the beauty of this body, which is actually only a combination of obnoxious and abominable substances, I will not only prepare myself for his return, but I will present to him with a gift, which is the essence of this beauty. In order to achieve this end, I will take these

purgatives and laxatives. (swallows with difficulty) Now let us see how enticed our sweet Prince will remain! (exits vomiting)

SCENE THREE

Outside the residence of Jagadish

SCENE THREE

Outside the residence of Jagadish

(One week later. Jester enters, blowing conch. Enter the Prince)

Prince: (singing) Today is the big day!!! Today I achieve what I rightfully deserve! Today I attain the perfection of my life! O Govinda Dasi! (Jester also calls out and the Prince rebukes him) Govinda Dasi! Come forward — your handsome Prince awaits you!

Govinda Dasi: (from offstage) Coming, my Prince! (enters staggering and coughing)

Prince: Who are you, you ugly wretch? (appalled)

Govinda Dasi: I am your lovely wife-to-be!

Prince: (tearfully) No! You cant be! Where is your beauty?

Govinda Dasi: Oh that! I saved it for you so you can take it wherever you go!

Prince: What do you mean?

Govinda Dasi: Just wait a moment and I'll get it for you. (exits and brings on a bucket) Here, my Prince, is the beauty you so long desired! Now you can enjoy it to your fullest satisfaction! (Prince and Jester peer cautiously into the bucket and then see what the contents are... They both recoil in disgust)

Prince: Yuck! What is that?!

Govinda Dasi: Oh, a little mucus, loose stool, urine, some blood, a few little worms and lots of vomit!

Prince: What kind of joke is this?

Govinda Dasi: I'm not joking, dear Prince. The joke is on you! You've been fooled by the material nature! You see, everyone is attracted by the external beauty of this material body. But, when one analyzes it, one actually sees it is only a skin bag full of abominable things. You were thinking, "Oh what a lovely woman!" But now you don't find me so attractive? What's the matter? My body is the same as before, except for the contents of that bucket. When I emptied the contents of my body into that bucket, my beauty was also removed, so it seems quite clear that my former beauty is now in that bucket!

Jester: I guess we would call it... "LIQUID BEAUTY"!!!

Narrator: Materialistic persons are all deluded by the outward beauty and attraction of the relative truth, and are unaware of the spirit soul within the body, which is both truth and beauty at the same time. The spiritual spark is so beautiful that when it leaves the so-called beautiful body, which in fact is full of stool and vomit, no one wants to touch that body, even if it is decorated with costly garments. The beauty of the outer skin can be destroyed in only a few hours, merely by a dose of strong purgative, but the beauty of truth is indestructible and always the same.

Unfortunately, mundane persons are ignorant of this beautiful spark of spirit as well as the original complete fire, Lord Krishna, who is the source of all these spiritual sparks. They do not know that Krishna is the beautiful person who attracts everything, that He is the prime substance, the prime source and fountainhead of everything that be. The infinitesimal spiritual sparks, being parts and parcels of that whole spirit, are qualitatively the same in beauty and eternity. The only difference is that the whole is eternally the whole and the parts are eternally the parts. Both of them, however, possess the ultimate knowledge, energy, renunciation, opulence, as well as the ultimate TRUTH AND BEAUTY. (kirtan)

The End

The King And The Genie (#1)

The King And The Genie (#1)

* * * * *

CAST: King, Baksheesh, Genie, Old Lady.

SCENE ONE

The Palace

SCENE ONE

The Palace

(The king enters amidst cheers and applause, introduces himself and then decides he would like to do something more for the citizens. Has an idea and calls out for his servant:)

King: Baksheesh! Where on earth is that foolish servant of mine? (enter Baksheesh, licking his fingers. Falls over)

Baksheesh: Yes, my Lord?

King: I've just had a brilliant idea...

Baksheesh: Oh, no!

King: Baksheesh, I want you to go down to the market place and buy up all the wares that have not been sold yet today, and I want you to bring them to me. And do you know what I'm going to do with them all?

Baksheesh: No, Your Majesty!

King: I'm going to distribute them to all the needy people in my kingdom! Isn't that a brilliant idea?!

Baksheesh: Yes, Your Majesty. A marvelous idea? Oh, yes, Your Majesty, a wonderful idea! Yes, yes, yes, Your Majesty!!!

King: Alright then, Baksheesh. The shops close at six and there's no time to lose—you better get going at once!

Baksheesh: At once, Your Majesty!!! (turns and falls over, gets up and runs out)

SCENE TWO

The Market Place

SCENE TWO

The Market Place

(On stage is an old lady asleep in front of her table of wares. Baksheesh runs up, breathless)

Baksheesh: (to himself) Oh, no! I took a wrong turn! I'm late and all the shops are closed. If I come back empty-handed, the King will have my head!!! Ah, here's an old lady selling her wares. (to lady) Hey, old lady! Old lady!!! She's not only old, she's deaf as a post as well! Okay everybody, I think you're going to have to help me wake her up. After the count of three, I want you all to shout out, "Wakey! Wakey! Wakey!" Ready? 1... 2... 3... "Wakey! Wakey! Wakey!"

Old Lady: Oh, who woke me up?!

Baksheesh: It's me, Baksheesh! I've come in the name of the King!

Old Lady: Sing? No, I don't want you to sing!!!

Baksheesh: No, no—King!!! The king ordered me to buy everything in the market place! So how much do you want for the lot?

Old Lady: All right, then you can have everything for 200 pounds!

Baksheesh: Okay, that sounds fair. (gives the money to the old lady and picks up all the goods, then spots an old lamp) Hey, what about that old lamp?

Old Lady: It's not for sale!

Baksheesh: But the King ordered me to buy everything!

Old Lady: I told you, it's not for sale!!!

Baksheesh: Okay, Okay, I get the message! (runs out)

SCENE THREE

The Palace

SCENE THREE

The Palace

(King pacing up and down in anxiety)

King: Oh, where is that servant of mine? He can't do anything right! Baksheesh!!!
(Baksheesh runs in and trips, dropping all the goods) Ah, Baksheesh, my faithful servant, you accomplished your mission, I see! Is that all the goods, then?

Baksheesh: Yes, Your Majesty, that's almost everything!

King: What do you mean, "almost"? Baksheesh, didn't I tell you to get everything?

Baksheesh: Yes, my Lord!

King: So, why did you disobey my order?

Baksheesh: I'm sorry, my Lord, there was this old lady, you see, and she had this old lamp. It was just an old lamp, you see, and she didn't want to sell it. I mean, I told her you wanted everything, but she insisted, so I didn't buy it...

King: She insisted, eh?

Baksheesh: Yes, Your Majesty!

King: Baksheesh, Baksheesh, Baksheesh! You know I've always said that servant of mine Baksheesh has a good head on his shoulders... Well, let's keep it there, shall we? Baksheesh, don't you realize that somewhere out there in the night there may be some poor old lady with no lamp to light up her life? (Baksheesh begins to weep, loudly and pitifully. The King comforts him) There, there, all right, Baksheesh! Now all I want you to do is this: just go back down to the market place and tell that old lady to sell you the lamp on the order of the King, otherwise I'll cut off her head!

Baksheesh: Yes, Your Majesty!!! (turns and falls over again, runs out)

SCENE FOUR

The Market Place

SCENE FOUR

The Market Place

Baksheesh: Wakey, wakey! Hey, old lady, the King wants that lamp!

Old Lady: I told you, it's not for sale!

Baksheesh: But the king has ordered me..

Old Lady: I'm sorry...

Baksheesh: You don't understand—he'll have my head!

Old Lady: It's not for sale!

Baksheesh: Look, I'll give you 200 pounds for it...

Old Lady: Sold!!! (Baksheesh takes lamp and turns to go)

Old Lady: Wait! There's something you must tell the king... in the lamp there's a wicked genie!

Baksheesh: Okay, a wicked genie, right, I'll tell him! Bye!

Old Lady: Wait! Tell the king not to rub the lamp! Remember—don't rub the lamp!!!

Baksheesh: Okay, don't worry, the king never was much of a lamp-rubber anyway! (they leave)

SCENE FIVE

The Palace

SCENE FIVE

The Palace

(King is pacing up and down)

Baksheesh: I got the lamp—I saved my life!

King: Baksheesh, well! You got the lamp, well done! What's the story, Baksheesh? It looks like a very interesting old lamp!

Baksheesh: There was something... Oh yeah, in the lamp there is a wicked genie, the old lady told me...

King: A wicked genie! HO HO HO HO! I haven't heard anything so funny in a long time! There are no such things as genies, are there?

Baksheesh: Oh, yes there is!

King: Oh, no there isn't!

Baksheesh: Oh, yes there isn't!

King: Ah, pifflecock! It's just an old wives' tale, anyway you know what these shopkeeper's women are like, Baksheesh. Hey, you might have cleaned it up a bit, you know, Baksheesh. (starts to polish the lamp)

Baksheesh: There was something else I had to remember as well, now what was it? (to audience) Can you remember what it was?

Audience: Don't rub the lamp!

Baksheesh: Don't what? Oh, don't rub the lamp!!! (Genie appears)

Genie: Who let me out of my lamp? Was it you? Alright, you King you! You better give me something to do all of the time! Otherwise, if I'm not kept really busy—I'm going to get very angry, and when I get angry I get real violent!!!

King: Oh, think of something, Baksheesh!

Genie: All right, King, I'm going to count to three, and if you haven't thought of something, I'm going to slit your throat... Okay, everyone... Count along with me! 1... 2...

King: Windows! Windows! I want you to clean every window in every building until they are all sparkling!

Genie: Is that all! That's easy! (exits in a whirlwind)

King: Phew, that's a relief, Baksheesh, those shopkeepers aren't so daft after all! Anyway, we don't have to worry about him any more! Why there must be thousands and millions of windows in the city, and they're all so dirty you can plant cabbages in them!!! (Genie quickly reappears)

Genie: I've done it!

King: Impossible!

Genie: Impossible, eh? Well, come and have a look! See every window!

Baksheesh: Hey! You did a pretty good job, too!

King: Baksheesh, you blithering idiot!

Genie: All right king, you better give me something else to do... 1... 2...

King: Leaves! Leaves! Leaves!

Baksheesh: At once, Your Majesty!

King: Not you, you fool! Every leaf on every tree... paint them all the colors of the rainbow!

Genie: Oh, that's an easy one for me, but when I get back... (threatens then exits)

Baksheesh: Good thinking, King, that should take him a long time to do that!

King: I'm not so sure, Baksheesh, he cleaned all the windows so fast... oh, Baksheesh, this is all your fault!

Baksheesh: My fault?

King: I told you not to buy that lamp.

Baksheesh: But... but... it was your fault!

King: Trying to blame it on me now, eh? I'll have your head for this, Baksheesh...
(Genie bursts in)

Genie: It is done!

King: No! It's not possible!

Genie: Not possible, eh? Well, come and have a look, King!

Baksheesh: Hey, I like the way you blended the colors... you know, the way you got those blues and greens...

King: Baksheesh, you buffoon!

Genie: All right king... 1... 2...

Baksheesh: Tell him to hit the road!

King: Roads! Roads! Roads! I want you to turn all the roads into solid gold! (Genie races off)

King: Well, that's the last we'll see of him! Do you know why, Baksheesh?

Baksheesh: No.

King: There is no gold—I gave it all away in charity!

Baksheesh: Ho ho ho ho ho! Hey, you're pretty clever, King!

King: You know, Baksheesh, this Genie reminds me of the mind!

Baksheesh: The mind?

King: Yes. Baksheesh, you wouldn't know much about that, but... I was reading in the Bhagavad-Gétä this morning, "Lord Krishna said: O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by suitable practice and by detachment." "For one whose mind is unbridled, self-realization is difficult work. But one whose mind is controlled and who strives by appropriate means is assured of success. That is My opinion." That's Chapter 6, verses 35 and 36—remember that!

Baksheesh: But, what's the best way to control the mind?

King: Well, it's said that if you chant the transcendental names of the Lord, especially Hare Krishna, then your mind will always be engaged, and you will be peaceful, and you'll never have to worry about the Genie of the mind.

Baksheesh: Is that a fact?

King: Yes, well that's what they say, I mean, I've never tried it myself, you know; but it's supposed to work.

Baksheesh: Is that the end of the play, then?

King: Yes, that's it, I suppose, we can all go home now... (the Genie enters in a fierce mood)

Genie: I've done it!!!

King: Impossible!!!

Genie: Impossible eh? Well come and see—every road is paved with 29 carat gold! I can produce gold from the tips of my fingers!!!

Baksheesh: Hey, that's a pretty neat trick—can you show me how you do that?

King: Baksheesh!!!

Genie: All right, King, I have had enough of you. I'm not even going to count to three, I'm just going to kill you dead!!! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!!! (Genie lets out blood-curdling cries and chases King and Baksheesh around the stage. Finally the King trips and the Genie moves in for the kill)

King: Oh, dear! What am I going to do? Oh, Hare Krishna!!! (Genie recoils) Hare Krishna! Krishna Krishna! Hare Hare! Hare Rama! Hare Rama! Rama Rama! Hare Hare! (the King and Baksheesh chase the Genie around the stage and finally catch him)

King: All right, Genie, I've found a perfect engagement for you!

Genie: What's that?!

King: You can chant Hare Krishna all day long... it's ever-fresh and transcendental!

Genie: Oh, no!

King: It's not so bad, really. Come on, just give it a try. (King gets audience to help engage the Genie in chanting Hare Krishna. Genie gets a taste, King shows him how to dance, and then they have an ecstatic kirtan)

The End

The King And The Genie (#2)

The King And The Genie (#2)

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, King, Servant, Storekeeper, Genie.

Narrator: Once, a long time ago, there was a King. One day he decided to be very charitable.

King: Servant, go to all of the stores and buy everything that is in them. I want to give charity to all the poor people today.

Servant: Yes, Your Majesty. (walks around) Oh, no! All of the stores are closed! What will I do? But wait, I see one store over there that is open. Let's see what is inside it. (Servant goes into the store) Mataji, I have been ordered by the King to buy everything in all of the stores.

Mataji: You may buy everything in here except this bottle.

Servant: But, the King told me to buy everything here!

Mataji: Well, this bottle is very old, black and dusty; you will not want to buy it.

Servant: Alright, I will not take it. I will buy everything else. (Servant returns to the King)

King: My servant, you've returned so soon!

Servant: All of the stores were closed except for one; I bought almost every single thing in that store!

King: I told you to buy everything in the store! Go back and buy whatever is left!

Servant: But the storekeeper told me that you would not like the dusty, old, black bottle!

King: So, we can give it to some really poor person. I'm sure they will like it. (Servant goes back to the store)

Servant: Mataji, the King has ordered me to buy that bottle you have.

Mataji: Alright, but the condition is that you cannot open it.

Servant: Oh, very well, whatever you say. (Servant runs to King) My King, I have the bottle! (King grabs the bottle) But you may not open it!

King: Who cares if I open it! (King opens it and Genie comes out)

Genie: (bellows) What will you have me do, master?

King: Oh, you do not have to do anything for me.

Genie: You must keep me engaged, or else I will chop your head off with my deadly sword!

King: Very well, I want you to make all of the roads in the country paved with solid gold.

Genie: Thank you, my King. Remember, while I am gone, to think of something else for me to do, or else I will have to use my sword! (Genie goes off stage)

King: Servant, I do not think that the Genie will be able to do that, because where would he be able to get all that pure gold? I will not give him any.

Genie: (quickly appears) Done! Done! What shall I do now?

King: You could not have done that already!

Genie: Look out from this balcony — all of the roads are made of pure gold.

King: Now I want you to paint every leaf in this country all the different colors of the rainbow.

Genie: Yes, master! (he runs off)

King: Well, we won't be seeing him for many weeks, I'm sure.

Genie: (quickly appears) Done! Done!

King: (looking out) Why, it's beautiful... breathtaking! What more could a kingdom want? I am totally satisfied with your service, as I am with myself. I advise that you also become self-satisfied and concentrate on perfecting your life through devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Genie: Master, I burn with impatience! What is the greatest service that I can do, that which will never be finished?

King: Meditate upon and declare to everyone the unlimited glories of the name, fame and character of Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Ananta Shesha, who is Himself an incarnation of the Supreme Lord's energy, has been describing the Lord's glories with His thousands of mouths since the beginning of time without once repeating Himself. So, surely, if you take up this service to Lord Krishna, which is recommended by all scriptures as that which pleases Lord Krishna the most, then you will purify yourself and become liberated from this world of hankering and lamenting! Because everything about Lord Krishna is eternal and unlimited, you will never be able to finish this glorification.

Furthermore, upon once again developing your eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, you will leave this temporary material world and go Back to Home to live with Him forever! Now, go!

Genie: Yes, thank you, O wise King, I will accomplish what you say and never have to come back here or to any other material place again. Thank you!

Narrator: This ends our little play for today, based upon a story told to us by Çréla Prabhupāda. We hope that you will do as we are doing and take up the glorification of Lord Krishna by serving Him, reading about Him in the books translated by Çréla Prabhupāda and chanting Krishna's holy names, which are non-different from Himself. Thank you very much.

The End

The Queen And The Genie (#3)

The Queen And The Genie (#3)

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CAST: Narrator, Queen, Servant, Dasi Dasi, Hatta Dasi, Genie.

(Note: This play is basically the same as previous version (#2), but has been expanded slightly and adapted for actresses only.)

Narrator: Once, a long time ago, there was a Queen who awoke one festival morning in a very charitable mood. She wanted to do something special for all the poor people in her kingdom on this auspicious holiday.

Queen: Dear Dasi Dasi, I want to give extra charity to all the poor people today. Please go to all of the stores in town and buy everything that is in them so that we may distribute enough nice things for everyone.

Dasi Dasi: Yes, Your Majesty. (goes out to the street) Oh, no! All of the stores are closed for the festival! Now what will I do?!—Wait—there's one store that looks like it's open! (stepping forward, looks at sign—"Hatta Dasi's") Let's see what is inside here... (goes into the store) Haribol, Hatta Dasi, I have been ordered by the Queen to buy everything in all of the stores today, but yours seems to be the only one open.

Hatta Dasi: I am honored that you have come on behalf of our good Queen. You may certainly buy everything here—except for this one old bottle.

Dasi Dasi: But, the Queen told me to buy everything you have!

Hatta Dasi: Well, this bottle is very old, black and dusty anyway; no one would want it.

Dasi Dasi: Alright then, I will not buy that one thing, but sell me everything else here, and I'll send someone to carry them to the palace. (Dasi Dasi returns to her Queen)

Queen: Dasi Dasi! You've returned so soon!

Dasi Dasi: Dearest Queen, all of the stores were closed except for one; but I did buy nearly everything in that one store!

Queen: But I told you to buy everything they had! Now please go back and be sure you get whatever is left in there.

Dasi Dasi: There was only one old dusty bottle that the storekeeper assured me no one would want.

Queen: Still, it might be useful to some really poor person. I'm sure we should have it, so please go now and bring it to me. (Dasi Dasi returns to the store)

Dasi Dasi: Haribol Hatta Dasi, the Queen has ordered me to buy that old bottle of yours anyway.

Hatta Dasi: Alright then, but there is one condition: you must never open it.

Dasi Dasi: Oh, very well, whatever you say. (Dasi Dasi hurriedly returns to Queen with the bottle) My Queen, here is that strange old bottle but... (Queen grabs the bottle) ...but she said you mustn't ever open it!

Queen: Certainly it's alright for me to open it. (she does so with some difficulty, a scarf comes out and a Genie appears from behind her as they shrink back in alarm)

Genie: (she bellows) I am the Genie of the bottle. What would you like me to do, Mistress?

Queen: Oh! I haven't brought you here to do anything for me.

Genie: You must keep me engaged, otherwise I will chop your head off with this deadly sword! (she threatens)

Queen: Oh, I see. Well then—I would like you to make all the roads in our kingdom to be paved of solid gold.

Genie: Thank you, my Queen. Remember—while I am gone you must think of another task for me to do, or else! (brandishing sword, Genie disappears. Dasi Dasi looks terrified)

Queen: It's alright, Dasi Dasi. The Genie will be gone a long time now, because it will be hard to find that much pure gold! She won't be getting it from me, and who else has enough?

Genie: (suddenly appears) All is done! What shall I do now?

Queen: You could not have accomplished that so soon!

Genie: Just look out from your balcony, my Queen. All of the roads are now made of the purest gold. (the Queen hesitates, then looks, and the Genie raises her sword suggestively)

Queen: Very well, then, I would like to see every leaf on every tree in this country painted all the different colors of the rainbow.

Genie: Yes, Mistress! (she disappears again)

Queen: There now. We won't be seeing her for many weeks with a huge task like that to perform, I'm sure.

Genie: (presto, the Genie appears) All is done! Next?!

Queen: (amazed, goes to balcony and looks out) Why, it's beautiful... breathtaking... What more could one do for a kingdom? So now, my Genie, I am totally satisfied with your service, and I advise you to also become self-satisfied, as I am, and concentrate on perfecting your life through devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Genie: Mistress, I burn with impatience—I must serve someone who will keep me engaged eternally. What could I possibly find to do that would be of service and never be finished?

Queen: O Genie, I can tell you exactly what to do to be fully satisfied and happy, and that will last for the rest of eternity. Just meditate upon and declare to everyone the unlimited glories of the name, fame and pastimes of Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Genie: But Mistress, I cannot do the same thing over and over without becoming bored and restless!

Queen: Oh, this is different! Ananta Shesha, who is himself an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, has been describing the Lord's glories with His thousands of mouths since the beginning of time, and has never once repeated Himself! So, surely if you take up this service to Lord Krishna, which is recommended by all scriptures as that which pleases Lord Krishna the most, then not only will you purify yourself and become liberated from this world of hankering and lamenting, but you will never be bored again!

Because everything about Lord Krishna is eternal and unlimited, you will never be able to finish this glorification. You will develop your eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead once again, and you will ultimately leave this temporary world and go to serve Him exclusively! This is my final request of you; always just chant the holy names of the Lord—Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare... Now, go!

Genie: Yes, thank you, O wise Queen! I will do as you say, and never have to return here or to any other material place again. Thank you, thank you! Hare Krishna Hare Krishna... (strides away happily chanting in comical mode)

Narrator: Thus ends our little play presentation, which was based upon a story graciously told to us by Çréla Prabhupāda. We hope that you will do as we are doing and take up the glorification of Lord Krishna by serving Him, reading about Him in the books translated by Çréla Prabhupāda, and chanting His holy names, which are non-different from Himself. Thank You. Hare Krishna! (leaves, with others, all happily chanting)

The End

The King And The Genie (#4)

by Phani Bhushan Das

and the Festival of India Players

The King And The Genie (#4)

by Phani Bhushan Das

and the Festival of India Players

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CAST: Narrator, King, Advisor, Cook, Physician, Warrior, Mana (the Mind).

Narrator: Long, long ago, in a kingdom not so far away, lived a great king who was good and kind and just—but above all, he was inquisitive.

King: (enters, sits) Well, my dear Adviser, have they all arrived?

Advisor: Yes, they are here with their presentations. Assembled before you, Your Majesty, are the final few who have come to respond to your request for the object in this world of the greatest value.

King: Yes, yes, let's proceed. I am very eager to learn what, in their opinion, is considered highest in value.

Advisor: May I present each of them to you—first, the Royal Cook.

Cook: O King, my skills in the kitchen are well known to you. Each meal is a new sensation, with tastes from every corner of the globe. Consider this, Sire: one cannot live without taking food. Therefore, eating is most valuable. Is it not, O King?

King: True, true, yet although everyone eats daily—from the poorest man up to the king—satisfaction soon fades, and again comes hunger. Does it not, O Cook?

Advisor: Next, we have the Royal Physician. Potent are his remedies; he has many to please everybody.

Physician: Your Highness, here in my bag are the greatest treasures for all mankind. Ailments vanish in no time. Pains are set aside. Health is restored overnight. Sound sleep is in itself a cure. And this, this serum of slumber, sends one to the restful realm of dreams. So, I consider sleep to be most valuable.

King: Sound sleep is indeed rare. To royalty, proper rest is a great opulence. Yet I feel there is something more valuable than mere sleep. What is next?

Advisor: There were several courtesans here who insisted that I deliver this note to you, my Lord. They lay claim to possessing the object of highest value.

King: The note... Hmmm! Ah! Ha! Well, well, this is indeed a popular pursuit! But since it is had by everyone, such can hardly be considered most valuable.

Advisor: Now, Sire, I present to you a great warrior. He is known to have taken on great numbers and emerged victorious. He is confident that his weaponry is most valuable.

Warrior: O commander, O chief of great armies, these arms and the weapons they wield are truly of the highest value. For by them, full defense is achieved. As the King gives protection to his subjects, these arms protect one from all fearful events. To defend oneself brings peace.

King: I agree that these shining weapons are valuable and that the need of defense is certain. However, it is not the all-and-all. For death may strike at any time, and from ultimate death there is no real defense. Is there, Warrior?

Advisor: Next, a devotee of Lord Krishna has brought this book for you—the Bhagavad-Gétä—claiming it to be the topmost truth. Highly prized for centuries, it is said to be a vast treasure-house of knowledge—the most valuable of all. He asked you to simply read it, and then judge for yourself.

King: A book! A single book! Ha! Oh, very well; I'll try to read it later. You, you hold it for me... So, is there any other submission, as to what is of the greatest value?

Advisor: Only this box. It was delivered by a strange character. I believe he was a mystic. He stated that all the power in the world is contained within this box. That the speed of what is contained herein is faster than that of light. However, he warned that although great deeds can be accomplished by such power, if one does not know how to control it, the force within can cause destruction and doom to the possessor. Unless properly engaged, it can sweep one away to the darkest regions. Before the strange fellow disappeared, he begged that you be very careful, for although the power within can act as one's best friend, it can also become one's worst enemy. He said—"Beware the power of Mana!"

King: "Beware the power of Mana!"—is that so?! Well, what in the three worlds is Mana, and from where in the three worlds does someone come to give warnings to a King about the contents of a box?

Advisor: It is written on the box, "Do not open without knowing how to control."

King: I know how to control! I rule the kingdom, don't I?! Let me see that box! (he opens box, Mana suddenly appears)

Mana: I am yours. Command me.

King: What have we here? A faithful servant—good, good, excellent. How wonderful! This is indeed most valuable.

Mana: I am yours. Command me.

King: Such demands from a servant! I've never...

Mana: I am yours. Command me, or I will drag you to hell!

King: Are you threatening me? Why you insolent... (Mana starts choking King)

Advisor: You'd better command him, Sire. Excuse me, let go of the King's neck now, he's going to command you.

King: (gasping, looks to Cook) Yess... Yess... Go with the Cook—prepare all sorts of foods... and don't forget to wash the pots!

Mana: I am yours. As you say, I will do.

King: Phew! That was unusual. I... (Mana suddenly reappears)

Mana: All is complete—I am yours. Command me, or I will drag you to hell!

King: Yes... Yes. The Royal Physician here would like you to... to... Ah?

Advisor: Test the sleeping potion.

King: Yes... Yes, take this wonderful medicine. You need to relax.

Mana: As you say, I will do. (drinks potion)

King: He does not sleep.

Mana: Mana does not sleep. I am yours. Command me!

King: "Command me! Command me!" Here, here is a great warrior. Spar with him. If you train well, we will find a nice war for you to win. (fight—warrior falls asleep)

Mana: He is defeated.

King: How did you do that, Mana?

Mana: Thinking, feeling, willing. He feels tired, so he sleeps. I am yours. Command me.

King: (to Advisor) We're in trouble. This Mana is going to drag me to hell if I cannot engage him.

Advisor: (holding Bhagavad-Gétä) Mana, Mana... Your Majesty, this book has something in it...

King: Not now! Think of how to engage him.

Mana: I am yours. Command me!

King: I know, I know, I know—you'll drag me to, to...

Advisor: Here's something in this book: digging wells, building roads, planting trees. These are considered pious deeds.

King: Good, good, any engagement. You, Mana, go out, build a road to the next kingdom. Build roads to all the neighboring kingdoms.

Mana: What you say, I will do.

King: There, he's gone. I thought I'd never get rid of him!

Advisor: (reading) Yes, "will"—I think I've found some information about that Mana of yours, here in this book.

King: Really, what does it say? (Mana suddenly reappears)

Mana: All the roads are complete. Command me, OR ELSE...

King: Alright! (to Advisor) What was that other pious work?

Advisor: Well-digging.

King: Yes, go out on the road, dig wells. Deep wells, so that travellers may refresh themselves. There should be a well in every town and village, and one in between each as well. Be gone!

Mana: As you say, I will do!

Advisor: This Mana is the mind. Your mind. Here is a description; it is similar to the one on the box. Faster than light... best friend... worst enemy... one of the sitting places of lust... as difficult to control as the wind...

King: The wind! No one can control the wind! How am I to control my mind?

Advisor: This book is wonderful! You should read it. It addresses so many subjects, including how to engage the restless, flickering mind. (Mana suddenly reappears)

Mana: The wells have been dug. Command me further (chokes King) or burn in hell!

Advisor: Yes, here it is written that the unbridled mind can degrade one...

King: (points to book) Another pious deed?!

Advisor: Planting trees.

King: Go out and plant beautiful, tall trees. (releases King) There should be so many trees along the road that the scorching sun will not bother any traveller.

Mana: As you say, I will do.

King: Give me that book! Where is that devotee? There must be a secret to controlling my mind.

Advisor: Yes, Your Majesty, have a look.

King: (reading) Simply by chanting the Maha-mantra, one's mind becomes peaceful. By engaging the mind in the chanting process 24 hours a day, the mind comes under full control, and acts as one's best friend. Hmmm!!!

Advisor: This is the mantra, the great mantra for deliverance... Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare... (King repeats. Mana suddenly reappears)

Mana: The trees are planted, the wells dug, the roads made, the food prepared, and the pots washed. I am yours. Command me!

King: Ah! Yes. My dear mind, thank you for rendering such fine service.

Mana: Command me now or I will...

King: Thinking, feeling, willing. Very nice, mind.

Mana: I will drag you to...

King: No, no, my mind. Dear Mana, simply chant the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra, and be happy.

Mana: Chant what? Be happy?

King: Yes—chant, chant!

Mana: I can't, I can't! (hides in box)

King: I command you—as I say, you will do.

Advisor: Yes, everyone engage your mind in chanting Hare Krishna.

King: Mana, repeat after me (Hare Krishna mantra) and chant this mantra 24 hours a day—then I can read in peace, and thus gain the greatest value. (kirtan)

Devotee: The word “man” means mind, “tra” means to release, and “maha” means topmost. Therefore the Hare Krishna maha-mantra is the topmost method of freeing the mind from material engagement. The meaning is “O all-attractive Krishna, O reservoir of pleasure, O Rama—please engage me in your loving devotional service.” All one needs to know to perfect one's life is found in this book, Bhagavad-Gétä As It Is.

The End

The Man Who Served The Greatest (#1)

The Man Who Served The Greatest (#1)

* * * * *

CAST: Servant, Grocer, Customer, Tax Collector, Governor, King, Attendant, Sage.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Bright lighting, flute music. Enter Servant, wandering about, people hustling about)

Servant: Just see, I am so small, so small, so insignificant in this world. What is this creation? What is my place? It is all too bewildering for one so small as me. I need a master, someone to watch over and care for me. But my master should be most competent, the greatest master of all. Who is such a master and where will I find him? (exit, cut music. Enter Gujarati grocery store owner, stands before a picture of Lakshmidēvi and offers puja)

Grocer: (sings song) Om jaya Jagadisha Hari!

Give me a brand new Cadillac with Michelin tires, too,

give my children an education at Harvard,

give my wife a new silk sari

and give me a house by the sea,

Om jaya Jagadisha Hari!

(finishes puja and grabs a bead bag in one hand and sack of money in the other and begins chanting and counting. Enter servant and customers)

Grocer: Namaste, Panditji!

Customer: Namaste, Maharaja!

Grocer: I am having best buy for you today on lettuce!

Customer: Oh I am liking anything, but are you sure it's good? Last week you gave me...

Grocer: Fresh! Just picked! How much you are taking—20 pounds?

Customer: No, I am only taking two.

Grocer: Take more, Prabhu. Here is special, best price for five pounds—10 rupees. I am doing only for you.

Customer: Well...

Grocer: No, you are best customer—I'm throwing in jalebis for the kids! (Customer gives his money, grocer touches it to his head, says prayer and greedily stashes the money and resumes counting money while chanting japa. Servant carefully walks over)

Servant: Ahem, excuse me sir.

Grocer: Yes what is it? What is your business here ? Speak up. (short pause)

Servant: Sir, I would like to serve the greatest person. I thought perhaps you could help.

Grocer: See for yourself. All the people in the town are coming to me. Without me, they cannot continue to live. Even the sannyasis, who are supposed to be totally dependent on God, are coming to beg from me, and without my support they would perish. You would do well, therefore, to engage yourself in my service.

Servant: Yes, sir.

Grocer: Very well, then. Take that broom and begin sweeping the floor.

Servant: Yes, sir.

Grocer: On second thought, son, come over here and help me move this sack of potatoes.

Servant: (quickly) Yes, sir.

Grocer: Put it over there in that corner... no wait, over there by the fruits... no no, that won't do, put them back here. Ow! Not on my foot, you fool!

(enter Tax Collector. Grocer shies away, sweats and becomes very nervous, puts bag of money under his seat)

Servant: What's the matter, Maharaja?

Tax Collector: Well well, if it isn't my old fat friend, Govind. Business must be good these days, eh? (patting him on his fat stomach)

Grocer: Bad times these days. Hard to make one from one.

Tax Collector: Let's see the books, Maharaja. (he looks at cash ledger) This is an unusual transaction—why so much?

Grocer: Let me see. Oh that. Well, that is no problem, no problem. (handing him a bribe) Look again—I think maybe you have miscalculated!

Tax Collector: Oh yes, excuse me—my mistake! So, then you are owing 50,000 rupees to the government.

Grocer: Yes, well here you go. Boy, bring that sack of money over here.

Servant: Yes, sir... but I don't understand. What is going on? I thought you said you were the greatest person, but I see you are subordinate to him. I want to serve the greatest person! (turning to Tax Collector) Please sir, I want to serve the greatest person!

Tax Collector: Well, you certainly have come to the right man, boy. All people are engaged in some occupation for which they receive some fruit, and although they work very hard to make their money—you see how they must pay me, simply at my command! If they do not pay me, they will be put in jail. There are many shopkeepers throughout the province, but all of them are subject to pay dues to me. Therefore, let's go, boy, you will be quite happy as my servant!

Grocer: He's a very valuable assistant to me, Your Grace!

Tax Collector: Okay, Maharaja... (hands grocer back the smaller bribe) Come on, boy, pick up that bag of money and let's go!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Enter Governor, very affected. Enter Servant and Tax Collector)

Tax Collector: Put the bag by his feet, you dolt! (Servant is very tired)

Governor: Ah... finally you've brought the taxes from that obese hold-out in the market square! Very well, then, be off with you. Your services are no longer required here. I'm sure you have something better to do.

Servant: But, excuse me sir... I am confused.

Governor: Billings, who is this ninny?

Tax Collector: I picked him up cheap in the market square.

Servant: Yes, sir, I wanted to serve the greatest person, and this man cheated me, explaining how he was the greatest.

Governor: How droll, Billings—the greatest person?! Country bumpkin, you have no taste. This man is my paid servant, and there are many more like him. He is simply collecting taxes which have been imposed by me. If people do not pay their taxes, I can take away all their possessions and send them off to prison!

Billings, jump... jump, Billings, or I'll have your head! (Billings jumps) You see? Anyway, enough talk. You'll be my servant?

Servant: Yes, sir.

Governor: A marvelous judge of character! Good ninny, of course I will accept you. Go away, Billings. (Billings leaves in a cowardly manner) Now shine my shoes, you nincompoop. Brush my hair, straighten my tie and pull up my girdle—we're off to see the king! (Servant engages in that way and then they exit)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Music, entrance of the King and Queen with entourage)

Attendant: Make way for the King, make way for the King! (music stops)

King: So, what is the first order of business?

Attendant: The governor of the West Province is here to see you, Your Majesty.

King: Announce him.

Attendant: The governor of Vishaya, the governor of Vishaya! (enter Governor and Servant, Governor half-bowing before the King, still puffed up)

Governor: Your Majesty, all is accounted for.

King: Well done, you may return to your home, there is no further business today.

Governor: Oh, I see... thank you so much, Your Majesty! Come, ninny! (they are about to leave, but Servant suddenly addresses King)

Servant: No! Please, Your Majesty, I beg you—I am in search of the greatest person to serve, and I have been cheated by one man after another!

Attendant: In this Province there is none superior to our King. Everyone is under his rule. Even the British fear his Majesty. You had better serve him if you know what is good for you.

Servant: Well, if you're sure.

Attendant: I'm sure!

Governor: Hmph! (walks off angrily)

King: So you want to serve me, eh? You seem a little naive. Nonetheless, you're sincere. What service would you like to do?

Servant: Your Majesty, I am able to do any menial jobs you may set me to!

King: Oh well, my Attendant here will see that you are settled in the palace and that you have a schedule of little jobs to do. I must go out now. (King exits)

Attendant: Long live the King! Long live the King!

Servant: Where is our King going?

Attendant: The King goes out to the garden every day to hear from his Spiritual Master, a very wise and saintly person. This meeting is very important to the King, and we must never disturb him!

Servant: I must see this... could it be?...

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Servant hides and observes the King bowing before his Guru)

King: Pranam, Gurudeva.

Sage: O King, is everyone well in your kingdom? Are all the citizens happy and well cared for? Is the system of varna and ashrama being maintained?

King: The kingdom is in quite good shape, Guruji. By following your orders, things never fail. Actually, it is a fact that you are the real ruler of this Province. Please tell me, how can I serve you?

Servant: (to King) No! No! You're not the greatest person! I've been cheated yet again! Now it appears that this saintly man is the greatest of all! Will my search never end?

Sage: To be master of everyone requires unlimited energy and opulence—wealth, strength, fame, renunciation, beauty and wisdom. By possessing these qualities one may rule over others. The Personality who possesses all of these qualities in full is known to me.

Servant: O great sage, please, I want to find this amazing Person! I want to serve Him! Please take me to Him!

Sage: Then let us go to the temple where He resides. (exit Sage and Servant)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Temple—enter Sage and Seeker. Sage shows him the Deity of Krishna)

Servant: I was simply trying to find the greatest person, but I always see that everyone has a superior over them. Even the great King takes instruction from you. So please tell me, are you the greatest master?

Sage: I am master of no one. I am a simple servant like yourself, endeavoring to serve Lord Sri Krishna—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Servant: I, too, wish to serve the Lord, but how do I become qualified?

Sage: You may start by chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare... by chanting the mahamantra constantly, your love for God develops and grows. It takes time, but try it, won't you?

Servant: I want to chant the Holy Names of the Lord constantly—let's all chant right now! (kirtan)

The End

The Man Who Served The Greatest (#2)

The Man Who Served The Greatest (#2)

* * * * *

CAST: Seeker, Baba, Ali, Customer, Tax Collector, Governor, Governor's Wife, Reynolds the Butler, King, Minister, Sage.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Street—enter Seeker)

Seeker: Just see, I'm so small, so insignificant in this world! What is this creation? What is it all about? Who am I? It's all too bewildering for me. I need a master who

can tell me all these answers, someone to watch over and care for me. But my master must be most competent, the greatest master of all! Who is such a master and where will I find him? (exits)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Shop—Ali and Baba on stage. Baba is a tall, greedy-looking businessman. His brother Ali is a short, fat, short-sighted man. Baba is counting out money, Ali is eating ice cream. He notices Baba counting)

Baba: 46 thousand, 47 thousand, 48...

Ali: Hey Baba, what are you doing, Baba, eh?

Baba: 48, 47... oh darn! 46, er 47, 48...

Ali: Are you counting money, Baba? What for, Baba? What for?

Baba: Ssshh! Where was I? 46, er no, 48...

Ali: I wish I was rich, Baba. If I was rich I'd buy a kulfi factory and...

Baba: (furious) Is that all you think about all day—kulfi?

Ali: No, Baba—not all day! Sometimes I think about rasagulla... (Baba slaps him)
Ow! Why did you hit me, Baba?

Baba: Listen, you fat, short-sighted, lazy good-for-nothing, you'd better start doing some hard labor around here, otherwise you can go back home to mother. Start piling those top shelves! Get a ladder! (exit Ali. Enter Customer)

Customer: Um, I... er... I'd like to buy... buy a... er...toupee.

Baba: A what?

Customer: (whispers) I'd like to buy a toupee.

Baba: (loudly) What's a toupee?

Customer: Y'know... (he lifts the top of his hair to reveal a bald head)

Baba: (loudly) Oh, you want to buy a wig!!!

Customer: Sssh!

Baba: (loudly) You want a wig because you're bald!

Customer: Please, not so loud!

Baba: Oh, we have lots of wigs... look! (Baba shows him a box of wigs and he looks through them. Seeker enters)

Customer: Okay, I'll take this one. (Ali bursts in with the ladder, swings it around, smashes a few things while shouting for Baba. Customer exits in rear. Seeker just looks on)

Ali: (approaches a store dummy) Oh, there you are, Baba. I've got the ladder. Now what?

Baba: Look what you've done to the shop! I'll kill you!

Ali: (being strangled) No, Baba, please stop! (enter Chaywallah, Tea Salesman)

Tea Salesman: Chay! chay!

Ali: Baba! Baba! Look—chay! Calm down, take some tea and calm down. (Baba lets go) Two chays, please!

(Chaywallah pours two cups of tea and gives it to them. Carefully, he steals one of the three bags of money that Baba was counting, puts it in his kettle, takes his cups and payment and exits)

Baba: Ali, did you take a bag of money from here?

Ali: No... why, Baba?

Baba: That thieving little... Just wait till I get my hands on him! Listen, you stay here. I'm expecting the Tax Collector today. If he comes, don't do anything till I come back; do you understand?

Ali: Eh?

Baba: Do you understand?

Ali: Oh yes, Baba, I understand!

Baba: Okay, you're in charge until I get back... and don't eat all the stock! (exit Baba)

Ali: Wow, I'm in charge! (Seeker approaches)

Seeker: Excuse me, sir!

Ali: Yes, how can I help you? I'm in charge here!

Seeker: Yes, I know. I can see how so many people all over the town are dependent on you and your shop. You must be a great person. May I serve you?

Ali: (surprised) Er? Yes, certainly you can serve me! First thing—get me a kulfi from the icebox, and after that you can sweep up this mess! (aside) Wow, being in charge is fun! (Seeker does this. Tax Collector enters, knocks down tin cans) Oi! What d'you think you're doing?

Tax Collector: Well, well, you must be Ali Akbar, Baba's brother.

Ali: Yeah.

Tax Collector: Business must be booming, eh? (pats Ali on the fat stomach)

Ali: Oh yeah, making lots of money!

Tax Collector: That's good news. What's Baba up to? Where is he?

Ali: Well, he was counting this money here and he went out somewhere. May I help you? I'm in charge!

Tax Collector: Yes, I'm the Tax Collector.

Ali: Oh, Baba mentioned you—oh—what did he say?

Tax Collector: Maybe he said that he owes me 50,000 rupees!

Ali: Er, maybe, yeah...

Tax Collector: Well, hand it over, Ali!

Ali: Okay. (gives him one bag)

Tax Collector: How much is this?

Ali: I don't know.

Tax Collector: Doesn't feel like 50,000 rupees to me—more like 25,000.

Ali: Well, you'd better take this one as well. (gives him other bag) Would you like a kulfi? Hey, servant—two kulfis!

Seeker: But I don't understand. What's going on? I thought you said you were the greatest person—but you're subordinate to him! I want to serve the greatest person.

Tax Collector: Well, you've certainly come to the right person. All people are engaged in some occupation for which they receive some fruit, and although they work very hard to make their money—you see how they must pay me, simply at my command! If they don't, they are thrown in prison. There are many shopkeepers throughout the Province, but all of them are subject to pay dues to me. Therefore pick up those bags and let's go. (exit Tax Collector and Seeker)

Ali: Hey, what about my kulfi? (enter Baba) Baba, my servant left me!

Baba: What are you blabbering on about? Have you been sleeping again instead of working?

Ali: No, Baba, it's true. He left with the Tax Collector.

Baba: What Tax Collector?

Ali: The one I gave all the money to. (Baba sees that the bags are missing and slowly approaches Ali threateningly) Please don't hit me again!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Governor's residence—Governor is sitting with his wife in the garden. He is reading a newspaper, she is reading a book. Wife looks up slightly and addresses Governor)

Wife: Would you like salad, dear?

Governor: (still reading) Yes, dear.

Wife: Mustard?

Governor: No thank you, dear. (she carries on reading book)

Wife: Tea, dear?

Governor: Yes please, dear.

Wife: Sugar, dear?

Governor: Two lumps, dear. (she carries on reading. Instead of placing sugar in his tea she puts mustard in it. Governor drinks it, pauses, his face contorts and he jumps up, clutching his throat. Finally he finds a bucket of water, drinks it and sits down to read the paper)

Wife: (after long pause) Is there anything wrong, dear?

Governor: Is that Darjeeling tea?

Wife: Yes, dear.

Governor: Oh. (pause) Maude, there's something I want to speak to you about—it can't wait any longer. Now don't get upset, old girl, and don't tell the children. I've been thinking about this for a long time. It's... it's Reynolds, our butler—he's not so young as he used to be. He's not he same Reynolds who we used to take on long walks in the countryside back in England—now he's old. I think his time's almost up—I'm afraid we're going to have to... have to... get rid of him!

Wife: Oh, Henry!

Governor: No, I'm sorry dear, my mind's made up. It will be quite painless. Don't worry, I'll call him. Reynolds! Reynolds! (enter Reynolds, an old butler)

Reynolds: Yes, sir?

Governor: Go bring some more tea, Reynolds.

Reynolds: Yes, sir! (exit Reynolds)

Governor: Don't worry dear, we'll get another one. (enter Reynolds)

Reynolds: Sir, Mister Billings is wanting to see you. He's at the back door.

Governor: Oh God! Alright. One, two, three, four—let 'em sweat at the door. Five, six, seven, eight—doesn't hurt to let them wait. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve—COME! (enter Tax Collector and Servant)

Tax Collector: Put the money at his feet, you fool. (Servant does so)

Governor: Ah, Billings... about time, too! You've finally brought the taxes from those two natives down at the market. You know, Billings, sometimes I despair with you.

Tax Collector: Yes, sir.

Governor: You're a very slow worker.

Tax Collector: Yes, sir.

Governor: I don't like it, Billings. Not one bit. I expect my men to be efficient and obedient.

Tax Collector: Yes, sir.

Governor: Not that I want to be surrounded by "Yes Men" all the time, you understand?

Tax Collector: Yes... er... No, sir!

Governor: Very well, Billings, be off with you. You're no longer required here. I'm sure you've something better to do. (Tax Collector goes to exit but Servant approaches Governor)

Seeker: But excuse me, sir, I'm confused.

Governor: Billings, who is this ninny?

Tax Collector: Oh, I picked him up cheap at the market.

Seeker: I wanted to serve the greatest person, and this man cheated me by saying how he was the greatest.

Governor: Billings—the greatest person? How droll! Country Bumpkin, you have no taste. This man is simply my paid servant, and there are many more like him. He is collecting taxes which have been imposed by me. If people do not pay their taxes, I can take away all their possessions and throw them in the clink! Billings—jump! Jump, Billings! (he jumps) You see! Anyway, enough talk. You'll be my servant?

Seeker: Yes, sir.

Governor: Marvelous—good ninny! Go away, Billings. (exit Billings, enter Reynolds with tea) Ah, very good. (he takes the tray, pulls out a gun and shoots Reynolds) There, I told you we would get another one, Maude. Now shine my shoes, nincompoop, comb my hair, put my coat on, straighten my belt, pull up my girdle—we're off to see the King! (exit servant and Governor)

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(The palace—King is on stage. He is a huge, obese blob of fat, reclining on a sofa and being fanned by servants)

King: Where's my Minister? Minister! Minister! (enter Minister)

Minister: I'm sorry, Your Majesty.

King: I'm hungry again. Get me more food!

Minister: Yes, Your Majesty. What would you like?

King: Well, what've you got?

Minister: Let's see... (takes long list from pocket and reads) ...pillo rice, cholay subji, aloo subji, gobi subji, makhan roti, miti roti, tepla, paratha, aloo paratha, dungri bhajias, samosas, palum paneer subji, pani puri, dhokra, gulabjamens, sandesh, jelabis, dahi, burfi, tefli, bundi...

King: I'll have the lot!

Minister: Very good, and how would you like it served?

King: All mixed together in a bucket!

Minister: Achaa! And to drink?

King: Some English tonic water. Oh wait! I think I can only manage six crates today.

Minister: I'll be back very soon, Your Majesty. (Minister exits and then returns)

King: That was quick!

Minister: No, no, the Governor is here to see you.

King: Announce him!

Minister: Your Majesty—Major General Sir Henry Goosescratcher-Smythe, representative of His Imperial Majesty King George V of England, Governor of the province of Bhelpuri and Captain of the Warwickshire cricket team. (enter Governor and Servant—National Anthem is played)

Governor: Your Majesty, on behalf of the King, I hereby present you with this month's taxes. Now bearing in mind that you are a semi-independent State and have financial backing as well as diplomatic aid from His Majesty's army, I have deducted a small percentage of...

King: Shut up and turn the money over!

Governor: I beg your pardon?

Minister: Er, what His Majesty meant to say was—he is honored that you have brought the money, and thanks you from the bottom of his heart.

Governor: Oh, I see... come, ninny! (they are about to leave. but Servant suddenly addresses King)

Seeker: No! Please, Your Majesty, I beg you, I am in search of the greatest person, and I have been cheated by one man after another!

Minister: In this Province there is none superior to our King. Everyone is under his rule. Even the British fear his Majesty. You had better serve him if you know what is good for you.

Seeker: Well, if you're sure.

Governor: Hmph! (walks off angrily)

King: So you want to serve me, eh? You seem a little naive. Nonetheless, you're sincere. Can you cook?

Seeker: No.

King: Oh, that's a pity.

Minister: Your Majesty, your guru has just arrived.

King: Show him in at once. (enter Sage) Pranam, Gurudeva.

Sage: O King, is everyone well in your kingdom? Are all the citizens happy and well cared for? Is the system of varna and ashrama being maintained?

King: The kingdom is in quite good shape, Guruji. By following your orders, things never fail. Actually, it is a fact that you are the real ruler of this Province. Please tell me, how can I serve you?

Servant: No! No! You're not the greatest person! I've been cheated yet again! Now it appears that this saintly man is the greatest! Will my search never end?

Sage: To be master of everyone requires unlimited energy and opulence—wealth, strength, fame, renunciation, beauty and wisdom. By possessing these qualities one may rule over others. The Personality who possesses all of these qualities in full is known to me.

Seeker: O great sage, please, I want to find this amazing Person! I want to serve Him! Please take me to Him!

Sage: Then let us go to the temple where He resides. (exit Sage and Seeker)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Temple—Enter Sage and Seeker. Sage shows him the Deity of Krishna)

Seeker: I was simply trying to find the greatest person, but I see that everyone has a superior over them. Even the great King takes instruction from you. So please tell me, are you the greatest master?

Sage: I am master of no one. I am a simple servant like yourself, endeavoring to serve Lord Sri Krishna—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Seeker: I, too, wish to serve the Lord, but how do I become qualified?

Sage: You may start by chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare... by chanting the mahamantra constantly, your love for God develops. It takes time, but try it, won't you?

Seeker: I want to chant the Holy Names of the Lord constantly—let's all chant right now! (kirtan)

The End

The Story of Lust, Anger And Greed

“The Pardoner's Tale”

The Story of Lust, Anger And Greed

“The Pardoner's Tale”

* * * * *

CAST: Innkeeper, Lust, Anger, Greed, Old Man, Death.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(An Inn—on stage an Innkeeper—enter Lust)

Innkeeper: Good day, sir!

Lust: Good day to you. Now tell me, what do you have for me to enjoy?

Innkeeper: Why, we have ale and the finest French wines.

Lust: Oh, wine! How delectable. Give me some at once! Let me taste it! (he sits down with a bottle of wine—enter Greed)

Innkeeper: Good day, sir!

Greed: Good day. I'm feeling a little hungry, do you have anything to eat?

Innkeeper: Well, we have these pies, sir.

Greed: Alright, give me 18 of them—and a big glass of ale.

Innkeeper: This is the biggest glass we have, sir.

Greed: Well, you had better give me three glasses, then. (Greed sits down and begins to eat ravenously—enter Anger, he bumps into Lust)

Anger: Out of my way, you idiot! (to Innkeeper) Hey you, give me some liquor and make it quick—I'm in a bad mood! (he grabs the bottle and sits down)

Greed: (to Lust) Might I ask, sir, what you are doing in this country?

Lust: Of course, let me introduce myself. My name is Lust. My business is enjoyments—thus I travel throughout the world searching for new tastes, new sounds, new sights, new sensual pleasures to enjoy. But pray, sir, who are you?

Greed: My business is similar to yours and my name is Greed. My aim in life is to consume more and more, for my desires are limitless. (to Anger) But please, tell us, sir, who are you?

Anger: What business is it of yours? How dare you poke your nose into my affairs?

Lust: Oh dear, look out the window there. What a terrible sight!

Greed: What is it?

Lust: Look! It's a coffin being carried for burial. How awful, they shouldn't upset people by allowing such things to be seen.

Greed: Innkeeper, who is the poor soul there being taken for burial?

Innkeeper: Oh sirs, it's too awful to speak of. I couldn't tell you.

Anger: Tell us!

Innkeeper: Oh yes, sir, well you see around here there lives a most infamous villain, a most terrible and fearsome person! Now he roams throughout this country, killing every person he meets, and it seems certain that not one of us will escape from his clutches! He'll have us all!

Greed: But who is this villain. What is his name?

Innkeeper: Oh, I dare not repeat it, sirs. I dare not.

Anger: Tell us!

Innkeeper: Very well, I will tell you. His name is... his name is DEATH!

Greed: Death?

Lust: Death?

Anger: Death?

Innkeeper: Aye sirs, Death.

Greed: Well, my friends, I have a suggestion to make. As it seems that all of us are in danger from this Death, I think we must take action to stop his nefarious deeds. Let us go in search of Death, and when we find him we will finish him off once and for all.

Lust: I agree, we must stop this Death, for his very name strikes terror in my heart.

Anger: Yes, just hearing about him makes me angry—let us go at once!

Greed: Wait! Innkeeper, tell us where this Death is to be found.

Innkeeper: Oh sirs, his activities are a great mystery. No one knows where he will strike next, but they do say that those who are old walk always in his shadow and they are closest to him.

Greed: Come then, let us set about our task at once.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(An old man crosses the stage—then enter Lust, Anger and Greed)

Lust: Oh, no! We've been searching for hours and we have come up with no trace of Death. I am exhausted!

Anger: Yes, this is a waste of time. It makes me so angry. Whose clever idea was this, anyway?

Greed: Wait, friends. Look—over there is an old man, surely he must be expecting Death. Anger, bring him over here and we will question him. (exit Anger; re-enters dragging old man)

Greed: Old man, we are searching for the villain who is known as Death, for we have decided to put a stop to his evil ways.

Lust: And we think that you know where we can find Death. Now you must tell us.

Old Man: I have no idea where Death is, for though I am old he has not yet approached me. I warn you, sirs, give up your quest, for no good will come of it.

Anger: You are lying! You are a friend of Death, and so you are trying to protect him from us. Tell us at once or I will cut off your head!

Old Man: No, no! It is true that I have never seen Death, but if you are determined to search him out, then I have heard that he is lurking in yonder grove of trees. If you search there, surely you will find him.

Lust: Come then, let us go there at once!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(On stage Lust, Anger, and Greed—searching)

Greed: There is no one here at all, nothing except this old chest.

Lust: The old man must have been lying.

Anger: Uhh! How dare he lie to us. Let's go and teach the old wretch a lesson!

Greed: Well, let us look inside this chest first. Perhaps there may be some clue in there. (they force it open and find it is full of gold and jewels)

Lust: Oh, how wonderful! So much wealth and it's mine all mine!

Greed: No, it's mine! I found it first!

Anger: Are you two trying to cheat me? Ugh! I hate you both! I'll kill you both for this!

Lust: Friends, friends, why should we quarrel? There is enough riches here for all of us to share! Rather, we should celebrate our good fortune. I will go to that inn we just passed and bring some wine here so that we can refresh ourselves.

Greed: An excellent suggestion! (exit Lust) Now, Anger, here is a chance for us to improve on our fortune. It is true that there is plenty of gold here for three people, but how much more would there be if the treasure were split only two ways?

Anger: What is your idea then?

Greed: That when our friend Lust returns, we do away with him and keep all the riches for ourselves.

Anger: What a splendid idea! My dagger is ready.

Greed: Ah, look—he is returning now. Act naturally. (re-enter Lust)

Lust: Here you are, my friends, the finest wine. After all, we can certainly afford it now. (aside) And we'll just add a little poison for you two.

Greed: Oh thank you, and we have something for you, dear friend, don't we Anger?

Anger: We do, indeed! (he stabs Lust)

Greed: Now all the riches are for us two alone! Let us drink to celebrate our success! (drinks some wine) Ahh! Ugh! Ow!

Anger: What's the matter? What's wrong with you? (drinks some wine)

Greed: Ah!... poison!!! (dies)

Anger: Oh no! Ugh! Ah! Ow! (dies)

(enter Death)

Death: Ha, Ha, Ha! So they thought they could cheat me, Death; they thought they could enjoy limitlessly? Impossible! No one can defy Death. No one.

The End

The Story Of Lust, Anger And Greed

The Story Of Lust, Anger And Greed

* * * * *

CAST: Lust, Anger, Greed, Old Man, Old Age, Narrator.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Lust: Good evening... Allow me to introduce myself—my name is Lust. I am sure you have all met me before, for everyone in this world knows me in one way or another. Originally, I was known as love, and I lived in an eternal land far away from here, which was ruled by one known as the All-Attractive Lord. I decided to become independent, to make my own fortune, so I travelled to this temporary

material world, where there is so much to enjoy—that is, in between the tiny inconveniences of birth, disease, old age and death.

Here, I met my beloved teacher, Selfishness. He taught me everything I know and initiated me with the name “Lust.” So, here I live now, along with my dear wife, Envy, who is never far away from my heart. Then, of course, there are all my devoted sons and daughters, including my eldest and favorite son, Cupid, and my three pet daughters—Profit, Adoration and Distinction. All in all, we are a very popular family; indeed, most people in this world treat me as their dearest friend. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! They do not know that I am actually their greatest enemy! If they invite me into their homes (for I never come where I am not invited)... I begin to make all kinds of demands—“Give me this, give me that...” and they try so hard to satisfy me... but it is never good enough—I am never satisfied! Then I call in my army of unlimited desires, who run through the house, setting all the rooms ablaze, until all their strength, knowledge, wealth, beauty, and everything is burned to the ground!

Then, I take these miserable fellows and have them thrown into the darkest dungeons of forgetfulness, where they sit and rot! Slowly but surely most hosts go completely crazy! Ha! Ha! Ha! Kings, scientists, philosophers, aristocrats, even great yogis and so-called holy men... by their own power they cannot stop me... I am invincible! Well... almost! There is one way and one way only that I can be thwarted... it is a great secret, hardly one man in millions knows this... but I will tell you! If one cultivates Krishna Consciousness, under the guidance of a pure devotee of Lord Krishna, he alone can conquer me! But I warn you! If you try to do this, you are declaring war against me, and as long as you are in this material world, I will not leave you in peace!

Excuse me, I don't know what came over me. I've got nothing to worry about... after all, who would want to leave my association? This material world is not such a bad place, really. I mean it has... some slight disadvantages—repeated birth, old age, disease and death—but on the other hand, there's so much... so much... sin! Mmmmmmm! Yes, there is nothing quite like it—it's so exciting, so absorbing, all-devouring! Talking of sin, that reminds me: where are those two good friends of mine... Anger and Greed? I've been looking for them everywhere! Anger! Greed! Where are you?

Anger: (offstage, roaring) What is it? Well... Lust, it's you! (comes on stage angrily)

Lust: Anger, my dear friend!

Anger: Well, what the hell do you want?

Lust: Oh Anger, it's so good to see you after all this time!

Anger: Bah!

Lust: I thought it would be nice if you and I could get together with Greed, and we could have a real good time!

Anger: Why should I? I hate you... I hate everybody!

Lust: Dear Anger... don't be so... angry! Tell me, why are you so upset?

Anger: Because I'm frustrated! I can't get what I want! So, I'm angry!

Lust: Listen, I've got a great idea how we can enjoy like anything!

Anger: What is it? (Lust whispers in Anger's ear) Bah! All right, then!

Lust: Believe me, it's a foolproof plan! Now, where is Greed?

Anger: How the hell should I know?

Lust: All right, just asking...

Anger: Well, don't!

Greed: (enters, waddling due to obesity... eating something which is falling out of his mouth due to trying to eat too much at once. He carries a bottle of something in one hand) Did somebody call me?

Anger: Where on earth have you been?

Greed: I've been everywhere... looking for more... money, power, food, intoxication, sex... you name it, I must have more of it... more and more!

Lust: Greed, my dear friend, wonderful to see you again! How fares it with you?

Greed: Can't complain, really, but I could have more! Yes, I must have more and more, otherwise life is just a bore!

Lust: Don't worry, Greed, I have got a perfectly demonic scheme for enjoying that is so abominably good it will send shivers up your spine!

Greed: Oh really? That sounds nice... but I want the most... may I have the most? I do need more than anyone else! I must have more and more. I must! Give me more and more and more! And I don't care if everyone else goes without, as long as I can have more!

Lust: Oh Greed, you're so... greedy! It makes me quite... envious!

Anger: Come on, Lust, lets get on with it... I'm getting impatient!

Lust: All right, now here's the plan—every day about this time, there's a feeble old man who comes this way. He looks a bit poor, but I happen to know that he's as rich as anything! When he comes by, we'll jump on him, beat him up and take all his money!

Greed: That sounds great! But can I have the biggest share?

Anger: I don't care, as long as I can kill him! Can I kill him, can I, Lust?

Lust: Well, all right, if you must! Look out—here he comes now! (Lust, Anger and Greed all jump on the old man, who cries out:)

Old Man: Oh, please! Leave me alone! I have no money... I am just a poor man...

Lust: Poor man? You're a liar!!! Hold him down, Anger, search him, Greed!

Greed: Not a brass farthing... he's skint!

Anger: I thought you said he was a rich man, Lust? Bah!

Lust: What? No money? But you had so much money... what happened to it all? Have you hidden it somewhere?

Old Man: Honestly, I did have a great deal of money, but... I lost it all.

Greed: Lost it all?

Old Man: Yes, by gambling...

Lust: Gambling? Oh, how irresponsible! How sinful! Anyway, you know the wages of sin! Anger, kill him!

Old Man: Wait! if you spare me, I shall tell you where to find riches beyond your wildest dreams!

Lust/Anger/Greed: Yes? How much?

Old Man: A huge chest full of gold, rubies, pearls and diamonds... and thousands of gold coins!

Greed: Where is it? Tell us!

Old Man: Will you give me your word that you will spare me if I tell you?

Lust: Of course... of course... I give you my word! We wouldn't do such a thing as break our promise! Now, speak on! Tell us where the treasure is!

Old Man: First you must find the path of Attachment, and follow it into the forest of Entanglement... then cross over the river of Illusion and keep going till you get to the mountains of Fear! Search the mountain top until you find the cave of Death! Inside that cave you will find what you are seeking...

Greed: Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! I'll be the richest man in the world!

Lust: Yes! We all will be! Thank you, old man... All right Anger, you can kill him now!

Old Man: No! Please, you promised! You gave your word!

Lust: You've got a lot to learn, my friend... never trust the word of a materialist!
Anger! (old man dies, screaming, by the knife of Anger) All right, Greed, Anger, let us find the path of Attachment! (curtain)

Narrator: And so, the three rogues, Lust, Anger and Greed, began their journey in search of the treasure. Finding the path of Attachment, they journeyed for many miles...

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Enter Greed, followed by Anger and Lust)

Greed: Look! There's a great forest up ahead!

Anger: Yes, yes! Do you think I'm blind?

Lust: We'll soon be rich!

Anger: All right, lets get moving! Hurry up!

Lust: Well, here we are in the forest of Entanglement! But... which way shall we go now?

Greed: This way looks the best!

Anger: No, no! It must be this way!

Greed: What do you say, Lust?

Lust: (pointing in another direction altogether) This way!

Anger: I hope this is the right way!

Greed: We're lost, aren't we?

Lust: Will you two stop squabbling? Just think of all those riches!

Greed: Yes, riches! All mine... all mine!

Lust: Look! The river of Illusion!

Greed: Oh dear, it looks very deep and dangerous!

Lust: (dipping toe in water) It's very cold, too!

Anger: (pushing them both into the water) Oh, just get in, you weaklings!

Lust: Help! I can't swim!

Greed: It's all right, just think of the riches... you can do anything for that!

Lust: Yes... riches...

Greed: We've nearly reached the shore!

Lust: Come now, friends, just a little further and we'll have our wildest dreams fulfilled!

Anger: If there really is any treasure! I bet that old fool was lying!

Greed: Take heart, Anger, here are the mountains of Fear that the old man spoke about!

Lust: Yes, Greed, yes—the mountains of Fear! They look rather high, don't they?

Anger: Come on, hurry up... Greed, you go first!

Greed: Help! I'm falling!

Anger: Come on, Greed, stop fooling around, this isn't the time for it, you know!

Greed: (scrambling to safety) There must be easier ways of getting rich!

Anger: Oh shut your mouth, Greed, before I put my fist in it!

Greed: Charmed, I'm sure!

Lust: Just a little further now, my friends! Just think of all that glittering gold!

Greed: The cave of Death! It looks very dark in there!

Anger: I'm not afraid! Come on, let's go inside! (opens the curtain to cave. Enter Old Age)

Old Age: Stop! If you value your lives, go no further, for this is the cave of Death! No man that ever entered here came out alive!

Lust: (laughing nervously) So sorry to trouble you, sir, we were just leaving...

Anger: Lust! Come back here, you snivelling toad! (to Old Age) I'm not afraid of you... you... who are you, anyway?

Old Age: My name is Old Age, and I stand here at the door to the cave of Death to welcome fools like you who are seeking doom!

Anger: Come on, you two, this old fellow's just been up in these mountains too long... he's lost his marbles! You crumbling old twit! Get out of our way before I kill you... be off! Old Age exits, shaking his head sadly)

Greed: Well done, Anger, good man!

Lust: I wasn't really fried... look, here's the treasure chest... we've made it... we're rich!

Greed/Anger/Lust: Gold, jewels! All mine... all mine!!!

Anger: We'll split it three ways, okay Greed? Lust?

Lust: Yes... Three ways! There's enough here for all of us... we must do these things honestly!

Greed: Honestly? Since when have you been honest, Lust?

Lust: Very funny! Anyway, it was worth it... we're rich! We're rich!!!

Greed: This calls for a celebration... I think I saw some wine in another part of the cave... I'll go and get some for us all!

Anger: Well hurry up, then... I don't want to hang around here too long! (Greed exits)

Lust: Hey, Anger, if we split this treasure only two ways instead of three, there would be a lot more for you and I!

Anger: But what about Greed? He wouldn't think much of that idea... how are you going to persuade him, Lust?

Lust: Not persuade—all we do is bump him off!

Anger: Bump him off?!

Lust: Come on, Anger, you're a man of the world! All we have to do is this: as soon as Greed comes back, I'll distract his attention while you go up behind him and ZZZZZIIPP with your knife—that's the end of Greed!!!

Anger: Ha! Ha! Ha! I like your style, Lust!

Lust: Shhhh! Here he comes now!

Greed: (aside) Ha! Ha! Ha! I'll give them some wine, all right! With the addition of a few drops of cyanide, just to add a little flavor! After all, why should we split the treasure three ways, when there's just enough for one—me! (aloud) Here you are, gentlemen, a little Vin Rouge to... uh... refresh you!

Lust: That's very kind of you, Greed! Who says there's no honor amongst thieves? Just put it down there, while we count the booty. I say, Greed, what's that big green snake crawling up behind you? (Greed turns around in surprise and Anger knifes him in the back)

Greed: Ah! You dirty double-dealers!!! The gold... jewels... all mine... (dies)

Lust: Nice one, Anger!

Anger: (to Greed's body which is lying on the floor) Please don't take it personally, my friend, it was purely a business arrangement!

Lust: Come, Anger, lets drink on it! I propose a toast.. to fortune!

Anger: To fortune! (Lust and Anger down their glasses of wine, and moments later they fall to the floor clutching their throats)

Old Age: Tut tut! I warned them... I warned them, but they did not listen! They did not heed my advice—such is the result of Lust, Anger and Greed! As Lord Krishna himself has said in the Bhagavad-Gétä (16.21): Tri-vidham narakasyedam, dvaram nasanam atmanah, kamah krodhas tatha lobhas, tasmad etat trayam tyajet... “There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.” Alas, these three qualities are still not dead, for they are very much alive in the hearts of men today. Come gentleman, tell us your tale of woe! (Lust, Anger and Greed get up and speak:)

Lust: Lust was so filled with desire to enjoy his bodily senses, to lord it over the creation and to be independent of God, that all his good qualities were destroyed, and ultimately, so was he.

Anger: Anger was so frustrated upon being unable to satisfy his unlimited lusty desires and being filled with rage and hatred for everything and everyone, he lost all intelligence and fell into madness, violence and destruction.

Greed: Greed was so selfish and avaricious that he plundered and cheated everyone for as much as he could grab, and by causing so much distress to others, he paid the price... and died in misery.

Old Age: Lust, Anger and Greed! Those very rogues who have created the factories, the slaughterhouses, the abortion clinics, the nuclear bombs—and thus have made this world exactly like hell—those same rogues are glorified in every newspaper and magazine, eulogized in every novel and song, and treasured in every home and heart! By following these rogues, and their modern day servants—the politicians, atheistic scientists, and educationalists—we are misled to replace spiritual searching with the accumulation of material objects and experiences. And, by allowing our children to be indoctrinated and misguided by them, we are inadvertently supporting the downfall of civilization! The result is this modern hell in which we are all suffering so miserably. If one simply wastes his human life in trying to satisfy the animal propensities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending, then he will certainly die in ignorance and take birth in the degraded animal species.

However, by turning one's attention to understanding his real identity—as eternal servant of Krishna—then, by such spiritual inquiry, one's whole life becomes successful. One who sincerely wants to become free from the bondage of Lust, Anger and Greed, will seek out a pure devotee of God who will guide him to perfection and eternal bliss in loving relation with the supreme all-attractive person, Lord Krishna. Such a rare and priceless opportunity is now available in the personality of Çréla Prabhupāda. So, simply by following in the footsteps of such a pure devotee, and by chanting the Holy Names: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare—one will be transferred at the end of this life back home, back to Godhead, the Supreme Abode, which is forever free from the pangs of Lust, Anger and Greed.

The End

Count Dracula Gets The Straight Sauce

by Loka Mangala Das

Count Dracula Gets The Straight Sauce

by Loka Mangala Das

* * * * *

CAST: Girl, Dracula, Female Sankirtan Devotee.

(thunder, lightning, wind, coyotes howling)

Girl: (runs in screaming) Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Dracula: (enters, singing to the tune of "I'm in the Mood for Love":) I'm in the mood for blood, simply because you're near me!

Girl: Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Dracula: Funny, but when you're near me, I'm in the mood for blood!

Girl: (runs off stage, screaming) Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Devotee: (enters with book bag full of books for distribution) My dear sir, what a wonderful voice you have!

Dracula: Ah, my beautiful one, you are such a feast for the eyes, what to speak of the tongue.

Devotee: Of all the senses, the tongue is the most voracious and difficult to control.

Dracula: My dear! How can you speak to me of control when the mere sight of you fills me with lusty desires?

Devotee: It is lust only, which is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of the world.

Dracula: But my dear! You misunderstand me. I have developed a profound attachment for you.

Devotee: While contemplating the object of the senses, one naturally develops attachment for them. And from that attachment lust develops.

Dracula: You little smart-alec, you make me so angry, I could bite you!

Devotee: Yes, it's a fact. From lust anger arises, and from anger delusion develops. From delusion comes bewilderment of memory, and when memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost and one falls down into the material pool. You see, it's a very risky business.

Dracula: If anyone is taking the risk, my dear, it's you! Obviously, you don't know who I am.

Devotee: Obviously, you don't know who you are!

Dracula: I don't know who I am? Well, I'll tell you who I am—I am Count Dracula of Transylvania, the Prince of Darkness.

Devotee: Surely, you are in darkness, for only an ignorant man considers the body as the self and his place of birth as worshipable.

Dracula: So, you think you are so smart, eh? Then tell me this—if I'm not Count Dracula, then who am I?

Devotee: Ah! My dear sir, your human life has just begun.

Dracula: Human life? Please do not insult me in this way. Why, I haven't been human for over four hundred years!

Devotee: Try to understand—human life actually begins when one asks himself —“Who am I?” You see, your real identity is that of spirit soul, full of knowledge and bliss, eternally connected to the Supreme Lord in an intimate relationship of love.

Dracula: My only business is to make others suffer so that I can enjoy. Indeed, for my personal pleasure, I do not hesitate to commit even the most abominable action. Yet, somehow or other, by your good instruction, I am feeling myself meek and humble.

Devotee: But, they are not my instructions, they are the instructions of Lord Krishna as given in the Bhagavad-Gétä As It Is by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupäda, my beloved spiritual master. (she pulls out the Bhagavad-Gétä)

Dracula: Aiiiiieee! Put that book away, it is more brilliant than thousands of suns!

Devotee: Yes, Godhead is light. Ignorance is darkness. Where there is Godhead, there is no darkness. But you are wrong to think that this book will harm you. Rather, it will relieve you of all the misery of material existence, even your desire for blood.

Dracula: But my desire for blood has been insatiable for over four hundred years! How can I be free of such a strong desire as this?

Devotee: You simply have to transfer your material affections to the transcendental consciousness of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (Dracula again lunges at the devotee) And if you don't give up this blood-sucking business, there is a good chance that in your next life you'll take birth as a mosquito!

Dracula: No!

Devotee: Yes!

Dracula: No! But why? But how?

Devotee: It is stated in the Bhagavad-Gétâ that whatever state of being one remembers when one quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.

Dracula: I have never even considered such things before.

Devotee: You must!

Dracula: But what can I do?

Devotee: It is the arrangement of the Supreme Lord that we drink the blood of the cow only after it has been transformed into milk, the miracle food, which builds strong brain tissues for understanding self-realization. From this milk we make butter and ghee, in which we cook wonderful preparations for the Lord like samosas, puris and halavah. But the real test is in the tasting. (devotee pulls out a sweet) Here, take this and enjoy.

Dracula: MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM! MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!

Ecstatically delicious! I must have more!

Devotee: Then, you must come to the wonderful Sunday Love Feast at the Hare Krishna temple and take many such foodstuffs to your full satisfaction. Please come, and bring your friends.

Dracula: I will be there, but as for my little friends of the night, well, we will see! Goodbye!

Devotee: But, before you go, I want you to have this book and give what you can.

Dracula: Would a twenty do?

Devotee: That will be fine! Thank You. Hare Krishna!

Dracula: Hare—?

Devotee: Krishna.

Dracula: Hare Krishna!

The End

The Great Brain Robbery

by Anadi Das

The Great Brain Robbery

by Anadi Das

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CAST: Butch, Ralph, Yogi, Scientist, Cop, Devotee.

SCENE ONE

Interior of a one-room apartment

SCENE ONE

Interior of a one-room apartment

(Butch is playing cards or shaving, etc. Ralph knocks and walks in)

Butch: Oh, hi ya, Ralph!

Ralph: Hi Butch!

Butch: Hey, Ralph, have any ideas who we're gonna rob in order to pay the rent this week?

Ralph: As a matter of fact I do... I've been readin' in the paper — in the "What's Happenin'" Column.

Butch: Really? So what's happenin'?

Ralph: I'll tell ya what's happenin'. There are three big meetings!

Butch: Wow! No kidding? Three big meetings. Are you gonna go to the PTA or the B'nai B'rith?

Ralph: No, seriously. I think we can score big.

Butch: I'm all ears. Let's hear about these meetings.

Ralph: Well, there's the Bhogi Yogi Seminar uptown, and there's a National Science Convention at the convention center downtown, and... oh yeah, over near the college, them Hairy Krizmas are havin' a love feast.

Butch: Hey, Ralph. You flipped your lid or something? We ain't got nothin' to do at no Yogi seminar... or at a science convention, what to speak of goin' to see those bald-headed Hairy Krizmas.

Ralph: Come on, Butch. Have I ever led you wrong, huh, have I?

Butch: Well, there was the time when we were makin' a getaway and you crashed into the cop car.

Ralph: All right. But other than that time I smashed into the cop car, have I ever steered you wrong?

Butch: Well there was the time...

Ralph: Okay, okay — within the last 24 hours did I ever lead you down the wrong path?

Butch: Well... I guess you haven't.

Ralph: All right, then. Trust me. Who's got more money than those scientists and those Yogis and those Krizmas?

Butch: I guess you're right. They've all got a good money-makin' racket. That's for sure. You know Ralph, sometimes you've got class. Real class.

Ralph: Yeah, I know. So let's hurry up. We only got 10 minutes till the Bhogi Yogi Seminar. (they exit, then return on the other side of the stage)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

The Yogi's Ashram

(The Yogi is sitting cross-legged and giving a lecture, and they work their way in through the crowd)

Yogi: So, my friends, we can now understand that I am you and you are me, and together we are united in one universal consciousness. By transcending our material bodies we can achieve the highest perfection: the blissful awareness of cosmic nothingness.

I have come all the way from the Riviera — oh — I mean the Himalayas just to save you poor suffering souls who are rotting here in this false material existence. So if you will just follow my instructions, then together we can achieve the ultimate purpose in life — merging with THE VOID.

Now it is time to close our session. Kindly leave your small contribution of at least \$75.00 with the young girl over there in the pink miniskirt and pick up your own special “mantra.” Now are there any questions? Ahhh, the lady in the back — Yes, we do take Mastercard! Thank you and Namaste.

Butch: (whispering loudly) Hey, Ralph? What's a Yogi seminar doin' up here in the ritzy section?

Ralph: shhhhh... (the people all leave and the Yogi gets up and begins to walk past Butch and Ralph)

Ralph: Hi there, Yogi.

Yogi: Namaste!

Butch: Nice day to you, too.

Ralph: What he means to say is "stick 'em up!"

Yogi: What?! Why you... you shall never get away with this!

Ralph: Why do you say "you" when you refer to us, Yogi? I mean, after all, you told us during the lecture that "I am you and you are me" ...so actually, you're holdin' the gun on us!

Butch: Hey, that was pretty good, Ralph! Start puttin' your money in this bag, mister!

Yogi: Ah... Gentlemen, I can't possibly give you any money... ah... ah... the, ah... landlady will come for the rent, and she will be...

Ralph: Come on, Yogi, Where's your "universal consciousness," huh? I mean the landlady is you and you are you, so when the landlady comes to ask for the rent, it's just yourself askin' for the rent!

Butch: Yeah, Yogi. And when the cops come to take you away for not payin' the rent, just remember they're all yourself just havin' a good time.

Yogi: This is preposterous!

Butch: Don't take it so bad. Just try to see us robbin' you as us helpin' you become poifect.

Yogi: What nonsense is this?

Butch: Well, you just got through sayin' that perfection was understandin' that everythin' is nothin'. So, when we get through robbin' you, you'll have nothin', and then you'll be poifect! (they laugh)

Yogi: How dare you speak to me like this!

Ralph: Take it easy, Yogi! Don't get mad at your fellow Gods.

Yogi: You are not Gods. You are madmen!

Ralph: No, we're not. We're the robbin' Gods, and you're the robbed God!

Butch: Hey, Ralph, it ain't all one!

Ralph: You don't say?

Butch: (looking in the bag) I dooo say! I see some twenties and some fifties in here.

Ralph: Hey, Yogi, if it's all one, then how come you don't wear a cotton ball instead of a t-shirt?

Butch: Yeah! If it's all one, how come you don't eat a dollar bill instead of goin' to a restaurant? (Yogi puts his face in his hands as if crying)

Ralph: Don't cry, Yogi: It's all false, remember? Everything that you see in this world is false. You said so yourself!

Yogi: Yes, I did say that everything is false... but...

Butch: Then that must mean you're false, too. Right, Yogi?

Yogi: Well... ah...

Butch: And everything you say must also be false, too!

Ralph: Here, Yogi, you can have your cigarettes back! We don't smoke Camels!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

The Lecture Hall

(Butch & Ralph enter the lecture hall while the big scientist is concluding his talk)

Scientist: So, in conclusion, this universe and all that we see around us has come from that one “Big Bang” that we sometimes theorize might have happened at some time — just “by chance!” All of us are simply chemical combinations of atoms and molecules, bumping around for some time, then dissolving and reforming as who knows what. A kind of “primordial soup,” as it were. This is the real gift of Science! By knowledge of the true origin of the universe, as well as our own origin, we need no longer fear death, nor any of its primitive superstitions! Thank you and good day! (the professor walks over in the vicinity of Butch & Ralph)

Butch: Hi there, Professor!

Scientist: Well, hello boys! Where did you come from?

Ralph: Oh, we just “accidentally” dropped in outta da sky.

Butch: And “by chance” we just happen to have a couple of guns here... Stick 'em up!

Scientist: Now, wait just a minute! What is the meaning of this?

Ralph: Meanin'? Why, there ain't no meanin'. It's all happenin' “by chance,” remember?

Scientist: Are you two crazy?

Ralph: Hey, Butch! He's askin' us if we're crazy!

Butch: Just start throwin' your money in the bag, buddy, or I'll pull this trigger and show you the real "Big Bang Theory!"

Ralph: Yeah, Professor, you wouldn't want any "theoretical accidents" to happen in here, would ya?

Scientist: Now, boys, take it easy... (starts to put his money in the bag) I've got two little kids and a wife at home!

Ralph: C'mon, Professor! You ain't got no wife and kids at home! You just got through sayin' that everything's all chemicals. So, all you got at home is a bunch of protons and neutrons!

Butch: (looking at pictures in Scientist's wallet) Hey, get a load of this Ralph — she's the fattest "proton" I ever seen!

Ralph: Yeah, and look at those ugly little "molecules" next to her!

Scientist: (snatching wallet) Those happen to be my children!

Ralph: No apologies necessary.

Scientist: You're nothing but a bunch of thieves!

Butch: Calm down, Professor, just try to look at us robbin' you as a "chance interaction of chemicals."

Ralph: Yeah, Butch, and those green chemicals sure look good to us!

Butch: By chance, would you mind droppin' your watch in da bag, too?

Scientist: No, boys! Not my watch! It's a special gift from N.A.S.A. I really need it to schedule my appointments! Surely, you can understand that?

Ralph: C'mon, Professor! You don't need to schedule any appointments. Everything's an "accident," right?

Scientist: Yes.

Ralph: So, nothin's gonna happen on time, anyway!

Butch: (handing Scientist a rock) That's okay, you can keep the moon rocks.

Ralph: Hey, why are you so scared anyway? I thought you scientists had "no fear of death."

Scientist: Well, after all, those are only hypothetical theories.

Butch: You mean you guys get paid all this dough for makin' up hypothetical theories?

Ralph: Looks like we're in the wrong business, huh Butch! C'mon, we've got enough for now — let's get outta here!

Butch: Nice meetin' your chemical composition, sir!

Ralph: (handing Scientist a dollar) Hey, just ta show you dat we ain't a bunch of real bad guys, here's a dollar. Go get yourself a bowl of “primordial soup!”

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

The Hare Krishna Temple

(Next, the thieves come to the Krishna temple, where a devotee is concluding his lecture. The devotee should ad lib for a few minutes, then say:)

Devotee: Now, we invite you to partake of our Sunday Love Feast, which will be held upstairs in the prasadam room. And after the feast, please be sure to come back into the temple room for a wonderful play. Thank You. Hare Krishna!

Ralph: Okay Butch, they're all goin' out ta eat dat Sunday feast!

Butch: I'm goin' too!

Ralph: Get back here!

Butch: But I'm hungry!

Ralph: We'll eat later! Foist we'll take care of business! They're all gone now. He's alone — let's get him!

Butch: Hi there, Baldy!

Devotee: Hare Krishna!

Ralph: Stick 'em up!

Devotee: Oh, is this a holdup?

Butch: Hey, Ralph, this guy's smart!

Ralph: Just start puttin' your money in da bag and make it snappy!

Butch: Or we'll plug you full of holes; then you'll really be “holy”!

Devotee: But... I don't have any money.

Ralph: Don't give me dat! The marble in this here fancy room don't grow on trees, ya know!

Devotee: Listen, gentlemen, whatever money we do get, we give to God, for everything belongs to God.

Butch: Oh, no! Not another one of dem "we're all God" guys! I suppose we're all one, right?

Devotee: No, we're not all one. And we're not all God, either. But we are all part and parcel of God, just as the drop of water in the ocean is qualitatively one with the ocean, but in quantity it is different.

Butch: Hey, that was pretty good, Ralph! Did ya understand dat one, Ralph?

Ralph: We didn't come here for no lecture! Just toss the dough in da sack so we can get outta here!

Devotee: Give me a chance to explain!

Ralph: Chance?! Now I suppose you're gonna tell us that everything's happenin' by chance, huh?

Devotee: Of course not! That's a ridiculous philosophy. Nothing happens by chance.

Butch: Wow! That's really true, Ralph! Dis guy's got it!

Ralph: Yeah, he's got it, alright, and I want it! All of it, in da bag, now!

Devotee: But, I've told you...

Butch: Ah... how come you ain't afraid like them other people we robbed? Ain't you afraid we might kill you?

Devotee: No, I'm not afraid for myself. Actually I'm worried about you!

Butch: What? You worried about me?

Devotee: Yes, that's right. If you kill me then you'll have to come back and take another birth to be killed yourself. That's the law of karma. For everything you do, there is an equal reaction that you must suffer. These are the laws which have been set up by Krishna or God.

Ralph: Are you nuts, or something? Us come back? And take another lousy birth?

Butch: Hold it, Ralph! Remember back on 33rd Street, at that church we tried to rob when the priest said about Jesus — as you sow, so shall you reap? Well, this is it — this guy is sayin' the same thing.

Ralph: I came to reap somethin' to pay the rent, not to listen to no sermon. Now, for the last time, start coughin' up the dough into the bag!

Devotee: Actually, I do have some “dough” that I can give you.

Ralph: See — I knew he was holdin' out.

Devotee: Here. It's some prasadam, and it's called a puri. We make it out of dough.

Ralph: Oh, you are a funny one. Wasn't that hilarious?! (Butch begins to eat the puri) Hey, what are you doin'? Don't eat that, Butch! It might be poison. You know what happened with Jim Jones!

Butch: But I'm hungry, Ralph. We never get anything decent to eat. Wow! This is good, Ralph, it's great stuff. Try it!

Ralph: Look, I didn't come here to eat. You eat. I want my food in the bag — in cool, crisp lettuce. Get the picture? (sound of police siren. The devotee leaves the stage)

Butch: On, no — it's the cops, Ralph! It's the cops, Ralph!

Ralph: I know it's the cops! I know it's the cops!

Butch: What are we gonna do, Ralph? What are we gonna do?

Ralph: I'll tell you what we're gonna do. I'll tell you what we're gonna... will you quit repeatin' yourself! Here! Take this cape. You play the drum, and I'll play the bells, just like we're regular Hairy Krizmas. (they have a funny kirtan. Cop enters)

Cop: Have any of you seen two thieves in here?

Butch: ah... ah... ah... ah...

Cop: What's he saying?

Ralph: I think he's tryin' to say. Well, uh... I'm not...

Cop: Will you shut up! Now have you seen two thieves or not?

Ralph: Well, what did they look like, Officer?

Cop: They were about your height... same color hair... looks like the same jackets, too.

Ralph: You know, come to think of it, Officer, I did see those two guys. They went over there.

Cop: Thanks a lot, boys! (Cop leaves. Ralph and Butch continue their horrible kirtan for a few more seconds)

Ralph: Boy. That was a close one — huh, Butch? For a second I thought that it was goin' to be another Waco. Hey, Butch. You can stop singin' now. The cop's gone. Will you quit it! The cop's gone already! Butch! Shut up!!!

Devotee: Calm down, Ralph. Can't you see that Butch is enjoying the nectar of the Holy Name?

Ralph: Yeah, come to think of it, I never saw the guy so happy in all my life!

Devotee: And you can be happy too, Ralph.

Ralph: You're kiddin'! Me happy? Money is happiness, isn't it?

Devotee: Has money ever made you really happy?

Ralph: I don't know... I never got enough of it to find out!

Devotee: See?! Listen, Ralph. Just repeat after me, and all of your anxieties will disappear. (Devotee says the Hare Krishna mantra. Ralph repeats it word by word. Devotee starts a proper kirtan)

Ralph: Come on everybody! Join in, or I'll blow your brains out!

(kirtan continues as Ralph and Butch take up a collection for the play — wielding their guns, they hold their bag open to each guest)

The End

Hell

by Datta Das

Hell

by Datta Das

* * * * *

CAST: Clerk, Tim.

SCENE ONE

(Opening: Tim checks into Hotel lobby)

SCENE ONE

(Opening: Tim checks into Hotel lobby)

Clerk: Date of birth?

Tim: 9/1/59. He looks around. Where am I, anyway?

Clerk: Don't try to tell me you don't know.

Tim: I don't. Is this some sort of joke?

Clerk: We never joke around down here.

Tim: Down here? You don't mean...?

Clerk: Welcome. (looks cross) Now—if you don't mind. I've got work to do. Last name?

Tim: Jefferson. (looks confused) Look, I'd really like to know what's happening here.

Clerk: First name?

Tim: Tim. Say, uh, is there somebody I can talk to?

Clerk: We are talking, aren't we?

Tim: (laughs) Oh, I get it. (laughs again) This is just a bad dream. I remember being in an accident—now I'm unconscious, and dreaming. Or hallucinating or something. I knew I shouldn't have stayed up to watch the Twilight Zone last night. (laughs again) This is just a bad dream.

Clerk: (sneers) You think this is a bad dream now, Tom...

Tim: Tim.

Clerk: You think this is a bad dream now, Tim, you just wait till you get your room assignment.

Tim: Ha! None of this is real, and...

Clerk: (slaps him on the face) How about that? Did that feel real?

Tim: (puts his hand to his face) Hey, you can't do that!

Clerk: No? (he slaps him on the other cheek)

Tim: I... I... I want a lawyer!

Clerk: Hey, we got lots of them down here. (laughs)

Tim: (looks bewildered) I thought you said you don't joke around.

Clerk: Did I say that?

Tim: Yes, you did.

Clerk: Well, I lied. Social Security number?

Tim: Just a minute. Fumbles for wallet. Hey, where's my wallet? (Clerk looks bored and impatient) I guess I don't have it with me.

Clerk: Too bad, now you don't qualify for the executive suite. (laughs again, then becomes deathly serious) But it doesn't matter, we know everything about you.

Tim: Everything?

Clerk: (looks at audience) Is there an echo in here? (gets out big book)

Tim: Wow, how many people are listed in there?

Clerk: (puts on reading glasses) One.

Tim: One?

Clerk: (ignores him) Hmm, doesn't say anything about you being hard of hearing. (closes book and holds it up) Tim Jefferson, this is your life! (canned applause. Printed on the book's cover is "Tim Jefferson, This Is Your Life")

Tim: Oh, my God!

Clerk: Guess again, Sherlock!

Tim: (faints)

Clerk: (looks at audience) You'd be surprised how much that happens. (shakes and revives Tim) Okay, for starters, you get to go to room 405.

Tim: Wait just a minute. Why should I be punished? I mean, I was a good guy. I helped a lot of people.

Clerk: (looks very unimpressed). Listen, Bud, my job is to give room assignments. My cousin Jake will do the reading.

Tim: Reading?

Clerk: (holds up book). Yeah, reading. That way we don't waste any time. He'll read to you in room 405.

Tim: But... but... you don't get it. This is a terrible mistake. I shouldn't be here at all!

Clerk: Yeah, and if I had a nickel for every time I heard that, I'd be Nelson Rockefeller. (looks up and grins) Actually, I'm glad I'm not. He's across from you in 404. (laughs) Okay, okay, what the heck. (looks at Tim) I don't do this for just anyone. (opens book) Here we go: August 22nd, 1979, you remember that little incident in Jenny Prist's garage?

Tim: But, but... That was a long time ago!

Clerk: So it was. So what? Should I read on?

Tim: Okay, you've made your point. How long will I be there?

Clerk: We don't measure time the way you're used to. In fact, you'll only be in room 405 for an instant.

Tim: That's good.

Clerk: Not really, 'cause it'll feel like a hundred years.

Tim: That's not so good.

Clerk: (shakes his head and looks at audience) Seems like we get all the smart ones down here.

Tim: What is room 405 like?

Clerk: It's got about a two-foot deep pool of the stinkiest muck you've ever seen. (laughs) Or should I say—smelled!

Tim: Why? Why me?

Clerk: (mimicking) Why? Why me? Oh, how did we ever get into this mess, Toto?

Tim: (shrugs his shoulders as the Clerk leads him out of the room) Oh, well, I guess it could be worse.

Clerk: It is, actually. You get to stand on your head the whole time!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Clerk: There, now, that wasn't so bad, now was it?

Tim: Wasn't so bad? That was the worst experience of my life! By 100 times.

Clerk: Actually, by a thousand times. We calculate those things very carefully. (he looks at schedule) Now let's see, your next assignment is in room 688.

Tim: What's the point, anyway? I mean, what good does it do to punish people after the fact? Why wasn't I warned about this before?

Clerk: (pulls out the book) Oh, but you were. (leafs through the pages) Time and time again. Here's a good one: September 12, 1967. Dear Mommy is putting you to bed. Remember what you asked her?

Tim: (has dazed look on his face. He stupidly shakes his head)

Clerk: (in child's voice) Mommy, do bad people get punished? (in mother's voice) Yes, Timmy, everyone gets what they deserve.

Tim: But that's impossible. How could you possibly know that?

Clerk: (patronizing attitude) Hold on, Timmy, I'm not done. (leafs through book) June 17th, 1974. You were reading the Bible in the school library... (looks up at Tim) ...hoping none of the other kids would see you.

Tim: But.. how...

Clerk: You read that, "As you sow, so shall you reap."

Tim: Yes, but...

Clerk: You thought about it, and finally decided—and I quote—“I'll just take my chances.”

Tim: You couldn't know all that!

Clerk: Guess again, Jasper.

Tim: But that's not fair! All that religious stuff is so... confusing.

Clerk: Indeed. But not always. Listen to this: October 2nd, 1977. Approached by a Hare Krishna devotee.

Tim: Yeah, some guy in the airport tried to sell me a book. (laughs)

Clerk: And you bought it, Bozo.

Tim: (abruptly stops laughing) Oh.

Clerk: He also told you about karma, remember?

Tim: Oh yeah—something about action and reaction, the universe being based on absolute justice...

Clerk: Right. Well, you didn't take that as far as you could have, did you?

Tim: Well, I didn't really... I mean, how could I tell if he was telling the truth? So many people say so many things.

Clerk: Your heart and your intelligence told you he was right. You decided it made sense at the time; you just chose to ignore it later.

Tim: But I didn't. I mean, I became a vegetarian. He was right about making all those animals suffer.

Clerk: Yeah, well, the punishment fits the crime. You wouldn't believe the kind of torture the non-vegetarians are going through.

Tim: So, what happens now? Do I keep going from room to room until the end of time?

Clerk: No. Absolute justice, remember. (looks at his schedule) Let's see... After 688, you're free to go.

Tim: To go? Where? Into some sort of purgatory?

Clerk: Not at all. Back to Momma.

Tim: What?

Clerk: Back to the W-O-M-B.

Tim: You mean, reincarnation?

Clerk: Duh!

Tim: So I get another chance?

Clerk: Right. And hopefully you won't mess up as bad this time.

Tim: But I still don't get it. What's the purpose of everything? Do we just go on living different lives and getting punished?

Clerk: Hopefully not. Remember what else that Hare Krishna guy told you?

Tim: Uh...

Clerk: The spiritual world, Lord Krishna's abode. No more birth, death, old age and disease. And no more visits back here.

Tim: (frowns) Have I been here before?

Clerk: (smiles) Only 987 times. (deadpan) Our business thrives on repeat customers.

Tim: So how can I find out more about the spiritual world and Lord Krishna?

Clerk: There'll be more opportunities. When they come, I suggest you take advantage. To be honest, I'm getting a little tired of seeing you.

The End

Sir Isaac Newton And The Big Bang

by Brajendra Nandana Das

(originally done as a puppet show)

Sir Isaac Newton And The Big Bang

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CAST: Narrator (TV Announcer), Sir Isaac Newton, Professor Hans Rightbrain.

Narrator: (speaking quickly) Good day, everyone, and welcome to our TV News Special, "You Are There." I'm your host and newscaster, "Speaks Quickly." Our show brings you on the scene to see your favorite historical personalities as they actually lived long ago. Today we will bring you back to this same day, 300 years ago in England, to observe that great man of science, Sir Isaac Newton. It is now the evening during a break in an important scientific convention attended by all the leading scientists of Europe. Isaac has wandered outside along with another famous scientist, Professor Hans Rightbrain, for a friendly chat. We now bring you

back to that moment in history. This is “Speaks Quickly” signing off, and now (speaking loudly) YOU ARE THERE...

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Newton: Just see, Professor Rightbrain—how beautiful the sky is tonight! The stars and planets appear especially effulgent and bright.

Professor: Uh. Yes, of course. Saturn's angle is at a direct square root of Pluto which is at 180 degree variable with Uranus... (pause—they look at each other)

Newton: Okay... But isn't it so inconceivable—the majesty of the creation? God's plan is so wonderful!

Professor: Creation? GOD? Did you say GOD?! How can you speak such foolishness? DUMKOPF. NUDNICK. Maybe you are missing a few screws, Herr Isaac. (knocks on his head) Hello in there! Anyone home? Maybe we should call you Fig Newton—for your fig-like brain.

Newton: Professor! Don't you believe in a Creator?

Professor: Creator! BOGUS!!! By my calculation—considering square roots, differentials, integers, and other necessarily scientific factors like that—it is completely illogical!

Newton: Well—how do you think this beautiful arrangement (points to sky) and you and I and everything else came to be?

Professor: Again I say—knock, knock. Hello in there, Mr. Newton! Earth calling Herr Newton—it's all by chance. There was some gas—some chemicals—some floatin' around—and mixing. And then all of a sudden “BOOM” (a balloon pops)—a big bang there was.

Newton: Come now, professor. Are you saying an accidental explosion was the cause of everything?

Professor: Dat's right!

Newton: Well, I don't know about you—but I've never seen an explosion create something.

Professor: It's the law of averages, Isaac. Just keep exploding things and one day you will create something.

Newton: Oh, I see. Look Professor, you're such a great and famous scientist. I don't want to argue with you, I just want to be your friend. In fact, I'd like to ask a favor of you. In my laboratory at home there is something very special I'd like you to see that requires your expert opinion. Would you kindly honor me with a visit to my lab tomorrow and give me your evaluation?

Professor: (flattered) Oh! You want my opinion? You want to consult me? Well, of course. I'll see you tomorrow. Around noon? Alright.

Newton: Wonderful, Professor!. Tomorrow then. Thank you.

Narrator: Hi! “Speaks Quickly” back with you again. So Isaac had a plan. As we again go back in time, we will see how his scheme was successful. Right now, the professor has arrived at Isaac's lab and is about to inquire from Isaac what special

thing he wanted him to see. So let's go on the scene and (speaking loudly) YOU ARE THERE... (then says more quietly) I love saying that.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Professor: (holds ears) Oh, my ears! That "Speaks Quickly" is a real DUMKOPF. Anyway, Isaac—what is it you'd like to show me?

Newton: (pointing to model) It's right there, Professor. What do you think?

Professor: Wunderbar! A scale model of the universe. My God! It's awesome, Isaac!

Newton: What was that you said, Professor?

Professor: Uh, I mean, My Goodness! This is wonderful, Isaac. Look at all the planets. There's Saturn with Mercury at integral differential with er... uh... Neptune. Such exquisite detail and mathematical exactness. Isaac, tell me, who has made this?

Newton: Made it? MADE IT?! Why no one, Professor Rightbrain. That's what's so surprising. It just appeared in my laboratory the other day—as if by chance. I was setting off some chemical explosions when sure enough, by the law of averages—just like you said—it just appeared by chance!

Professor: Now don't tease me, Isaac. Who is behind this extraordinary creation. Such attention and care. Someone made it. Who was it?

Newton: No, Professor. It happened by chance.

Professor: Isaac. You're insulting my intelligence. Someone had to make this!

Newton: Actually, Professor—it is you who have insulted my intelligence and anyone else's to whom you express your foolish speculation. You insist that some intelligent creator is responsible for this tiny model you marvel at. But when it comes to the original universe, which is infinitely greater and more complex than this simple model—you deny that some intelligent creator is behind it. Is that very scientific, Professor?

Professor: (mumbling) The square root of 2—the integer—yes... and then the differential...

Newton: Hello, Professor—anyone home?

Professor: Well, Isaac. I think I must be going now...

Newton: Thank you for coming, Professor. By chance will you be walking or riding to your hotel?

Narrator: Hi. “Speaks Quickly” back with you again. Thank you for being with us and witnessing another event in history that has altered and illuminated our time. And—by chance—(very dramatically) YOU! WERE! THERE!

Professor: (pops head into view) Oh, shut up!

The End

The Liberation Of Carnivore Das

limerick poetry by Brajendra Nandana Das

The Liberation Of Carnivore Das

limerick poetry by Brajendra Nandana Das

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CAST: Narrator, Jack the truck driver, Veggie Man.

(Note: This play is particularly meant for street theater—with the intention of preaching about prasadam at the conclusion.

Scene: McDonalds or similar Hamburger place. Enter Narrator observing a macho-type truck driver sitting at a table with a “Big Mac” hamburger in front of him)

Narrator: Today we're performing in rhyme

A story that won't take much time

But although it's brief

It is our belief

That the message is sage and sublime

Some folks claim true faith in the Lord

While His wishes remain quite ignored

He commands "do not kill"

Very clearly, but still

Countless creatures are eaten and gored (Narrator gestures to Jack)

Such a man was a trucker named Jack

Who desired to devour a Big Mac

As he eyed his chopped steer

A strange man did appear

Who proceeded to give him some flack

Jack: I'm hungry—I can't wait to eat

What a nice piece of juicy ground meat

I like it well done

On a crisp toasted bun

Now I'll dig my teeth into my treat

(brings burger to his mouth—but suddenly Veggie Man enters with a cape, tight pants and a V on his T-shirt, carrots and/or broccoli stalks adorning his neck as a garland. He grabs Jack's hand as he brings the burger to his eagerly awaiting open mouth)

Veggie Man: I'm Veggie Man—I beg you to wait

Please don't let your lust grow so great

By eating this meal

You're in danger I feel

You yourself might wind up on a plate

For the laws of the Lord are exact

And we reap what we sow—that's a fact

Don't you know that you "oughta"

Not eat what you "slaughta"

Or one day you will also be hacked

Jack: Hey man, you get outa my face

Or I'll knock you all over this place

I would like now to feast

On my meal of chopped beast

With me you won't get to first base

Veggie Man: (sounding intellectual and unaffected by Jack's threats)

Dear sir—let me ask you a question

Did you know that your body's intestine

Is long like a herbivore

Not short like a carnivore

Eating meat isn't good for digestion

As confirmed by the famed A.M.A.

Without meat heart disease fades away

And I'd like you to answer

Why there's so much more cancer

For those who eat flesh every day

Jack: (gesturing more angrily)

Hey, buddy, you'd better look out

Before this clenched fist knocks you out

Do not rearrange me

Or dare try to change me

I need meat to remain strong and stout

Veggie Man: (admonishingly)

Is the elephant not strong enough

He's a veggie, you won't call his bluff

You're a victim of lies

Won't you open your eyes (pointing to Big Mac)

Our bodies weren't built for that stuff

If you put the wrong fuel in your truck

It won't run well and you'll get stuck

By God's own design

It is way out of line

To eat lambs, cows, chicken or duck

Jack: (fuming, enraged)

You get me so mad I could kill... (pause, he panics)

Oh no, I'm becoming quite ill

I feel terribly stressed

By sharp pains in my chest (even more fearful)

And my heartbeat is virtually nil

Now my whole life is passing before me

I see teary-eyed creatures implore me

To put down my knife

And to not take their life

Oh what terrible fate awaits me

What horrible things I have done

Thinking eating God's children was fun

By my own endeavor

It seems that I'll never

Again see the light of the sun (kneeling prayerfully and begging)

Dear God, won't You please hear my plea

I appeal for Your causeless mercy

Please allow me some time

To undo all my crime

I will love every creature that be

You love every being, small and great

And we bring to ourselves a sad fate

If we don't treat each other

As sister and brother

But act out of envy and hate (turning to the audience and addressing them)

My friends—kindly hear me today

Do not live your life in my way

Human life is a chance

to reflect and advance

And progressively live the right way

(Jack continues to pray as Narrator enters)

Narrator: In this story our character survives

But we must all examine our lives

It's too late to complain

Or to try to explain

On the day the grim reaper arrives

As we exit—we confess to one fear

We hope that no offense was felt here

We mustered our nerve

In an effort to serve

And we thank you for lending an ear

One final point can't be ignored

If we're seeking life's highest reward

The best way to eat

And be free of deceit

Is to offer our food to the Lord

(enter devotee preacher)

The End

The Butcher's Nightmare

by Prajapati Das and Madhu Pandit Das

The Butcher's Nightmare

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* * * * *

CAST: Patty Slaughter, Butch Slaughter, Frank Furtive, Priest, Doctor, Cowboy, Various Voices, TV Announcer, Mike Cleaver, Eileen Bacon. (Note: This script was originally intended for a video production)

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(The telephone rings. Patty Slaughter, the butcher's mother, puts aside her kitchen tools, wipes her hand on her apron, and answers the phone)

Patty: Hello? Hi, Chuck. Oh, nothing... just getting Butch's breakfast together. No, he's just here for a few days. His place is getting fumigated. I don't think he keeps it very clean since the divorce. No, I haven't forgotten. What kind a meat did you want him to bring home? Ribs. Just ribs? Well, then listen, I better let you go because I gotta get Butch's breakfast ready. Okay, Chuck, I'll see you tonight for the BAR-B-Q. Bye. (she hangs up the phone and turns on the radio. It's Perry Como singing "Hot Diggity, Dog Ziggity." She sings along) Oh Butch, it's time for breakfast! Come on, your breakfast is getting cold! (Butch Slaughter, visibly disturbed, drags in with a briefcase and newspaper) Hurry up, son, you'll be late for work. Why, you're bleeding!

Butch: It's nothing. I just nicked myself shaving; but I was thinking of not going to work. Would you call in, saying I wasn't coming, that I was sick or something?

Patty: What's wrong? Are you sick?

Butch: Mother, I'm all right. I just didn't sleep well.

Patty: Oh, I'm sorry about the bed. I really should get it fixed.

Butch: It's not the bed, Mother...it's bad dreams.

Patty: Oh, my poor boy! But I've fixed your favorite, you'll feel better after you eat some steak and eggs. Now don't be like that! I fixed them just the way you like them—nice and rare. Besides, you have to go in today. You told me last night—you've got a new man to train up. You remember what it was like when you first started down at the butcher shop. It took quite a while to learn all the cuts!

Butch: All right, I'll go. But I can't eat steak and eggs. How about some fruit or a glass of milk?

Patty: And what am I supposed to do with the steak, throw it to the dogs? Butch, you're killing me! Please, why don't you just eat it?

Butch: I can't. The very sight of it turns my stomach.

Patty: Do you want some Pepto Bismal?

Butch: All I want is some milk!

Patty: Milk? When did you start liking milk? I've always had a hard time getting you to drink your milk. Remember, I used to say, "If you want to grow up big and strong, you'd better drink your milk!"

Butch: Just skip it! I'll pick up some donuts on the way to work.

Patty: Don't forget about the BAR-B-Q tonight, dear. Your Uncle Chuck called this morning and asked that you bring some ribs home.

Butch: Maybe we could send out for some Chinese food instead?

Patty: What are you talking about? We've had this thing planned for the last three weeks! And since when do you like Chinese food? You used to get sick every time we ate it! Remember the time we had Chinese food for your birthday? You threw up all over my new cowhide chair! I just don't know what's happening to you.

Butch: I'll call you at lunch and let you know how I feel. What was it Uncle Chuck wanted?

Patty: Ribs.

Butch: Ribs. (exits)

Patty: That boy is going to be the death of me. (she sits and eats the meat) I can't throw it to the dogs...

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Behind the counter at Lard's Butcher Shop. Large chart showing meat cuts. Frank Furtive, dressed appropriately for work, is banging out "The Halls of Montezuma" on the butcher block, as Butch enters)

Frank: Are you Mr. Slaughter? I'm Frank.

Butch: Frank?

Frank: Furtive, the new butcher.

Butch: Have you been waiting long?

Frank: Half an hour. I thought we were supposed to start at nine.

Butch: Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm not feeling well.

Frank: Well, I'm rarin' to go!

Butch: I see from your application you've had some experience before in the meat industry.

Frank: Yeah, I used to drive a truck for American Packers. I'd drive 'em from the forced feed to the kill floor. I tried to get a job as a head killer, but I could only get on as an apprentice.

Butch: So you've never done any cutting or cleaning?

Frank: I killed 'em, but I never cut 'em.

Butch: Okay. Well, I guess I'll have to show you myself. We might as well get started. Why don't you go get a side of beef—it's on the first rack you see when you go into the freezer. You know, I haven't done this for awhile, usually someone else trains the new men up.

Frank: Is this the one?

Butch: Yeah. Put it on the table here.

Frank: Whew, are they all as heavy as this Mama?

Butch: Get those choppers over there.

Frank: Choppers, huh? You know I was in a chopper in Vietnam. Were you over in 'Nam?

Butch: No.

Frank: Well, you're lucky! Anyway, we were in this chopper, me and a bunch of other guys...

Butch: Now make sure the blade is good and sharp.

Frank: So our chopper gets hit by the Cong, and we have to jump out...

Butch: Now, look at the chart here. These are your basic cuts. We start over here at the short loin.

Frank: So, as soon as we jump out, one of the guys gets hit—my best buddy. (Frank chops into the carcass) There he is, holding his guts in his hands. He looks at me as though he wanted me to do something. There was nothing I could do! I never felt so helpless in my life.

Butch: Be careful now, that you don't get too close to the guts, I mean, ribs. See this layer of fat here—leave that on. It'll give you a little more weight with your ribs. That'll push up the price per pound.

Frank: As soon as we hit the ground, I feel like I'd broken all my ribs.

Butch: Right below the short loin is the flank. Cut upwards to the right at a thirty degree angle.

Frank: Before we know what was happening, we were under fire from both flanks. I was angry; I wanted to get even.

Butch: After you cut the flank, you switch over to this area called the round.

Frank: They must have fired hundreds of rounds at us before I spotted the sniper.

Butch: Maybe you shouldn't talk so much while you're learning this. You might not be able to remember it all later.

Frank: Holy Cow! I just started today, what do you want?!

Butch: Listen, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be so sharp. It's just that I'm not into it this morning. Maybe I shouldn't even... Now up on the top left here is the rump roast. Now, this goes for about \$3.75 a pound, so don't throw any of it away.

Frank: No problem. I had Marine training. I remember everything. And I'll never forget how I circled around behind the gook as he was bending over loading his gun. So I let him have it right in the rump.

Butch: And while you're circling around, why don't you circle around here to the neck. Now take your knife.

Frank: I take out my knife and I run up and grab him by the neck. I cut his neck wide open and the blood squirts out and I reach down his throat, the blood pouring into my hand and I...

Butch: Stop! Give me that knife. Aren't you getting a little carried away, Frank? Aren't you getting off on this violence a little too much? You know, you'll get along just fine here. You love to kill. You love the taste of blood. You love death. You and all the other millions of people... (the phone rings. Frank answers it)

Frank: Hello. Uh... Lard's Butcher Shop.

Butch: Blood... Blood! So much spilled blood. So much suffering.

Frank: Oh, hello, Mr. Lard! I'm the new assistant here, Frank Furtive.

Butch: So many wars! The hydrogen bomb and napalm.

Frank: Yeah, he's here, but I don't think he can come to the phone right now.

Butch: Concentration camps... slaughter houses. Can't they see the connection?

Frank: I think he's flipped his lid.

Butch: You think I'm crazy, do you? Here, let me have that phone. Mr. Lard, listen, you fat pig. You and this whole meat industry are nothing but a vehicle for mass murder, and I don't want any part of it anymore. I'm getting out right now—I quit! (Butch slams the phone down. He takes off his blood-stained apron and throws it in Frank's face as he exits)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Interior of Church. Priest is inside confessional, unseen. Holy music. Butch is saying rosary)

Butch: Dear God, please help me understand what's happening to me. I just walked out of my job. It just doesn't seem right. It seems I'm... maybe I'm... I don't know... Maybe I am going crazy! I'm just wondering who's responsible for all the suffering in the world—God or man? (Butch genuflects and kneels outside confessional) Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I confess to Almighty God and to you, Father. It's been three weeks since my last confession. Father, I've been killing. I've been mutilating innocent, helpless beings. I've been a part of a vast murder conspiracy.

Priest: Good God, man! Do the police know about this?

Butch: No, I've just realized it myself today.

Priest: How many people have you killed?

Butch: It's not people, it's animals. Thousands and thousands of innocent animals.

Priest: Animals? What are you, crazy or something? In the Ten Commandments "Thou shalt not kill" doesn't mean animals. It means people.

Butch: But doesn't the Bible say, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap?" Doesn't that mean that violence breeds violence?

Priest: But man was given dominion over the animals.

Butch: But doesn't dominion mean love and responsibility, like an older brother has for his younger brother? I mean, aren't we all creatures of God?

Priest: Yes, but if you kill to stay alive, it's no sin. Animals have no soul.

Butch: No soul? But what makes them grow? What gives them consciousness? Look, I've been a butcher for fifteen years. I've seen them kill the cows. They cry out and scream just like a human being, just like you would, Father. I've seen the calves as they were forcibly separated from their mothers with big tears streaming down their cheeks. You can't tell me they don't have a soul!

Priest: Well, I don't know what to say. Is that Butch Slaughter out there? I can sort of recognize your voice. How is your mother, lad? Is she still in the hospital?

Butch: No, Father Angus.

Priest: Well, listen, Butch. It sounds to me like you've just spent a little too much time on the job. You're overwrought. I think you should go to see a doctor.

Butch: I'm not crazy.

Priest: I'm not saying you're crazy. I'm just saying you're working too hard. You need a break. Why don't you take a few weeks off. Give yourself some time to think. Go see a psychiatrist and get some counseling. A lot of people are doing it nowadays. Is that all of your confession?

Butch: Yes, Father.

Priest: I don't need to give you an absolution for that, but say an Our Father and a Hail Mary, it can't do any harm. Okay?

Butch: Father Angus, tell me honestly: don't you see a connection between the millions of animals killed and the wars we're forced to fight every twenty or thirty years?

Priest: Don't bother your mind too much with that stuff, Butch. Anyway, there's a football game about to start. Come on over to the rectory and we'll watch it together. We'll have a few drinks and you'll feel a lot better. What do you say?

Butch: No, thank you, Father. I have some other things I have to do.

Priest: All right, then. We'll see you in church tomorrow. Now don't be a stranger.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Well-appointed psychiatrist's office. Doctor is at desk)

Intercom: Doctor, your next patient is here.

Doctor: Thank you. Send him in, please. (Butch enters) You're Mr. Slaughter?

Butch: Dr. Guernsey?

Doctor: I understand you're very upset. What seems to be the trouble?

Butch: Either I'm crazy or the whole society is crazy!

Doctor: Please sit down. What do you mean?

Butch: I'm a butcher. I've been slaughtering innocent animals for fifteen years, and I just realized it today. I've been having bad dreams. I couldn't eat the steak my mother fixed for me. I had to train up a new butcher and all of sudden the meat wasn't just an object, it was dead flesh. I went to my priest, and he told me I had committed no sin, but in my heart I feel guilty of murder.

Doctor: Now, how long ago did you have this dream?

Butch: I had it again last night.

Doctor: Do you have any history of mental illness?

Butch: Sometimes I get headaches.

Doctor: Can you tell me about the dream?

Butch: No, I can't. All I know is that when I woke up, I found I was in a cold sweat, I was shaking, frightened, my head was reeling. I couldn't concentrate. I felt like I'd been through hell. Nothing like this has ever happened to me before.

Doctor: Have you ever experienced hypnosis?

Butch: I've seen it done on TV. A guy holds up a shining object and swings it back and forth... and people bark like dogs.

Doctor: What I would recommend is that you let me induce the hypnotic state to review that dream and try to see what triggered this melancholy.

Butch: Doctor, I don't know if I want to go back to that dream.

Doctor: Trust me. Believe me, you'll experience a very heightened state of relaxation. You'll merely be reviewing the dream as if you were observing a movie. It's a common phenomena in the psycho-analytic process. Shall we begin?

Butch: Well, you're the doctor.

Doctor: Just lean back and relax. Close your eyes and feel that all the tension is flowing out of your body. Listen to my voice. You are floating back, back to the dream. How does it begin?

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Dreamscape. Strains of pastoral music as Butch enters carrying the veil of the Cow, who is dressed for May Day with ribbons and colorful long robes. They come in like a procession, but dancing. Butch garlands her and pins on a blue ribbon. The Cow takes out a jeweled tablecloth from her picnic basket, and together they spread it out and they sit. The Cow then pulls various dairy products out of the

basket and hands them to Butch, each one accompanied by the appropriate offstage intonation:)

Voice: (singing) Milk. Butter. Cheese. Yogurt. Ice cream. (Butch is in ecstasy. But then there's a phone ringing. The Cow takes a phone receiver from the basket and hands it to Butch)

Voice: (different from the "milk" voice) Hey, Butch, this is Mr. Lard. It's time to go to work, Butch. (Butch mechanically takes out meat cleavers from the basket. Then he realizes what "work" means. Music changes to a kind of ominous, rhythmical knife sharpening)

Another Voice: How now, Brown Cow?

Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

For our pleasure you must bow.

Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

We like to drink your milk so sweet.

Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

But our heart's desire is to eat your meat.

Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

(enter Cowboy, swinging rope and singing)

Cowboy: Yippie ti-yi-yo, get along, little doggie.

It's your misfortune and none of my own.

Yippie ti-yi-yo, get along, little doggie.

You know that my stomach will be your new home.

(Music changes to "Rawhide." Cowboy chases Cow and finally lassoes her and brands her. Butch is aghast, but helpless. Music changes)

TV Commercial Voice: Jack Sprat could eat no fat;

His wife could eat no lean;

And so betwixt them both, you see,

they licked the platter clean.

(Cowboy forces Butch to sit by Cow, over whom he has placed the tablecloth)

TV Commercial Voice: Yes, friends, we put the whole cow in Jack Sprat Hamburgers... nothing is wasted. Enjoy one today, you'll lick the platter clean. (reprise of Jack Sprat song. Cowboy forces Butch to eat hamburger. Butch is sick. Music changes to scientific-sounding electronic commercial)

Another TV Commercial: Enzyme Grow. Fatten up your livestock. Miraculous Enzyme Grow! (Cowboy injects Cow with large hypodermic needle. Music changes. Sound of auction. Cowboy is auctioneer. Leads Cow in big circle as Butch helplessly follows. Finally Butch buys the Cow. The two are reunited at last. Cowboy exits. When phone rings, Butch answers)

Voice: Hey, Butch! What's the matter with you? You're late for work! You're just killing time, killing time, killing time... It's killing time, Butch, killing time... (nightmarish music begins. Strobe lights. Like a zombie, Butch chases the Cow with meat cleavers. Kind of like a bull fight. Just as Butch kills the Cow, the Cow becomes Butch's mother, Patty, and screams)

Patty: Butch, why did you kill me?

Butch: I didn't kill you—at least, I didn't mean to—I thought I was just killing a cow...

Patty: Don't you know that the cow is everyone's mother? I nourished you with my own milk ever since you were a tiny, little boy. I am the mother of all the children of the world. Didn't you drink my milk? Didn't you? Didn't you?

Butch: Yes, yes, yes...

Patty: And this is how you repay me?

Butch: I was just doing my job.

Patty: Your job means my death. You're a murderer, Butch. (Patty exits, Butch gets hysterical)

Butch: I didn't know. I'm sorry. I didn't know. Oh, God! I've killed my mother!
(breaks down sobbing)

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

(Doctor is trying to calm Butch. He helps Butch back to his chair)

Butch: I see! I see it all clearly now—the cow is like my mother. When my mother can't give me milk anymore, the cow takes over and gives me her milk. Why should I kill her? Why should anyone kill her?

Doctor: I'm not sure it's quite that simple, Mr. Slaughter.

Butch: Yes, it is! It's very simple! I have to do something! This is very urgent! Everyone is blind to the fact that they're killing their mother. I have to tell everyone!

Doctor: Mr. Slaughter, I think your analysis is incomplete at this time. I think we should investigate the dream further. You are a very sick man, Mr. Slaughter. I think we should continue these sessions before you do anything else.

Butch: Maybe I am sick! But so is everybody else. A world that produces pollution, millions of starving people, nuclear holocausts, a false economy which forces

people to buy a bunch of junk that they don't even want or need... just for the great God Almighty buck. That's what the whole damn thing is about... and to make their buck they'll even murder millions of innocent animals... what to speak of murdering millions of their own unborn children... and I say that's sick. And you think I'm sick? Well, what about you? Are you happy? You can't tell me you are. And what makes you think you're so great that you can say who's sick and who's not? Have you solved all the problems of life? Then how can you pretend to be... to be...

Doctor: I would like to prescribe some psycho-pharmaceutical medication to relieve these symptoms of stress. I think it would be helpful in your case...

Butch: Drugs? Oh yes, Doctor, that's a great idea! Just give me a big dose that puts me on a totally mindless level—like a zombie! That way I could just go through life without seeing the hypocrisy, the futility of the way we're living nowadays... or feel the suffering that these innocent beings are going through. I could just go to work without any emotion. I won't mind murdering! Can't you see there's something wrong with what you're doing, Doctor?

Doctor: Please calm down, Mr. Slaughter. Take one of these now, and one every three hours. Now they may cause some confusion and temporary memory loss, but...

Butch: No! I've been confused for too long. For the first time in my life I'm not confused... I know exactly what I must do.

Doctor: Don't do anything rash, Mr. Slaughter. I want you to come see me tomorrow morning...

Butch: No! There's too much to do. Thank you very much.

Doctor: Mr. Slaughter, wait! What about paying your bill?

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

(TV Talk Show. Theme music for show)

Announcer: And now from fabulous Hollywood, the entertainment capital of the world, it's the "Meet Cleaver Show." (applause) Mike's received some complaints that lately the show's been too tame, so tonight's first two guests should fire the works up brilliantly. It's vegetarianism versus meat-eating in the classic David and Goliath struggle. The unlikely advocate of vegetarianism is an ex-butcher from the Chicago stockyards, who's started the "Save the Cow" crusade. Opposing his point of view will be a well-known nutritionist who says that meat is an absolute necessity for human health. And now, here's your moderator and whole hog host, Mike Cleaver. (applause)

Mike: I've been called a ham a lot, but no one's called me a hog since, since... since my last meal! No, ladies and gentlemen, I'm not a hog, but I am your host, and we'd better move on to the subject at hand before this show turns into a squealer! We have a truly great debate coming up tonight, but before we jump into it, let's take a quick poll. How many in our audience are vegetarians? Hands down. How many eat meat? Thank you. The meat eaters have it. We are a nation composed overwhelmingly of meat consumers, but there is a man on our show tonight who's trying to change all that. His successful efforts have been making headlines all across the nation. Not since Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle* in 1906, which exposed the unsanitary conditions in the meat-packing industry, has any one individual so shaken the meat-consuming habits of America. In 1906, Americans decreased their meat consumption by 50% after learning from Sinclair's book that rats, sawdust, grossly diseased animals, and even human flesh were common ingredients of that day's packaged meats.

But tonight's guest, who is igniting a similar phenomena in America, wants to stop meat eating entirely. His appearances on nation television have gained him a large and sympathetic following. This man has struck a responsive chord in the heart of many Americans. However, not everyone is happy about his success. Last night as he addressed a packed house of over 25,000 people at New York's Madison Square Garden, a minor riot erupted in the audience. Reliable sources are

alleging that the violence was sparked by provocateurs from the beef industry, which has suffered drastic cuts in their beef sales over the past few weeks. So now, ladies and gentlemen, let's welcome the former butcher and author of the best-selling book *The Meat Conspiracy*, Butch Slaughter! Glad to have you with us tonight, Butch. How are you feeling?

Butch: I'm very well, thank you. I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to share my message with your viewers.

Mike: All right now, Butch. You have a best-seller on the market, *The Meat Conspiracy*, and last night you addressed a sell-out crowd at the Garden. Tell me, did you expect your "Save the Cow" crusade to be this successful in such a short period of time?

Butch: I won't consider it a success until all the cows are safe at last. When I began, I never even thought of it in terms of success. It was just something I had to do.

Mike: Along with your success, Butch, I understand you've made a few enemies as well. Haven't there been some threatening letters and even an attempt on your life? How do you account for all this negative reaction?

Butch: It is so difficult to understand? We present a threat to the greed and profit motive of the entire western culture, which is geared to simply satisfy the desires of the senses without consideration of others. The United States alone produces enough food grains that what we waste alone could feed the rest of the world. And yet we dump it in the ocean in order to keep prices up. Is it any wonder we needlessly slaughter millions of animals simply for sensation on the tip of the tongue? One psychologist who has joined our movement calls it blood lust.

Mike: On that note, why don't we bring in our next guest? This lady has been one of the strongest opponents of the "Save the Cow" crusade today. The *New York Times* has quoted her as condemning the total vegetarian diet, for she states that meat is a natural, healthy, essential ingredient for balanced nutrition. Former publicity director for the National Meat Packers Association and now a member of

the U.S. Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, let's welcome to our show, Dr. Eileen Bacon! Good evening, Dr. Bacon, welcome to the show.

Eileen: Thank you very much.

Mike: Dr. Bacon, many Americans are now vegetarians, and the number seems to be increasing as the "Save the Cow" crusade gains momentum. But you say that it is necessary to eat meat. Why?

Eileen: First of all, let me tell you the basic dietary requirements for those viewers who may not be aware of them. Protein is the most essential part of the diet. And meat is the perfect, complete source of protein, whereas vegetables require special planning, purchasing, and cooking to obtain just barely enough protein to survive on. In fact, in our studies at the National Research Institute, we have noted that most vegetarians are protein deficient.

Mike: Butch?

Butch: Most meat eaters get at least twice too much protein and are therefore always on edge; consequently, they must drink large quantities of alcohol to take the edge off. And furthermore, meat is not pure or even perfect protein, but only about twenty-five per cent. The amount of meat absorbed by the body is only sixty per cent, compared to eighty per cent for milk.

Mike: Butch, in your book you have also mentioned the economic considerations of a vegetarian diet.

Butch: Yes. If the land used to grow grain for feeding cattle were used to produce crops for human consumption, it would be enough to feed the entire world.

Eileen: What about the thousands of people you'd put out of work in the meat industry, if your crusade is successful?

Butch: There will be lots of work in the agricultural industry. I'm not only talking about America, I'm talking about the whole world. We can show everyone that...

Eileen: This type of idealism may be good for making your book a best seller, but this nation has been founded on logical, rational understanding. And may I remind you that we have survived over two centuries with the majority of Americans adhering to a basic meat diet.

Butch: The animals who live here are also Americans, and they also have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Mike: Dr. Bacon, in your article in the Times you completely refute the argument that meat eating is unhealthy.

Eileen: Yes, we have practically eradicated all danger of food poisoning through meat consumption.

Butch: But the long-range effects of meat eating have proven to be disastrous. You may be able to preserve the meat until it gets to the consumer, but once he starts to cook it, he immediately starts producing cancer-causing agents. And furthermore, man has long intestines like all natural vegetarians, unlike the short intestines of natural carnivores. Put meat in long intestines and fermentation and disease is the result. But the main thrust of our crusade is not nutrition or economic, but humanitarian compassion. Dr. Bacon, you're a mother, aren't you?

Eileen: Yes, but I don't see what that has to do with anything.

Butch: If one of your children were a little slower than the others, would it be okay to kill that child?

Eileen: Why, of course not, but that isn't...

Butch: But the same thing applies to animals... for science has shown us that they have the same intelligence as a two- or three-year old child. Would you kill a baby and eat it? Or a pet? And I bet if you had to personally kill a cow before you ate it, you'd be a vegetarian, too.

Eileen: But, Mr. Slaughter, you have to kill the plants to eat them.

Mike: Yeah, Butch, I was just talking to my pet petunias this morning... Don't plants have feelings, too?

Butch: When you pick an orange or a tomato, you don't kill the plant.

Eileen: What about grains?

Butch: What you have to understand is that there are different levels of consciousness. It's not that we can stop killing altogether, but we can prevent the senseless shedding of blood while still meeting the needs of our bodies. In that way it will be possible for the human race to finally be in harmony with the laws of nature, the laws of the Supreme. Now, I have a poem here by George Bernard Shaw... (TV theme music has begun)

Mike: Well, it seems we've run out of time! Thank you very much, Butch Slaughter and Dr. Bacon. We'll be right back, after these messages, with two gentlemen who claim that the universe is in the shape of a coconut, half-filled with water, and that the moon is further away from the earth than the sun!

(Mike rises, as do Butch and Eileen Bacon; they shake hands, as the lights fade)

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

(Large auditorium stage, podium sign says "Save the Cow," crowd is chanting same slogan. Butch arrives and is greeted by standing ovation. He walks to podium)

Butch: There are lots of crusades around today: Save the Whale, Save the Seal, Save the Endangered Species. That's good... we can't keep killing animals and expect there to be peace in the world. Actually, there are laws of nature at work here which are inescapable... laws of God which are controlling our lives. And if we're going to make so many campaigns to save this animal and that animal, let's not make campaigns just because they're going extinct. That means we want to save these creatures not out of compassion, not out of mercy, but just because we like to have them around for our own amusement. I don't think that's the real reason we should want to save animals. Mainly, I think we should protect the animals because they happen to be God's creatures. We have to realize that wherever there is consciousness, there is a soul present there—whether in a tree, or an insect, or human, or animal—and we have no right to unnecessarily disturb any soul, in any kind of body. We shouldn't even cut down trees unnecessarily. We shouldn't even kill a fly unnecessarily, what to speak of the cow!

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen—of all the creatures that God has put under our dominion here on this earth, no creature is as generous as the cow. Practically speaking, all of us grew up and became strong by the mercy of the cow. And you know, I don't think I'm just being sentimental or crazy to say that in one sense the cow is like our mother. Every one of us was nourished by the cow. Therefore, if we're going to be kind to every creature, let's start with the most generous creature. Let's be grateful. Let's actually show that we have a higher, spiritual awareness. Let's wake up from the nightmare of the most widespread injustice of all.

Don't be fooled by all these fast-talking politicians. Our modern leaders are trying to keep us in darkness and exploit us. Of course they're gonna tell you it's alright to kill the cow—because it's good business for them. Why should they care? Why should they care what your karma is going to be? Why should they care what's

going to happen to you? Why should they care about your consciousness—as long as they can get the money out of your pocket? Therefore we must be prepared to struggle, to enlighten people about the real purpose of life, which is spiritual—about the laws of God, which forbid the unnecessary killing of any creature.

And the real leaders are those who are willing to stand up at any cost and tell you these things. So let's stick together. Let's give the cows and all innocent beings our protection. We must stand up for the rights of our fellow citizens of the earth who can't stand up for themselves. Let's take this to Congress. Let's close the slaughterhouses. Let's boycott the restaurants and supermarkets. Let's speak out. Let's distribute our literature. Let's change people's minds. Let's change people's hearts. Let's save the cow. Come on everybody. Don't worry what your neighbor may think—Save the Cow! Save the Cow! Now I want everybody to say it along with me... don't be bashful...

SAVE... THE... COW...

SAVE... THE... COW...

(as the crowd roars with approval, a man with a ski mask covering his face runs in, and at close range shoots Butch three times. Screams. Blackout. Almost immediately there is the TV music of the “Meet Cleaver Show.”)

SCENE NINE

SCENE NINE

(Same as Scene 7—a later episode of “The Meet Cleaver Show”)

Mike: Ladies and gentlemen, to finish off tonight's show, I'd like to pay a special tribute to a man who appeared on our show last week. This man single-handedly started a crusade to awaken America to an issue which he believed was so

important that he risked and eventually gave his life for it. That movement was to "Save the Cow," and the man was Butch Slaughter. Last night at the San Francisco Cow Palace, as Mr. Slaughter was addressing over 100,000 people who had gathered together to hear his plea, he was gunned down by an assassin. The assassin has been apprehended, and it is believed that the police are linking him to the American Meat Packers Industry. Whether the "Save the Cow" crusade will go on without Butch remains to be seen. But I'd like to say for myself personally, and judging from the response we had from his appearance on the show, I think that I speak for a good majority of the American people that Butch Slaughter touched our lives. We get so wrapped up in ourselves that we fail to consider the suffering of other human beings, what to speak of the animals. And Butch made us aware of that.

Last week on our show, Butch wanted to read a poem, but we ran out of time. I'd like to read it to you now as a tribute to Butch Slaughter. This is by George Bernard Shaw and it is included in Butch's book, *The Meat Conspiracy*.

We are living graves of murdered beasts,

Slaughtered to save our appetites.

We never pause to wonder at our feasts,

If animals like men could possibly have rights.

We pray on Sunday that we may have light,

To guide our footsteps on the path we tread.

We are sick of war, we do not want to fight,

And we gorge ourselves upon the dead.

Like carrion crows we live on meat,

Regardless of the suffering and pain

We cause by doing so, in this we treat

Defenseless animals for sport or gain—

How can we hope in this world to attain

The peace we say we are so anxious for,

We pray for it o'er hetacombs of slain,

To God while outraging the moral law,

Thus cruelty begets its offspring—war!

This is Mike Cleaver on behalf of Butch Slaughter. Good Night!

The End

The King Who Was Distressed

— or —

The Duration Of Sex Desire

(based on a true story)

by Phani Bhushan Das

The King Who Was Distressed

— or —

The Duration Of Sex Desire

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* * * * *

CAST: King, Advisor, Princess, Mother, Father, Doctor.

SCENE ONE

In the palace

SCENE ONE

In the palace

(King sits deep in thought. Advisor enters)

Advisor: O King! My dear King—are you well, O King? (to himself) I cannot recall ever seeing him so very deeply engrossed! What could he be considering? (he goes out and re-enters)—(clears throat) Your Majesty!

King: (looks up slowly) Yes? Oh, yes. Is there a guest?

Advisor: Well, no, Sire. I've simply come to see if you are in need of a... ah...

King: Will you reach the point? I have much on which to meditate.

Advisor: That is it, Your highness. Is there a problem with which I may assist?

King: Oh, no... mmm... uh, yes! As a matter of fact, I do need your advice...

Advisor: I am your advisor. Please allow me to hear about the point you ponder. Tell me, is it social, political, economic, strategic, or...

King: SEX.

Advisor: ...religious, domestic... What! Did you say?...

King: SEX, sex. I am concerned with...

Advisor: I... I.. Your Majesty, the queen is... is...

King: I'm concerned with what brings the world to be so very caught-up in the whole idea of sex. Why are thoughts so much drawn to the attraction of the opposite sex? Who, beside small children, is free from these affairs? When does one cease to be attracted to sex?

Advisor: My, my, O King, these are deep inquiries, indeed! Generally, the great thinkers skip this subject, identifying it as life itself. Yet you, O best of thoughtful rulers, you seek answers.

King: And why not? The people are scampering about in hot pursuit of that which in the end brings so much difficulty.

Advisor: Yes, yes, the iron shackles of sex life!

King: So—wise one, tell me—at what stage does the attraction end, and what is the duration of sex desire?

Advisor: The duration of sex desire... Why—until the time of death, Sire.

King: The time of death. How can this be? No! I refuse to accept that. No. No. Death, the time of death? Are you saying that one remains attracted to the opposite sex even up to the last breath?

Advisor: Yes. You...

King: No! I don't believe it! You must prove this to me.

Advisor: Alright, Your Majesty, alright. I will prove my statement in due course.

King: Will you, then?

Advisor: Yes, yes, but when the time comes, you must be willing to do as I say.

King: Agreed.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

In the garden or on a balcony overlooking a garden

King: O princess, my dear daughter, the spring flowers are appearing everywhere. Take in their beauty now, for their glory will soon fade. Then, they will fall to the ground. As the seasons come and go—the cycle of life must follow nature's laws.

Advisor: (enters suddenly, panting) O King! Please come with me right away! Let us go immediately!

King: What is this...?

Advisor: Sire, as I previously stated, I have come to prove to you, conclusively, the point on which we differed. You must recall...

King: Oh, eh? Ahh, yes! (turns to daughter) Please excuse me, dear. I must be going.

Advisor: Your Highness, as we agreed, you should do as I request, yes? I... uh...

King: I'm coming. What more is required?

Advisor: I ask only that your daughter accompany us. It is important.

King: Are you quite sure? This is highly irregular. (nods are exchanged) Oh well, alright. (he sends for her) I have no objection, but tell us where are we going in such haste, my man?

Advisor: Your Lordship may recall the family living just outside the palace grounds, who is so very dedicated to you. The head of that household has always held you in the highest regard. He was born in that very place. He has labored hard during his long life, dutifully caring for his family and performing service to all. He is an outstanding citizen, your loyal subject.

King: Really! Hmmm. (daughter enters) My dear princess, we are going for a visit to my loyal subject. So, will you join us? (she smiles and nods)

Advisor: There is no time to lose. (King speaks to daughter as all exit)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

The home of the loyal subjects

Mother: Please be quiet, children. Yes, it is best you stay over there and play. (closes door to children)

Father: My father is not long for this world. To see him in this weakened condition pains my heart.

Mother: My dear husband, we all must become old. Our children are growing up, but they are also growing old. Your father has led a full life.

Father: Yes. Yes. And that is certainly part of my remorse, for he was always fit and vigorous in performing his duties. His absence will be felt by the entire village.

Doctor: (enters) There is little that can be done. He is resting now. All we can do is wait. That he is also doing.

Mother: (takes out handkerchief and she sniffles) Please sit. I'll see to the children.
(she exits)

Doctor: Thank you. (sits near Father) Are you... Is there...

Father: (waves hand but continues to stare at a point in space) Doctor, you see death so frequently. Have you accepted it as a matter of fact? What is it? Death, I mean—does anyone truly know?

Doctor: My friend, there are numerous views on the subject. I myself believe it to be much like a door, a doorway. At one moment the person is living on one side of a door, then he or she is gone... gone through the doorway, away from our eyes and ears and touch. So, just as your wife left our company in order to attend to her affairs by going through this door, when a person leaves us at the time of death, that person has departed to another sphere of activities that are beyond our enclosure. That is the way death appears to me.

Father: Simple enough. Simple enough. (both sigh, silence falls. There is a light rapping at the door)

Father: Hmmm... eh?! Someone's at the door.

Doctor: Will you not see who is there?

Father: Yes, yes.

Advisor: I have come to see your father, Sir. With your permission I should like to enter.

Father: Yes. Yes. Please enter...

Advisor: My dear Sir, I've taken the liberty of visiting your home, for I have heard of your good father's fine qualities, especially his loyalty to our king. Therefore, I have brought the King to see your father.

Doctor: How marvelous!

Father: The King—here in this humble home?! (King enters)

Mother: (enters) My, do we have guests? Oh my!

Advisor: Allow me to present His Highness and the Royal Princess. (all meet with bows and nods)

King: Forgive our intrusion. My advisor here has informed me that you are exemplary citizens, and that the head of the household is my most loyal subject. Thus I could not refuse his suggestion that I come here.

Father: My father... he... he is your servant and we too are yours to command. Is there anything...?

Advisor: Please, be at ease, my good man. We've simply come to see your father.

Doctor: He will be greatly encouraged. The old man has always cherished the thought of a personal audience with you, Your Majesty.

King: Is that so? May we...?

Advisor: If you don't mind, before we enter, I should like to speak to you, O King, privately—for just one moment... (King and Advisor move aside)

King: What is it now? This is a bit awkward, don't you think, barging into these poor people's home out of the blue?

Advisor: They are honored to host you, no doubt. And so your most loyal subject will be delighted to greet you, for may I remind you, Lord, that this man has always held you in the highest esteem. But before we see him, I have one specific wish.

King: And what, pray tell, is it now?

Advisor: I would like you to watch your subject's face very closely, particularly his eyes, when we enter.

King: Is that all?

Advisor: The princess should enter with us, yet stand on the opposite side of the room.

King: Very well, very well. I shall tell her what you desire. Now can we proceed? (Advisor bows. King talks to his daughter)

Doctor: He is resting, but I'm sure he will be thrilled to realize his good fortune.

(the scene could be acted out in pantomime; or after a short while, they return)

King: My dear advisor, I concede. I am convinced that you are correct; yet, I'm amazed. Here, my most loyal citizen lies—on his deathbed. Then I, his king, the ruler of his country, comes to visit him. I was expecting... But in the presence of a pretty wisp of a girl, my own daughter, the princess, my most loyal of all subject's eyes were drawn to her features by that apparently uncontrollable attraction.

Advisor: Yes, my dear king, I predicted as much...

King: O Advisor, you have proven yourself to be correct, but I must know more. Is there any way by which one can be freed from the “iron shackles” of sex attraction, as you call it?

Advisor: The devotees of Lord Krishna are said to be able to achieve the freedom to which you refer. Your Majesty, the glare of illusion is personified by the opposite sex. It is natural that male is attracted to female and vice-versa. Yet, if one is overwhelmed by lust, control of such exaggerated attraction is nearly out of the question.

The Vedas offer numerous injunctions to help the conditioned souls release themselves from their imprisonment in this material world. Topmost among them is the instruction to turn one's full attention to the Supreme All-Attractive Feature of God—Lord Sri Krishna. One can simply chant Lord Krishna's Holy Name and gradually feel oneself become freed from lust.

King: Oh? I shall begin immediately. Thank you. (kirtan)

The End

The Blind Leading The Blind

by Phani Bhushan Das

The Blind Leading The Blind

by Phani Bhushan Das

* * * * *

CAST: King, Advisor, 3 Blind Men, Young Lad.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

King: This was a veritable stroke of genius, to hold this glorious festival and show all of my subjects the practical use of their tax payments while at the same time collecting more. The decorations, the sacrifices, the distribution of sanctified foodstuffs, everyone feeling the charitable inclination — happily they enjoy and willingly they surrender a portion of their accumulated wealth. The streets are teeming with visitors and pilgrims. This is a very special time. People from near and far have come to see the sights of the city and pay their taxes.

Advisor: (enters) My dear King! These festivities have outdone all others. The sounds of the crowds fill the atmosphere with several languages and countless dialects. Everyone is in a joyous mood, sharing song and various ethnic foods.

King: Yes, I can smell the mixing of spices from here. Tell me, are there any occurrences of misbehavior?

Advisor: Besides the usual rascals — the sneak-thieves and the ruffians — who have been turned away by the guards stationed throughout the marketplaces, there have been only a few rather odd incidents.

King: Do tell? What type of odd incidents?

Advisor: Since we are receiving your subjects from far and wide, there are bound to be difficulties. Three men and one boy have been brought here. Each is a kind of problem in himself.

King: Where are they now? Bring them here to me. I will deal with these culprits myself.

Advisor: They are not culprits, sire, they are more like victims.

King: Victims, are they? Have they been wronged?

Advisor: No, not exactly. (they walk in) You see, Your Highness, these men are blind.

King: Well! What on earth happened to them?

Advisor: This one was found by the bank of the river. Almost drowned, I was told, he kept repeating, "Water, water."

King: My dear blind man, can you tell me where you are from and what happened to you?

Blind Man 1: Here you have a desert dweller. I have lived my life on dry lands for as long as I can remember. When I heard of the invitation extended to all people, I became curious to experience a new environment. So I set out across the vast flat plain. Traveling by day and resting at night, I moved with parties of journeymen. But this morning I awoke to find myself alone, so I ventured on with caution. I knew I was approaching a new place, for I heard extraordinary sounds. The next moment I had fallen into a mysterious river, which swept me away. I struggled with all my might, but finally I lost consciousness. Now I am here. Is this the afterlife I've heard about? Are you the superintendent of death, Yamaraja?

King: No, I am not the lord of death, but I am, for now, the ruler of this kingdom. Please rest yourself. (he sits. King looks over Blind Man 2) And this sorry-looking gentlemen — whatever put you into this tattered state? Your clothes are torn to ribbons. Have you no proper garment, old man?

Blind Man 2: My King, I have arrived here after many adventures. I began my trek high in the mountains. Enroute I encountered a wild beast with sharp claws and an aggressive growl. I had been calmly sitting on a large clump of soft grasses in the morning sun, when suddenly I was thrown down. Next I heard my fine clothes tear while a warm breath was felt on my neck. I leapt to my feet and ran as quickly as I could manage. Thorns as sharp as knives tried to embrace me as I attempted to escape. As I raced through the undergrowth I was ravaged, yet finally, by the grace of God, I reached the outskirts of the city. One of your men helped me to find water to wash and he insisted that I come here with him.

King: Quite a story, indeed. You have taken great risk to accept my invitation. I will see that your efforts are made fruitful. Next?

Advisor: This one was blocking traffic. (indicates Blind Man 3)

King: Blocking traffic, where?

Advisor: By the main gate. No one could pass. He simply stood in the middle of the gateway, tipping his head from side to side, while holding this huge bundle.

King: Young man, can you explain your behavior or not?

Blind Man 3: I was lost. I was staying in one place because I was told by my traveling companions that if we become separated I should just remain still and then I will be found.

King: Obedient fellow, but...

Blind Man 3: You found me, so I am no longer lost.

King: Yes, I see, I mean I understand. From where have you journeyed? (to others) He is quite well built, as sturdy as the venerable ox, I venture to say. (to Blind Man 3) By which path did you approach? Can you explain this?

Blind Man 3: I am here. Wherever I was in the past, I was also here. I have been here my whole life. Where else could I be? This is where I started, and I suppose I will end here as well.

King: Sounds philosophical... somehow. (shakes head)

Advisor: There is this young boy, Sire. He was also apparently lost. He refuses to speak. Perhaps you will be able...

King: My lad, I am the King. I give protection to all citizens. Have you not heard your parents speak of me? I am obliged to give shelter to all, just as a father cares for his children. Will you not speak to me?

Lad: (hobbles to largest, Blind Man 3) Uncle, let us go.

King: Child, is this your uncle, this disoriented blind man?

Lad: A blind uncle is better than no uncle, O King.

King: Now you speak? Tell me more.

Lad: My mother has taught me not to speak to strangers, and my grandmother has taught me not to speak unless I have been addressed.

King: Ah. Well, we are honored to have hosted such a unique group of explorers. My dear Advisor, kindly take these guests on a “guided” tour of the palace and the grounds. Skip nothing and be certain they are properly fed. Then return here with them.

Advisor: It shall be done immediately.

King: You, my boy, stay here. I wish to discuss with you further.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Later, the group returns, as king and lad are still conversing)

King: Here they come. I truly pray that they have been able to appreciate their opportunity.

Advisor: Your Highness! The tour is complete. They have been given a grand feast. Each in his own way has enjoyed very much. They thank you.

King: I would like to learn if there was any part of the complex that especially sparked their interest.

Advisor: Their interests remained high throughout. Yet, when we entered the stables, when they were told of the royal elephant — well, Sire, there was no end to their excitement.

King: Really!

Advisor: Each in turn approached that prince of the pachyderms.

King: So let them each explain his experience. You, old man, tell me about the elephant.

Blind Man 2: I've heard about elephants before, but I was greatly surprised how this particular elephant was just like a snake. (gestures by waving arm like a snake)

Blind Man 1: A snake? How could you think of an elephant in this way? There are no elephants living near my homeland, but I have clear knowledge of this elephant, and he is just like a large pillar. (uses two hands in gesture as if feeling a pillar)

King: There seems to be a difference of opinion here.

Blind Man 3: Difference, yes. They are both mistaken. The royal elephant is not like a snake, nor is he at all like a pillar. No, he is exactly like the hull of a boat. (makes large round scooping gesture with arms)

King: (suppresses laughter) Can you settle this, Advisor?

Advisor: O Gentlemen, please do not argue as to who is right or wrong in this matter. You are each correct in your own perception, yet none of you have complete information. The elephant's trunk is in a way similar to a snake's body, and the legs of the elephant resemble a pillar in strength and shape. Further, the belly of the colossal beast is much like the hull of a boat, full and rounded. So you are all correct, but none of you were completely accurate due to the limits of your understanding. If you combine ideas, a clearer picture will be the result.

King: These men have been put together by fate. They should join forces; collectively, they may be able to help one another. They might provide some useful service to society.

Advisor: What are you suggesting, Sire?

King: Perhaps they should appoint a leader.

Advisor: (aside to King) On the basis of what qualification?

King: Let us observe how they proceed, and if there is a mishap then we can assist. This may prove to be instructive. (to Blind Men) My good fellows, I, your King, request you to decide which one of you can lead the others. Please discuss this idea.

Blind Man 3: I can lead. I am strong. I can protect you all.

Blind Man 1: I have wealth. By this wealth I have influence.

Blind Man 2: I am quite old. My years of experience are my wealth of wisdom.

Blind Man 3: What were you doing when you were young?

Blind Man 2: (thoughtfully) Young, young. Why when I was young? I cannot remember that long ago.

Blind Man 1: Have you any other “experiences?” (to Blind Man 3) And you, how can you protect us — please demonstrate.

Blind Man 3: (swings his bag around and around — he falls, others move away)

Blind Man 1: My wealth remains. Yes, the bag of gold will buy proper treatment from others.

Advisor: May I examine that bag?

Blind Man 1: Yes, but be careful, it is priceless.

Advisor: (opens bag, finds stones) Priceless, is it? These ordinary stones have no price because they're worthless!

King: Ha! Try another tack. Do they have any special talents to offer? Perhaps they can work as a group.

Blind Man 1: Well, I was given these hand cymbals and can carry rhythm and sing.

Blind Man 2: I sing also, and I was told once that my steps are stunning — like a dance.

Blind Man 3: Here in my bag is a fine drum. I can keep a steady beat that will move his feet.

King: Fine, fine! All people love music and dance. But even such a trio ought to have a leader.

Advisor: Can you not agree on a leader?

Blind Man 2: All in favor of me, raise your hand. (only he raises his hand)

Blind Man 3: Let us have a call for volunteers. If willing to act as a leader, step forward. (all step forward)

Blind Man 1: We can simply take turns as leader. (waves stick) Let us join hands now and we can guide one another. (all walk about pulling and pushing, then fall down together)

King: (aside to Advisor) This is humorous!

Advisor: Ironic, Sire, these are like the political arrangements of the fools and rascals. They never make real progress. Blind leaders degrade society. These poor souls have their physical handicaps, yes. But, as a team they could become truly useful to society by dovetailing their talents into a transcendental act.

King: Just what are you saying? Blind men, useful to all society? They cannot even find their own way!

Advisor: My dear King. The bodily conception has us seeing them as blind men and others as so-called seers, yet nearly everyone is blind to the purpose of life. Without proper direction, most of the populace are marching headlong into hellish conditions, but by engaging in service to Lord Sri Krishna, by chanting His holy names, everyone can come to the ultimate destination — an eternal life of knowledge and bliss. These men can become a traveling Hari-nama party, going everywhere chanting Krishna's glories. (to men) Do you men know the Maha-mantra?

All: Of course, of course, yes, of course!

King: How right you are. Come here, boy.

Lad: Yes, my King?

King: These blind men, including your uncle, are in need of your assistance.

Lad: I am just a boy, Your Highness, and I can barely walk. How can I help?

Advisor: Your eyes are working, are they not, lad? Therefore, these who are unable to look out for themselves should carry you. As their leader, you can give direction by becoming their eyes and then they will not go astray. I order you men to take care of this boy, for he is now your leader. Do as he says. Carry him aloft where he can be of benefit to you.

King: Boy, keep these three safe from mishap by your vision and be blessed. (they walk off chanting kirtan)

Advisor: (stepping forward) A righteous leader has spiritual vision to keep him on the right path.

King: To what path do you refer?

Advisor: The progressive path back to Godhead. All society should be guided to the topmost goal, the ultimate good for all people, for all time. To become Krishna conscious is to have one's eyes opened with the torchlight of knowledge by the spiritual master. The spiritual wisdom of the Vedas may be found in an impoverished country or in the heart of a meek and humble sage, but that wisdom can uplift and deliver a world that is otherwise blinded by the glare of material opulences. In this Iron Age of Kali, where men are but short-lived, quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, and above all, always disturbed, the recommended process for spiritual advancement is to chant the holy names of the Lord.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

(Harinama party returns and concludes by having a loud kirtan)

The End

Don't See God, But Experience Him

(A Lesson In “Kamandalu Therapy”)

Don't See God, But Experience Him

(A Lesson In “Kamandalu Therapy”)

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Sannyasi, Young Man, Other Man, Judge.

SCENE ONE

Lecture in the Temple

SCENE ONE

Lecture in the Temple

(A Sannyasi is sitting on an asana reciting Vedic mantras—facing towards the audience, he speaks the following words:)

Sannyasi: In these texts of the Vedas—it is so nicely explained how the Supreme Lord exists as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe! Ignorance is so prominent in this age—people cannot understand God. Everywhere, the cry is “There is no God,” “God is Dead,” or even “We are all God.” They do not know that they must have spiritual eyes to see God. Oh, they do not know that they must have eyes which are bathed with the ointment of unalloyed love of God in

order to see Him! My Lord, please break the unbreakable hearts of the demons! (looking upward in the sky—raising his two arms and again touching his two arms to his chest. Suddenly, a young man gets up from the middle of the audience shouting at the Sannyasi)

Young Man: Show me God! Show me God! You must show me God. I want to see God. Where is God? I am sick and tired of hearing God this, God that! This world is obsessed with Gurus, Gods and Goddesses!

(the Sannyasi speaks very calmly and slowly to pacify the young man)

Sannyasi: Young man, please come to your senses—let us speak calmly. It is a slow and gradual process. Calm down, calm down. Just sit here—let us talk.

Young Man: No! I cannot wait—you are just going to cheat me! When we speak about an apple, we know it is there. I get satisfied when I eat it because it exists. We speak about sunlight, friendship, the earth, and pollution—all because they exist. We can see them right in front of our eyes. But where is God? (in a passionate way, shaking both his hands) Thousands of years have passed, gurus, yogis and devotees speak, “God! God!” They failed to show God to people. No! I cannot accept all that you say. You just show me God!

Sannyasi: (still cool and patient, he raises his palm to console him) Look! My dear young man, before you know what is meant by seeing God, you must understand that we cannot see God by our gross eyes—because they are material, limited and imperfect while God is spiritual, unlimited and supremely perfect. So how can we imperfect, limited and finite beings see God? (suddenly the young man angrily interrupts with a loud voice)

Young Man: Then tell me why you are speaking about God, who is even beyond your sense perception. No! You so-called gurus and sannyasis are just cheaters—you are fools in paradise—simply wasting the precious time of others and yourself. You are dreaming. You are a parasite to society because you are lazy. You must show me God—unless and until God is shown right in front of my eyes, your explanations are just the outpourings of the tongue, which has no bones!

Sannyasi: (becoming angry, he picks up his kamandalu, waterpot, from his side and hits the young man on the head with it as the sound of karatals, mridanga, etc., simultaneously occur. He shouts) Now you have seen God! For a faithless person like you, this is the real God! SEE GOD, SEE GOD, YOU OFFENDER TO THE DEVOTEES AND THE SUPREME LORD!

Young Man: (indicating pain and groaning, breathing heavily) No! Surely, this is not God, this is your kamandalu on my head! Instead of showing me God and giving me nectar, you are giving me your kamandalu. HELP! HELP! SOMEBODY HELP ME! I AM BEING ATTACKED HERE!

Other Man: (comes in and leads young man away) Police, police, somebody is in a pool of blood! He must be taken to the hospital!

Narrator: Now we have seen how the young man got the “kamandalu therapy” from the Sannyasi. The Sannyasi's act may look like a violent one, contradictory to the usual peaceful conduct of a spiritual person, but he has chosen that process to demonstrate practically how God cannot be seen through the gross eyes. Unfortunately, the young man happened to become the victim of the demonstration due to his ignorance. It is not that the Sannyasi is incapable of transmitting his own spiritual realizations just by touching the body of the young man, but he is not interested in showing his mystic power—he wants to make the young man convinced by the scientific way of God realization. This process is only a therapy to treat the sickness of God-lessness in the young man. Now, let us witness the results of the Sannyasi's action. Let us now turn our attention to the explanation of the Sannyasi, which will drive out the stubborn demand of contemporary people that God must be shown to them.

SCENE TWO

In the Courtroom

SCENE TWO

In the Courtroom

Judge: Okay, young man, tell me—what's the problem?

Young Man: Your Honor, this Sannyasi has broken my head with his kamandalu. This was an attempt to eliminate my life. Your honor, please render proper justice against this heinous act.

Judge: (looking towards the Sannyasi) Maharaja, is it true that you have broken the young man's head? Why did you do that? You must tell me the reason; otherwise you will be punished. There is no partiality in the eyes of justice—whether one is a Sannyasi, a layman or a king, everybody has an equal right to obtain justice.

Sannyasi: Your Honor, this young man came and asked me to show God to him, so I was trying to make him understand whether he should see God or experience Him; but he was so impatient and restless that he could not wait for a moment. He insulted me, along with all past and present gurus. He even came to the extent of defying the Supreme Lord. He gave me so much disturbance and interference in my spiritual practice that, to make him understand, I have given him the “kamandalu therapy” on his head.

Judge: (in surprise, his eyes opening widely) What do you mean by this “kamandalu therapy?” (the Sannyasi shows him the kamandalu by lifting it up. Judge nods his head in acknowledgement) Yes, yes—proceed.

Sannyasi: Your Honor will give me the opportunity to question this young man? (he turns abruptly towards the young man, raises his water pot and speaks) Young man!

Young Man: No! No more kamandalu, that is very painful! Please do not repeat it again!

Sannyasi: Calm down, calm down. Do not be panicked. I am not a brute, as you think. I just wanted to be reasonable with you. Let me ask you some questions. (remains silent for a moment, in deep thought) Yes, young man, when the kamandalu reached your head and knocked you down, how did you feel? You just tell me the truth. What actually did you experience! Young man... what?

Young Man: (he looks around in wonder) Sadhu Baba, do you need to have your head examined? How are you asking such a stupid question? Don't you know that I feel pain when a kamandalu hits my head—even a child knows this, right? Please, make sure you are not going out of your mind.

Sannyasi: (speaks in a very serious mood) Then if you admit that you felt pain in your head when hit with the kamandalu, then please show me the pain—just show me the pain, I want to see it.

Young Man: Oho, Sadhu Baba, now I have realized why people call you Swamis mad people! How can I show to you the pain which is felt in my head? It is only a feeling, or experience, which is subjective. It is not the object of visual perception—you are again and again proving yourself to be a fool! Please do not waste your time in this useless talk.

Sannyasi: Yes! That is the point I wanted to make by using the “kamandalu therapy.” Just as you cannot show the pain to me, I also cannot show God to you. This is felt inward in my heart as an experience of my love and devotion for my dear Lord. It is an experience of Him, the Supreme Worshipable Person; it is a subjective experience. Therefore, I cannot show it to you. First of all, we do not have spiritual eyes to see the Supreme Lord, who has no dead matter in Him. By the limited, the unlimited cannot be perceived. But, it does not mean that God cannot be seen, in an absolute sense. There is a prescribed way of seeing Him, given in the scriptures, such as the Bhagavad-Gētā. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, speaks: “I am the smell in a flower, I am the taste of water, I am the strength of the strong man, etc.” These words of the Supreme Lord show that He is the essence of everything. Therefore, Lord Krishna is also the pain in your body. In this manner, God reveals Himself to you—in the form of pain. (Young Man opens his eyes in the mood of sudden awakening from ignorance and stupidity. With tears of joy, he falls down at the feet of the Sannyasi, saying the following words:)

Young Man: Swamiji, kindly forgive me for the offence I have committed unto You. You have awakened me by removing the thick dirt of ignorance from my mind through your powerful “kamandalu therapy.” Please forgive me for my offence to the Supreme Lord and to you. (he turns to the judge and says) Your Honor, please excuse me for this nuisance I have caused this great Holy Man; please relieve him from all liable punishment, and punish me instead.

Judge: According to your request, all the charges against the Sannyasi are withdrawn.

SCENE THREE

Outside near the Forest

SCENE THREE

Outside near the Forest

Young Man: (walks around, up and down on the stage, reflecting very seriously, holding his head) I am very happy! I am very happy! What he said must be true! We are limited and our five senses are imperfect. I cannot even see a small germ, so how can I see God, who is Supreme, Absolute and Infinite? But, he said we can experience Him! Oh, it must be a very nice experience! (very quickly) I have to find out that Sannyasi. Oh, where can I find him now? I must find him before it is too late! (he walks around turning his head about, looking for the Sannyasi and calls out) O Sadhu Baba, where are you? I am very eager to see you! (suddenly he catches sight of the Sannyasi) Oh! There he is, there he is! (he runs toward the Sannyasi, who is to the other side of the stage, and falls at his feet) O Swamiji, please save me from this ocean of birth and death, please open my eyes! Please impart to me the process by which I may experience God!

Sannyasi: Alright, sir, we will study under this tree. (Sannyasi gives a short lecture here. The Sannyasi explains the process of sadhana as per our usual preaching, emphasizing japa and sankirtan as the process given in revealed scriptures for the present age)

Young Man: (he chants and reflects to himself, then turns towards the audience and makes them chant, saying) Let us experience God through His name—chant the maha-mantra. Repeat these names after me, please: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. (the audience follows his chanting. All the characters in the drama appear on the stage and hold kirtan for a few minutes)

Narrator: (concluding speech pertaining to how Krishna can be experienced and seen through His creation and in the heart of one advanced in loving devotional service)

The End

Indra Cursed To Become A Pig

by Radha-Damodara Das

The source of this play is Çrémad-Bhägavatam, 3.30.5, Purport

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CAST: Indra, Servant, Brihaspati, 2 Farmers, Papa Pig (Indra), Mama Pig, Piglets, Lord Brahma.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Indra relaxes on his asana, drinking a goblet of Soma. There is a knock at the door; the Servant goes to the door and comes back in, announcing the arrival of sage Brihaspati Muni)

Servant: Lord Indra, His Divine Grace Brihaspati Muni is here to see you.

Indra: Not now, please, I don't wish to speak with my Spiritual Master today! I'm in no mood for guests—just tell him to come back tomorrow. Tell him I'm in a meeting or something.

Brihaspati: (overhears) This is the last straw, Indra! I came here to counsel you about your unexemplary behavior—always warring, slighting the saintly kings, stealing a horse—but what's the use! I can see now that you are just like a PIG! You deserve to be a PIG! In fact, I CURSE you to be a PIG for one year so that I don't have to hear about you for a while! Then, if you're ready to be a proper demigod, we can talk.

Indra: Nooooooooooooo, my dear Spiritual Master, I was only joking! Please don't curse me, I am sooo sorry! Come back! (they exit)

(while the stage is being cleared and the barnyard props are being brought on, two farmers tell country jokes. Get a joke book from the library and tell as many as the audience can stand. Here's some examples:)

1st Farmer: I was up the holler visitin' Ol' Glum Taylor yesterday. You remember him, don't you?

2nd Farmer: I reckon so.

1st Farmer: I asked him how his kinfolks were and he just started in a-crying. "Kinfolk? Kinfolk?" he moaned. "Why two years ago, I had me a wife and least eight or nine children. Then corn went down and taxes went up till one by one I had to send all the youngsters to the Orphans' Home. That was bad enough, but things kept on getting worse... and then I had to send my dear, sweet love, my only wife, on back to her daddy's."

"Cuss, Uncle," I replied, "I'm powerful sad to hear that."

"Well, let me tell you," he said, "things is goin' bad agin! If they get much worse, blamed if I ain't afraid I'll have to sell my car!"

2nd Farmer: I'll tell you a story now: One time I was blastin' stumps down there along the river bottom when that old fat sow of mine come along and gobbled down the dynamite. She was the toughest Poland China I ever saw, and darn, if she wouldn't eat anything. Sure enough, I'd just come back from setting a charge when there she was, chomping up the last of what had been blamed near a full box of 20% sticks.

Afore I thought what I was doin', I yelled at that old sow and she took off for the barn. I didn't know what else to do, so I high-tailed it right after her. Just as she rounded the back side of the barn, she met the hired hand I had at that time—a squint-eyed fellow by the name of McIntyre—coming the other way. And afore I

could say a word, old McIntyre hauled off and kicked that Poland China square in the ribs.

Well, there was just a tremendous explosion—blew the barn down, flattened the chicken house, knocked over the windmill, took the roof right off my house, killed the hired hand of course, and flipped the tractor upside down.

Yes sir, and I mean to tell you... for about three weeks there, I had one mighty sick hog on my hands!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(The piglets come in singing the song “Swinging On A Star” from Disney Music. They wear hats with ears and snouts. There are curly tails on their pants. They dance and introduce us to other barnyard characters:)

Swinging on a Star

Would you like to swing on a star

Carry moonbeams home in a jar

And be better off than you are

Or would you rather be a PIG?

A pig is an animal with dirt on his face

His shoes are a terrible disgrace

He's got no manners when he eats his food

He's fat and lazy and extremely rude

So if you don't care a feather or a fig (Get the picture?)

You could grow up to be a PIG!

(Mama and Papa Pig come onstage, he is very fat and has Indra's moustache. She wears a curly wig. He reclines to watch the show)

Would you like to swing on a star

Carry moonbeams home in a jar

And be better off than you are

Or would you rather be a MULE? (Mule enters)

A mule is an animal with long funny ears

He kicks up at anything he hears

His back is brawny and his brain is weak

He's just plain stupid with a stubborn streak

And by the way, if you hate to go to school

You could grow up to be a MULE!

Would you like to swing on a star

Carry moonbeams home in a jar

And be better off than you are

Or would you rather be a FISH? (Fish enters)

A fish won't do anything but swim in a brook

He can't sign his name or read a book

To fool the people is his only thought

And although he's tricky, well, he still gets caught

And if that sort of life is what you wish

You could grow up to be a FISH!

And all the monkeys aren't in the zoo

Every day we meet quite a few

So you see, it's all up to you

You could be better than you are!

You could be better than you are!

Or would you rather be a PIG?

(laughter, backslapping. Mama Pig herds piglets to side of stage with Papa Pig)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Two farmers come in with buckets of vegetable peels marked "SLOP" and "SWILL." They dump the peels on the floor)

1st Farmer: Sou wee! Here pig pig pig pig pig! (the piglets bump and fight to get over to him for their dinner)

2nd Farmer: Here's your slop, pigs! (the piglets dive into the slop and eat with great gusto and noise, clattering the buckets, slipping and fighting)

1st Farmer: Hee hee! Pretty good business, raisin' pigs! I slop 'em with any old garbage, they don't care! And when they're good and fat (pinches them) we bring home the bacon! Hee hee! You look like you're ready to go to market! Ha Ha!

SCENE FOUR

Barnyard Happiness

SCENE FOUR

Barnyard Happiness

(Children dressed as animals and birds sing and dance happily)

Old MacDonald had a farm, EE I EE I OO

And on this farm he had a cow, EE I EE I OO

With a moo moo here and a moo moo there, etc.

And on this farm he had some turkeys, EE I EE I OO

With a gobble gobble here and a gobble gobble there, etc.

Old MacDonald had a farm, EE I EE I OO

And on that farm he had some pigs, EE I EE I OO...

Littlest Pig: Hey, that's us! Come on, guys!

Piglets: Yeah! We're PIGS! A Bunch of dirty, filthy PIGS!

With an OINK OINK and an OINK OINK there

Here an OINK there an OINK, everywhere an OINK OINK

Old MacDonald had a farm, EE I EE I OO

(all the animals clap wildly. The piglets bow proudly)

Papa Pig: (clapping) That's my boys! Life is so good down here on the farm!

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Lord Brahma enters holding up his dhoti a little and stepping very reluctantly because it is a very dirty, muddy place)

Brahma: Indra! Indra! Good news! The year is over! You may return to your post in the heavenly planets now! You poor fellow! I've been sorry for you all this time, but I never dreamed that it would be as bad as all this! Come along with me! Let's get out of here!

Papa Pig: Huh? Who are you?

Brahma: Who am I?! I'm Brahma, the chief of the demigods, creator of the universe, and I'm also your friend! And you're the king of heaven! We've been together for thousands of years—how could you forget me? Come on! Let's get out of here! This whole place smells really bad!

Papa Pig: I didn't think you were a pig! Usually, only pigs come here! Can't say that I do remember you, but even if I did—I wouldn't dream of leaving my mud holes! Three slops a day, plenty of mud to wallow in, I've got my fat sow and my piglets and my friends. This is heaven, alright! Just call me KING PIG!

Brahma: Listen, Indra! This isn't heaven—it's a slaughter house! The farmer is going to cut your fat pig body into pork chops! And he's going to cut your perky piglets into wieners and sausages! What do you think about that!?

Papa Pig: OH HO HO HO! What do you think of that, boys? (they laugh heartily)

Littlest Piglet: Hey, let's sing that song!

Piglets: Oh, I wish I were an Oscar Meyer wiener

That is what I'd truly like to be!

For if I were an Oscar Meyer wiener

Everyone would love to eat me! (they laugh uncontrollably)

Papa Pig: That was nice, sons. Throw this fancy man out, would you, boys? He's stinking up the whole mud hole! (the piglets attack Brahma)

1st Farmer: There's the little porkers, now. Come on, you! Catch 'em, Jim! (there is a comic chase. Play the "Little Piggies Song" by the Beatles. Finally, the piglets are all caught and pushed offstage. There are chopping and squealing noises)

Brahma: See, Indra?! That's pig life!

Papa Pig: Ahhh, too bad! It's a natural death for a pig! But, it can't happen to me! I'm too valuable around here! All the animals depend on me for wisdom and leadership! Just ask this mule. (Brahma looks at the mule, who just wears a stupid expression)

Brahma: No thanks, I'll take your word for it.

Papa Pig: The farmer is a close friend of mine. Anyway, I've still got my fat sow. We can just have more piglets!

2nd Farmer: It's your turn, Mama. Come with me. Help me with her, Floyd. Don't give me any trouble, now. (Mama Pig is led out as she screams wildly)

Papa Pig: Well, it's going to be pretty quiet around here; I'll like that—sleepin' in every day, and all the more for me to eat! I can just get me another sow any time I want. Aww, life is sooo good! Now, if you'll excuse me, it's time for my nap.

Brahma: No, Indra! No time to nap, now! Listen! The farmer is sharpening his knives! You're next! (Farmer approaches while loudly sharpening two knives)

Papa Pig: Don't let them get me, Brahma! Take me back! This place is horrible! I don't want to die! Don't let them eat me, Brahma!

Brahma: Okay, if you promise to be a nice demigod and be respectful to those who are more advanced than you, then maybe...

Papa Pig: Yes! Yes! Anything! Please! Take me back!

Brahma: Okay, we'll have to go quickly! It's this way to our flower airplane! (they exit)

Narrator: (preaches and tells the philosophical moral of the story)

The End

The Age Of Kali

The Age Of Kali

* * * * *

CAST: Bhumi (cow), Dharma (bull), Kali, Sin, Yudhishtira, Pariksit.

SCENE ONE

Yudhishtira Observes the Bad Omens of the Age of Kali

SCENE ONE

Yudhishtira Observes the Bad Omens of the Age of Kali

Bhumi: (crying) My name is Bhumi. I am Mother Earth in the form of a cow, and my heart is now very heavy with grief. What you are about to see is very, very horrible, for this is the Age of Kali, the Winter Age of mankind, when people become selfish and are overcome with greed for any and all forms of sense gratification. I am afraid of Kali himself, who is without morals or decency. But you can all help, for I have just one request: when you go home tonight, please don't eat me! Please don't eat me! (she runs off crying)

Yudhishtira: The direction of eternal time has changed. The seasons no longer follow their prescribed courses. While the people in general grow greedy and angry, they no longer care for honesty and will do or say anything to satisfy their uncontrolled desires. Everywhere—in the market, in business, and in ordinary

dealings between friends—there is cheating. Brother fighting with brother, mother with child, and even between husband and wife there is no peace; and always the strain of quarrel. Just see how many miseries due to celestial influences, earthly reactions and bodily pains—all very dangerous—are foreboding danger in the near future! My left side is trembling. The lower animals are circumambulating me, and my horses are crying. Just see! This pigeon is like the messenger of death and the owls and the rival hawks with their shrieking screams make my heart tremble! It appears that they want to make a void of the entire universe!

Smoky encirclements cover the sky! The earth and the mountains are trembling! Lightning bolts are flashing without any clouds and the chilling sound of thunder is everywhere! The wind is blowing violently, blasting dust everywhere—creating darkness! The clouds are raining everywhere with bloody disasters! The rays of the sun are declining and the very stars appear to be fighting among themselves, and the Deities appear to be crying in the temple!

What is this extraordinary time? I do not know what calamities are awaiting us. Seven months have passed since Arjuna went to Dwaraka to see Krishna, who has quit His earthly pastimes just as Narada has foretold. No longer will the earth be marked by the Lotus Feet of the Lord—and thus the Age of Quarrel has begun!
(exits with a worried look)

SCENE TWO

Kali and Sin's Celebration of Degradation

SCENE TWO

Kali and Sin's Celebration of Degradation

(Enter Kali & Sin, laughing and dancing to wild music)

Kali: This is my age, my queen, just now begun—

and I am allowed 400,000 years in which to have my fun!

I'll drag them by their senses into the deepest hell!

This is my art, my queen, and I know it well.

With lust and greed their hearts will be afire!

I'll laugh at the ignorant fools struggling in the quicksand of Maya.

Wars... plagues... death... suicides...

bombs... money... liquor... and lies...

Kali & Sin: So, we're pleased to meet you.

Hope you guess our names.

For what is troubling you

is just the nature of our game.

Kali: For I am Kali.

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Kali: In my age, my queen, illicit sex will be in vogue!

Sin: O Kali, Kali, you're such a rogue!

Kali: Yes, ILLICIT SEX—such delight!

For a moment of pleasure like dogs they'll fight.

They'll kill their babies in the womb

and make the garbage cans their tomb!

Women-hunters will scavenge the night

and they'll slaughter the cows for their appetite...

Which brings us to MEAT EATING!

Sin: What would you like for dinner, dear?

Some freshly-killed cow, chicken or steer?

Government-inspected turkey, rabbit or lamb?

Kali: No, love, tonight I'll eat my fellow man! (jumps at nearest person in audience)

I'll get you all, just wait and see,

I yield no compassion, no drop of mercy;

for this is the age of Kali!

Sin: INTOXICATION—Would you like a cigarette, sir?

Some coffee or tea, perhaps you'd like some burgundy!?

What's that!? You want more and more?

Kali: Still more? Then come. (pulls out needle)

Just see what I have in store!

Mystical visions do I guarantee.

Whatever you want, just come to me—Kali.

Sin: GAMBLING! Money is God,

they'll make it their life.

Their greed for wealth

will cause such strife.

Kali: Worship of God? Ha! There'll hardly be any;

but even the pauper will worship his penny.

And the leaders of men will be so filled with greed,

they'll be too blind to see

that the only way to have peace

will be to get rid of me! Kali!

Sin: Mental speculation:

Science is God! Atomic bombs,

atomic radiation!

Kali: I am God. You are God.

Sin: The death of religion I will bring!

It's all one, it doesn't matter.

Just have your fun...

blow your minds and let them run...

Kali: For the corruption of religion is my game.

Watch austerity, mercy, cleanliness

and truth go down the drain;

for the world will be ruled by the thoroughly insane...

For I am Kali.

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Kali: When we're done, just see how heads will spin!

Sin: You will eat one another—even kith and kin!

Kali: At the end of the age men will be pygmies, short and thin!

Sin: You'll be old by the time you're ten!

Kali: For I am Kali.

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Both: AND THIS IS THE AGE THAT WILL DO YOU ALL IN!!! (they run out laughing)

SCENE THREE

Yudhishtira's Throne Room

SCENE THREE

Yudhishtira's Throne Room

(Enter Yudhishtira, King Pariksit, and 2 guards)

Yudhishtira: The total land of the earth is under the control of my throne. As emperor, it is my duty to protect all the citizens, including the animals, from all harm and to train them according to the directions of the Supreme Lord. It is under His control and sanction that everything moves, and thus I am also His servant. Under His guidance, all of the citizens on the earth are happy in all respects, free from the disturbances of sinful life.

Pariksit, you are my grandson. You have been trained to assume leadership. This age is a difficult one. As the new emperor, it will be your duty to protect the citizens from degradation.

Now I am growing old. The time has come for me to give up material activities and devote myself entirely to the service of the Lord. I must prepare myself to return to Godhead. (he crowns Pariksit and gives him a sword. Pariksit bows, thinks for a while, then addresses audience:)

Pariksit: My dear citizens, my friends, as king it is my duty to give protection to the residents of the land, and therefore I am here to serve you all. We are entering difficult times. This Age of Kali is very dangerous for the human beings. Human life is meant for self-realization and to understand that we are all brothers. Not only the humans, but the animals, the birds, the trees, they are our brothers as well. Together we must acknowledge and glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead, our common Father. Due to the influence of this Age of Kali, men will completely forget the aim of life. The great sages foresee that in this age men will become mad after sense gratification. They will become short-lived, quarrelsome, misguided, and above all always disturbed. Finally, at the end of the age, the only philosophy will be "I will kill you and eat you or you will kill me and eat me."

Yudhishtira: But, my dear friends, before these tragedies come about, in the midst of the turmoil of this age, there will be a renaissance of transcendental knowledge and religious principles. At that time, men everywhere—in every town and village all over the world—will be given the opportunity to revive their relationship with the Supreme Father and glorify Him by the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord! (all exit)

SCENE FOUR

Outside in the Forest

SCENE FOUR

Outside in the Forest

(Dharma and Bhumi enter as a bull and cow. Song:)

Dharma: O Madam, are you quite hale and hearty?

Why do you look so aggrieved?

Why do you have these tears in your eyes?

What sorrow brings on these trembling cries?

Bhumi: O Dharma, what you say is true.

And it's already known to you.

But I shall reply to those

And tell you why I cry so.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality

Has gone away, can't you see?

Never again will I hope to meet

The soft sweet touch of His lotus feet.

Dharma: Is it because you now foresee my disaster

Caught up in the clutches of Kali?

With kings picked from thieves, high taxes to pay,

The innocent men will all lose their way.

And do you see the poor women

Exploited and left without home;

Their children gone wrong, with no one to care,

Society reaps a hell that all men must share.

Bhumi: I'm lost in a night of sad dreams.

With lust, cruel men now plunder the earth.

My dear Lord has gone from my sight.

Nescience has turned day into night.

The fields once were green from His touch,

I miss my dear Lord so much.

I'm weak with a load I no longer can bear,

And O I'm afraid! For I... feel Kali near!

Kali: (sings) For this is the age of Kali

When men will come under my sway!

And all of your good qualities, today

Surely I'll steal away.

Surely I'll steal away! (Bhumi sneaks out)

Kali: Dharma!!! You filthy bull! You represent everything I detest. Cleanliness! Ptahh! (spits) Mercy! Ptahh! Austerity and truthfulness!! Ptahh! Who needs these useless things? I will break every bone in your body! First your leg of cleanliness I will destroy with my weapon of illicit sex. (strikes Dharma) Now I will break your leg of mercy with the weapon of meat eating. (strikes Dharma) Now your leg of austerity I will destroy with the weapon of intoxication. (strikes Dharma for the third time) Am I alone and unobserved? Now, I shall destroy your last existing leg of truthfulness with my weapon of lying propaganda! (he gets ready to strike, but Maharaja Pariksit quickly enters, running and shouting)

Pariksit: Who are you? You appear to be strong and yet you dare to kill, within my protection, those who are helpless? By dress you pose to be a manly king, but no leader would ever do such an act. You rogue! You dare to beat an innocent cow on account of Lord Krishna and Arjuna being out of our sight? As you are beating the innocent in a secluded place, you are a culprit and deserve to be killed! (Kali falls at his feet with folded hands)

Kali: O King, my Lord,

spare me your sharpened sword!

I confess, I confess

and I'll even take off my royal dress!

Pariksit: As you have surrendered yourself with folded hands, you need no longer fear for your life. Kali, you cannot remain in any part of my land, as you are the cause of irreligiosity and strife. Wherever you go, Kali, inauspiciousness is sure to follow—like greed, chaos, cheating, quarrel; and it is qualities like these that degrade the entire society.

Kali: O Your Majesty, I may live anywhere by your order,

but here and there wherever I may go,

I shall have to see you with your bow.

Come, be a little more fair —

where is that place that I can go?

Therefore, O chief protector of religiosity,

please fix me up where I can live permanently.

Pariksit: Very well, Kali. You may live wherever you find gambling, intoxication, illicit connection with women, and the slaughter and eating of animals.

Kali: Yes, yes, that suits me fine.

Your Majesty is very kind.

But also, while you are king,

such places you mention, there are no such thing.

Come king, please give me a permanent place to stay in your kingdom.

Pariksit: Alright, Kali, I give you permission to reside wherever there is the hoarding of gold, because wherever there is gold there is falsity, lust, and enviousness. (Kali backs away bowing meekly, but leaving with demonic laughing) And so, Dharma, I shall cheat this personality of Kali. In my kingdom I shall re-establish your three legs—austerity, cleanliness, and mercy. I shall collect all the gold meant for illicit propensities and utilize it in the Sankirtan movement, the spreading of the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord:

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

(Govindam song heard while the cast comes on for final bow)

The End

The Age Of Kali (2)

(similar to the New York version by Sudama Swami)

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(similar to the New York version by Sudama Swami)

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CAST: Kali, Sin, Lust, Anger, Greed, Envy, Illusion, Madness.

SCENE ONE

Kali and Sin's Celebration of Degradation

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(Enter Kali & Sin, laughing and dancing to wild music)

Kali: This is my age, O Queen, now just begun—

I'm allowed 400,000 years in which to have my fun!

I'll drag them by their senses into the deepest hell!

This is my art, my queen, and I know it well.

With lust and greed their hearts will be afire!

I'll laugh at the ignorant fools struggling in the quicksand of Maya.

Wars... plagues... drugs... suicides...

bombs... money... liquor... and lies...

Such a feast for my eyes!

With perverted desires will I flood their minds.

They'll be vultures for pleasure... but only torment will they find!

Sin: Sordid perversions will be in vogue.

O Kali, Kali, you're such a rogue!

Kali: Yes, ILLICIT SEX—such delight!

For a moment of pleasure like dogs they'll fight.

Sin: They'll kill their babies in the womb

and make the garbage cans their tomb!

Kali: Women-hunters will scavenge the night

and they'll slaughter the cows for their appetite...

Which brings us to MEAT EATING!

Sin: What would you like for dinner, dear?

Some freshly-killed cow, chicken or steer?

Government-inspected turkey, rabbit or lamb?

Kali: No, love, tonight I'll eat my fellow man! (jumps at nearest person in audience)

I'll get you all, just wait and see,

I yield no compassion, no drop of mercy;

for this is the age of Kali!

Sin: INTOXICATION—Would you like a cigarette, sir?

Some coffee or tea, perhaps you'd like some burgundy!?

Kali: What? Not enough? Here, try some hashish or LSD...

Mystical visions do I guarantee...

Whatever you want, just come to me!

Sin: What's that? You want more and more?

Come, just see what I have in store!

Sin: GAMBLING! They'll make money their life.

Their greed for wealth will cause such strife.

Kali: Worship of God? Ha! There'll hardly be any;

but even the pauper will worship his penny.

And the leaders of men will be so filled with greed,

they'll be too blind to see

that the only way to have peace

will be to get rid of me! Kali!

Sin: Mental speculation:

Science is God! Atomic bombs, atomic radiation!

They'll have no idea how life began,

but their lives will end with a nuclear bang!

Kali: I am God. You are God.

It's all one, it doesn't matter.

Just have your fun...

blow your minds and let them run...

Sin: Cook that steak till it's nice and done!

Kali: Come on, enjoy your life! Do your own thing!

It's all absurd! Be your own king!

Sin: They'll try to be master of the world and enjoy a life of ease,

but they'll create a hell of concrete skies and plastic trees!

Kali: Like rats they'll race at frightening speeds, encaged in cars of steel.

Sin: And they'll work like slaves to feed their shiny coffins on four wheels!

Kali: We'll anaesthetize their brains with senseless songs and television!

Sin: We'll cripple their bodies with chemicals, junk-food and pollution!

Kali: We'll twist their minds with political lies in books and in newspapers!

Sin: And we'll break their hearts in Godless schools, factories and skyscrapers!

Both: And this is just the beginning... you wait till we really get going!!!

Sin: Corruption of religion is our game,

watch austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truth go down the drain!

Kali: And the world will be ruled by the thoroughly insane! For I am Kali!

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Kali: When we're done, just see how heads will spin!

Sin: You will eat one another—even kith and kin!

Kali: At the end of the age men will be pygmies, short and thin!

Sin: You'll be old by the time you're ten!

Kali: For I am Kali.

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Both: AND THIS IS THE AGE THAT WILL DO YOU ALL IN!!! (they run out laughing madly)

SCENE TWO

Sin And The Six Enemies

SCENE TWO

Sin And The Six Enemies

(Sin enters along with her six devilish assistants—Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion, Madness and Envy. They all say “Bravo! Bravo!” and take their places before Sin's throne as she addresses them)

Sin: As seeds grow to become flower-bearing trees, my pets, so like a seed do I lie in the innermost chamber of the heart of all fallen souls. And, day by day, I develop till I do deliver to each and every individual the fruits and flowers of his own sinful life—misery, disease, confusion, pain and poverty. For the sins of his past, a man suffers, but he is uncontrollably impelled by my force to commit more and more sins. And from these, he suffers in the future and again commits more. My innumerable seeds are indestructible. They are deeply sown and, like irrepressible weeds, give misery to all.

By my design the poor soul who contemplates sense objects develops attachment for them. That attachment leads to lust, and from lust, anger arises... from anger, then delusion... and finally loss of intelligence. And when a man loses his intelligence, he comes more firmly under my grip. (all applaud)

Thank you, my expert foremen. How grateful I am that with your assistance my authority has been expanded throughout the universe. My pets, recite to me now what expert means you use to expand my kingdom, and I shall reward each of you as you deserve. (all speak simultaneously) Wait, wait, my pets. One at a time, please, one at a time. Now let me see... who shall it be? You begin, O Lust...

Envy: He always gets to start first!

Sin: (claps) Silence, Envy!

Lust: (rises) O Empress Sin, your influence is boundless. Who can escape the enchantment of your web? I am not one to brag, (others murmur) but I must admit that it is I who am the greatest enemy of all the living entities!

All: What, you?!

Sin: (claps) Silence! Let him continue.

Lust: Yes, I! It is I, dear Empress, who induces the pure soul to become entangled in your clutches. My work is simple, very simple. Listen, mother, how I do your work to the best of my ability..

The beautiful woman sits in her bedroom, and with her quickly-moving eyes she sees the redness of her own lips in the mirror. And as she brushes her hair, which is black like the wings of a crow, the desires in her mind easily flow. Seeing her own reflection, her mind becomes delighted, and at any time I whisper in her ear... slowly, slowly I say to that lusty woman: "Alas, O beautiful-eyed one, why are you sitting here alone, not being cared for? Why don't you attract some young man's mind and bind him up? Go, go! For what reason do you remain here idly? How can you tolerate the pride of these young men? Why not make them cry out in desire? Why not make them all roll at your feet?" With a steady mind she hears these words. Slightly smiling, she rises and, holding the mirror with her own reflection in front of her, the enchantress runs off to conquer in all directions!!!

When I see laziness in a man, I go to him and say: "O mystifier of the worlds, what are you doing? Just see—women are dying for you! You are just like a bumble-bee, now go and drink honey from many flowers!" Hearing my sweet words, the scandalous man begins to think himself the lord of love. And at that moment, the beautiful woman attacks him with the arrows of her glances. In this way, the young man and woman fall down by Lust's deception. In the end, they enjoy poisonous fruits, and the depths of their hearts burn day and night. Thus bound by ropes of attachment, they come under your control... their shouts of remorse never end! In this manner do I, Lust, ever cause the best of men to fall.

Sin: (happily clapping) Beautiful! Beautiful!

Envy: Now me! Let me!

Sin: Wait! All in good time! Speak to me, Anger—what is your business?

Anger: O Sin! All glories unto you! Without you, what would this world be like to live in? Please hear of my exploits on your behalf. Lust's work is simple, he says. I couldn't agree with him more. But my work is thorough. He may capture a man's senses, mind and intelligence, but it is my toxins that pollute his whole body. After Lust does what little he can, his victim gets passed on to me. (Lust responds with insults) Then I make the man's gentle voice harsh and loud, his muscles taut, his heart palpitate, his actions uncontrolled. Just see the pauper in my palm, his blood boiling and his face flushed red by my wrath! That soul will not listen, reason cannot find him, patience has deserted him. Only arrogance and pride provoke him, and he turns upon his own beloved wife, children and friends. Being unkind to them, he suffers all the more. O dearest Sin, devastation is my work! You can see the evidence of my work everywhere in the form of enmity: between husband and wife, between brothers, friends and families, between societies, religions and nations. I have men at each other's throats over mere trifles. Then after my brief visit is over, my black shadow, war, arrives! And that's when the real fun begins! (harsh laughter. The other enemies mimic his laughter sarcastically) Ah shut up! Shut up!

Sin: Next! Who shall speak next? (clamor) Quiet! (immediate silence) All right, Greed, go on.

Greed: Of all your foremen, sweet Sin, I truly am the foremost! (all respond negatively) Like a faithful gardener, I lavishly water the seeds you so carefully sow! Please hear, Your Majesty, of my qualifications—of which you certainly already know. Whatever there may be within the universe to satisfy one's senses can never satisfy me. Even though a man has everything, under my influence he wants more. With discontent by my side, I sap the very vitality of human life. Where I reside, rest assured, happiness never dares show her face. My pitiful prisoner, one foot through the gate of hell, thinks: “So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes.” Thus he works hard like an ass day in, day out, and even overtime...

Rushing to work at breakneck speed, full of anxiety, convinced that he is free. But in truth he's working for me!

No matter what he goes through and gets, it will never make amends...

thus he takes to stealing and cheating, even from his friends.

Then they steal from him and, thus oppressed,

they become enemies over a farthing or less.

Let but my sticky fingertips lightly touch the most esoteric philosopher, the most advanced scientist, the most renowned politician, the most brilliant poet, and they become morose, living a life of two extremes: hankering for future gain, and lamenting for past loss.

Ahhh! Just see how I make them all insane!

Illusion: Ho-hum!

Greed: My queen, these are the waters of my reign...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...and the flood has only just begun...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...by my touch, they all become undone!

Illusion: I can't stand any more!

Greed: Too bad!

Sin: Illusion, Illusion, please.

Illusion: (jumping up and interrupting Greed) O Sin! With all due respect, I have heard enough! After all, why does a man endeavor to enjoy himself? And why is he angered when he fails? I ask you why... why is he dissatisfied with his wealth? It is because I, Illusion, have spread my veils. You should know that all beautiful, glorious and mighty sins spring from but a spark of my splendor. (Sin squirms nervously) With but a single fragment of myself, I pervade and support all these other petty seedlings. (other enemies protest vigorously) Why do I reign supreme?

All: Supreme?!

Illusion: For one reason only: because of my cheerful smile called ignorance. It is due to ignorance, Madame Sin, that men are overcome by your glance. Poor little Lust and Anger simply carry on my work. (negative response) And when I make a man want more than what he's due, then only is he susceptible to you, O noble Greed! And why are souls called fallen? Because I cast them down. And why do they stay down? Because I enshroud them. For every being is born in my grip, overcome by desire and hate.

I have decided for modern man

that life is a complex chemical combination,

that there is no God in control,

and within the body there is no soul.

He thinks that his body made merely

of earthly lifeless elements

is his complete identity.

Poor lost little living entity!

He's unaware that there's a joyful Lord in control,

that within the body, there's a blissful living soul.

You see, they only age in years, but not in knowledge,

for I hide reality behind my shawl,

for the detriment of one and all.

Good queen, you know this world to be

a place of death, happiness has no place here.

But for them, this truth is wholly unclear.

They are blind, for within their minds, I pit hope against hope. "Things will be better," they think, "and the future is so bright."

That's my master plan...

to keep them locked up in this sham.

Sin: Your master plan?

Illusion: Well, I didn't mean...

Sin: That is quite enough now, Illusion. Don't let yourself get carried away.

Illusion: But my Queen, I haven't...

Sin: Sit down, Illusion! Sit! Good. Now, Madness, you've been ominously quiet and reserved. Let's hear of your play.

Madness: I, reserved? How very droll.

Sin: Why not let us into the labyrinth of your mind?

Madness: Excuse me if I seem a bit reserved. A real hero shows prowess by his actions, not high sounding words. (negative response) Allow me to quietly reveal my seductive plot. Man is mortal; this statement seems quite sound, you must admit. (responses: "So what else is new? Ho-hum!")

Old folks have died, and he who is a child today,

will sooner or later pass away.

Yet although he knows his destiny to be dust,

he madly accumulate more and more and more,

and becomes a prime target for Illusion, Greed, Anger and Lust.

And why? Because he cannot help himself... he must!

All: He must?

Madness: He must! Do you hear? And this is the substance of my gift... This is what I, Madness, contribute. So, Mistress Sin, you can see that I'm the best, I trust.

Sin: (to Madness) Hmm. Perhaps. After all, there is method to your madness. Well now, Envy. Envy?

All: Hey Envy!!!

Envy: Huh? Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Sin: At last it is your turn to beat the drum. But I must caution you—don't be too malicious!

Envy: Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Envy: (intensely eager) To begin with, O Queen, let me ask: From which tree do the seeds of sin come? (all respond in favor of themselves) Wrong! From me! (all freak out) There—you see! Ha! The desire-tree of Envy!

Without me, men would live peacefully,

he'd not care if another was more opulent than he.

None would strive to accumulate more and more,

and then, Madness, where would you be?

Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion and Madness all envy me! (wild response)

They know that only my call

lures the soul to want what is not his

and makes him fall—(faint kirtan is heard in distance)

and it all begins when he envies God!!!

That's why I will never let it end,

for my roots are stronger than an iron rod.

And nothing in this world can ever make them bend. (dissenting increases)

(a kirtan is heard offstage in the distance, and this does not stop for the rest of the play. The actors must shout over it)

Sin: Shhh, quiet. Listen! What's that?

All: What's what?

Sin: That sound!

All: What sound?

Sin: That! That horrible sound. It sounds like music...

All: Music?

Sin: Yes, happy music!

All: (they stand up) Yes, yes it is!

Sin: All right, who's responsible for this?

All: Honestly, Sin, we didn't...

Sin: I warn you—if this is someone's idea of a joke, I'm not amused! I want it stopped. I want it stopped immediately! (silence, no one moves) Well, someone do something. Someone go out there and tell them to stop it this instant! (Kali enters)

All: Kali! Kali!

Sin: O Kali! How wonderful to see you, my dear! (kirtan is more noticeable in background)

Kali: (sadly) O my Queen, my poor Queen...

Sin: What's the matter, Kali?

Kali: (distraught, pacing back and forth) I never thought it could happen... Brace yourself, my queen, I have bad news.

Sin: Bad news?!

Kali: Yes... It's all over! Our doom is in the making!

Sin: Our doom?

Kali: Yes! They are chanting and spreading those horrible names!

Sin: What names?

Kali: You know—those names!

Sin: What are you talking about?

Kali: Must I spell out everything for you? The Holy Names of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead! They are planting those names in the minds and hearts of everyone, everywhere!

Sin: Oh, no! No!

Kali: Our entire empire is quaking!

Sin: But how can that be? We've sown

uncountable seeds of sin within their hearts. (All: "Yes! Yes!")

And those seeds will kill piety

like piercing, poisonous darts. (All: "They must! They must!")

Kali: (shakes his head dismally) Excuse me, don't you realize this chanting of the Lord's names nullifies all sinful seeds...

Sin: Nullifies?

All: Nullifies?

Kali: ...and all reactions to sinful deeds?

Sin: No, no, it can't be!

Kali: Yes, it can. It's useless! All our work gone for nought; it's useless, don't you see?

Sin: (in extreme anxiety) But I don't understand. It just can't be!

Kali: But it can, it can! The Supreme Lord has come to say: "Abandon all varieties of religion, just surrender unto Me and I'll protect you from all sin."

Sin: (more calmly) Oh, is that all? But that's not news! No one will listen to that when faced by Envy's might! (All: "Right!") And who will care for such words when Lust makes his strike? (All: "Right!") Our stalwart army will not fall! (All: "Never!")

Kali: (interrupts her, shouting) That's where you're wrong! Our stalwart soldiers are being used by these devotees!!!

Sin: What gall! (All: "What gall!") They must be deprogrammed at once... (All: "At once") ...once and for all!

Kali: Listen! They transform their lust into love for the Lord.

Sin: For the Lord?!

All: Disgusting!

Kali: They use their anger and envy to fight those who decry the Lord and His divine plans. Their greed becomes eagerness to attain the Lord's favor. And separation from the Lord will make even Madness stand mute with folded hands as they wait for their beloved Lord to benedict the devotees with His ecstatic

flavor! These devotees seem to taste some mysterious sweet that gives them strength to control their minds!!! O my queen, what can it be that makes our treats tasteless? (Lust, Anger, Greed, Envy and Madness slink off; only Illusion remains)

Sin: Let them try to control us! Illusion will captivate them back to our view! Just wait and see!

Kali: (with sad voice) O my poor Queen, I'm afraid Illusion won't do!

Sin: (hopelessly) What do you mean, Illusion won't do?

Kali: Let me show you. Illusion, come here! Under whose control are you?

Illusion: Sin's of course. For the source of my power, it is Sin I woo.

Kali: That may be true. But beyond her milieu, in whose shadow do you stand?

Illusion: (great hesitancy) I? Well... I stand behind the Lord!

Kali: And who is your Lord?

Illusion: My Lord? Why, ultimately Krishna, of course. Who else?

Sin: Ah! Don't mention that name! (she tries to attack Illusion but Kali stops her)

Kali: Wait! And when your Lord commands you, can you afford to disobey?

Illusion: No, never. How could I disobey my Lord? (he runs off. Sin calls after the enemies)

Sin: Illusion! Envy! Greed! Those miserable clowns claimed to abound in the confines of my world. But I've found their boasts to be merely bad jokes. May they all to their deaths be hurled! (chanting continues. Kali and Sin look at each other for a moment, listening. They continue talking, but now more slowly than before)

Sin: What a cacophonous disruption! (pause) I demand to see who's doing this! (gets up to go)

Kali: (alarmed) O my consort Sin, if you wish to stay with me, I urge you not to go!!! (to kirtan party) Stop it! Stop it! My head is about to burst!!! (he sits down as if he has a great headache)

Sin: (to herself) Until this happened, our might was immeasurable! How could they deal such a blow? I must know! I must go... I must see how it could be so! (she turns, sees Kali is not watching and runs off)

Kali: (immediately looks up and sees she's gone) Wait! Wait! Sin! You'll be entrapped by our foe! (he runs after her)

(the kirtan party enters and audience participates in a loud kirtan)

The End

Kali And Sin And The Six Enemies

Kali And Sin And The Six Enemies

* * * * *

CAST: Kali, Sin, Lust, Anger, Greed, Envy, Illusion, Madness.

(Sin enters along with her six devilish assistants—Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion, Madness and Envy. They all say “Bravo! Bravo!” and take their places before Sin's throne as she addresses them)

Sin: As seeds grow to become flower-bearing trees, my pets, so like a seed do I lie in the innermost chamber of the heart of all fallen souls. And, day by day, I develop till I do deliver to each and every individual the fruits and flowers of his own sinful life—misery, disease, confusion, pain and poverty. For the sins of his past, a man suffers, but he is uncontrollably impelled by my force to commit more and more sins. And from these, he suffers in the future and again commits more. My innumerable seeds are indestructible. They are deeply sown and, like irrepressible weeds, give misery to all.

By my design the poor soul who contemplates sense objects develops attachment for them. That attachment leads to lust, and from lust, anger arises... from anger, then delusion... and finally loss of intelligence. And when a man loses his intelligence, he comes more firmly under my grip. (all applaud)

Thank you, my expert foremen. How grateful I am that with your assistance my authority has been expanded throughout the universe. My pets, recite to me now what expert means you use to expand my kingdom, and I shall reward each of you as you deserve. (all speak simultaneously) Wait, wait, my pets. One at a time, please, one at a time. Now let me see... who shall it be? You begin, O Lust...

Envy: He always gets to start first!

Sin: (claps) Silence, Envy!

Lust: (rises) O Empress Sin, your influence is boundless. Who can escape the enchantment of your web? I am not one to brag, (others murmur) but I must admit that it is I who am the greatest enemy of all the living entities!

All: What, you?!

Sin: (claps) Silence! Let him continue.

Lust: Yes, I! It is I, dear Empress, who induces the pure soul to become entangled in your clutches. My work is simple, very simple. Listen, mother, how I do your work to the best of my ability...

The beautiful woman sits in her bedroom, and with her quickly-moving eyes she sees the redness of her own lips in the mirror. And as she brushes her hair, which is black like the wings of a crow, the desires in her mind easily flow. Seeing her own reflection, her mind becomes delighted, and at any time I whisper in her ear... slowly, slowly I say to that lusty woman: "Alas, O beautiful-eyed one, why are you sitting here alone, not being cared for? Why don't you attract some young man's mind and bind him up? Go, go! For what reason do you remain here idly? How can you tolerate the pride of these young men? Why not make them cry out in desire? Why not make them all roll at your feet?" With a steady mind she hears these words. Slightly smiling, she rises and, holding the mirror with her own reflection in front of her, the enchantress runs off to conquer in all directions!!!

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ropes of attachment, they come under your control... their shouts of remorse never end! In this manner do I, Lust, ever cause the best of men to fall.

Sin: (happily clapping) Beautiful! Beautiful!

Envy: Now me! Let me!

Sin: Wait! All in good time! Speak to me, Anger—what is your business?

Anger: O Sin! All glories unto you! Without you, what would this world be like to live in? Please hear of my exploits on your behalf. Lust's work is simple, he says. I couldn't agree with him more. But my work is thorough. He may capture a man's senses, mind and intelligence, but it is my toxins that pollute his whole body. After Lust does what little he can, his victim gets passed on to me. (Lust responds with insults) Then I make the man's gentle voice harsh and loud, his muscles taut, his heart palpitate, his actions uncontrolled. Just see the pauper in my palm, his blood boiling and his face flushed red by my wrath! That soul will not listen, reason cannot find him, patience has deserted him. Only arrogance and pride provoke him, and he turns upon his own beloved wife, children and friends. Being unkind to them, he suffers all the more. O dearest Sin, devastation is my work! You can see the evidence of my work everywhere in the form of enmity: between husband and wife, between brothers, friends and families, between societies, religions and nations. I have men at each other's throats over mere trifles. Then after my brief visit is over, my black shadow, war, arrives! And that's when the real fun begins! (harsh laughter. The other enemies mimic his laughter sarcastically) Ah shut up! Shut up!

Sin: Next! Who shall speak next? (clamor) Quiet! (immediate silence) All right, Greed, go on.

Greed: Of all your foremen, sweet Sin, I truly am the foremost! (all respond negatively) Like a faithful gardener, I lavishly water the seeds you so carefully sow! Please hear, Your Majesty, of my qualifications—of which you certainly already know. Whatever there may be within the universe to satisfy one's senses can never satisfy me. Even though a man has everything, under my influence he wants more. With discontent by my side, I sap the very vitality of human life.

Where I reside, rest assured, happiness never dares show her face. My pitiful prisoner, one foot through the gate of hell, thinks: "So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes." Thus he works hard like an ass day in, day out, and even overtime...

Rushing to work at breakneck speed, full of anxiety, convinced that he is free. But in truth he's working for me!

No matter what he goes through and gets, it will never make amends...

thus he takes to stealing and cheating, even from his friends.

Then they steal from him and, thus oppressed,

they become enemies over a farthing or less.

Let but my sticky fingertips lightly touch the most esoteric philosopher, the most advanced scientist, the most renowned politician, the most brilliant poet, and they become morose, living a life of two extremes: hankering for future gain, and lamenting for past loss.

Ahhh! Just see how I make them all insane!

Illusion: Ho-hum!

Greed: My queen, these are the waters of my reign...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...and the flood has only just begun...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...by my touch, they all become undone!

Illusion: I can't stand any more!

Greed: Too bad!

Sin: Illusion, Illusion, please.

Illusion: (jumping up and interrupting Greed) O Sin! With all due respect, I have heard enough! After all, why does a man endeavor to enjoy himself? And why is he angered when he fails? I ask you why... why is he dissatisfied with his wealth? It is because I, Illusion, have spread my veils. You should know that all beautiful, glorious and mighty sins spring from but a spark of my splendor. (Sin squirms nervously) With but a single fragment of myself, I pervade and support all these other petty seedlings. (other enemies protest vigorously) Why do I reign supreme?

All: Supreme?!

Illusion: For one reason only: because of my cheerful smile called ignorance. It is due to ignorance, Madame Sin, that men are overcome by your glance. Poor little Lust and Anger simply carry on my work. (negative response) And when I make a man want more than what he's due, then only is he susceptible to you, O noble Greed! And why are souls called fallen? Because I cast them down. And why do they stay down? Because I enshroud them. For every being is born in my grip, overcome by desire and hate.

I have decided for modern man
that life is a complex chemical combination,
that there is no God in control,
and within the body there is no soul.
He thinks that his body made merely
of earthly lifeless elements
is his complete identity.
Poor lost little living entity!
He's unaware that there's a joyful Lord in control,
that within the body, there's a blissful living soul.
You see, they only age in years, but not in knowledge,
for I hide reality behind my shawl,

for the detriment of one and all.

Good queen, you know this world to be

a place of death, happiness has no place here.

But for them, this truth is wholly unclear.

They are blind, for within their minds, I pit hope against hope. "Things will be better," they think, "and the future is so bright."

That's my master plan...

to keep them locked up in this sham.

Sin: Your master plan?

Illusion: Well, I didn't mean...

Sin: That is quite enough now, Illusion. Don't let yourself get carried away.

Illusion: But my Queen, I haven't...

Sin: Sit down, Illusion! Sit! Good. Now, Madness, you've been ominously quiet and reserved. Let's hear of your play.

Madness: I, reserved? How very droll.

Sin: Why not let us into the labyrinth of your mind?

Madness: Excuse me if I seem a bit reserved. A real hero shows prowess by his actions, not high sounding words. (negative response) Allow me to quietly reveal my seductive plot. Man is mortal; this statement seems quite sound, you must admit. (responses: "So what else is new? Ho-hum!")

Old folks have died, and he who is a child today,

will sooner or later pass away.

Yet although he knows his destiny to be dust,

he madly accumulate more and more and more,

and becomes a prime target for Illusion, Greed, Anger and Lust.

And why? Because he cannot help himself... he must!

All: He must?

Madness: He must! Do you hear? And this is the substance of my gift... This is what I, Madness, contribute. So, Mistress Sin, you can see that I'm the best, I trust.

Sin: (to Madness) Hmmm. Perhaps. After all, there is method to your madness. Well now, Envy. Envy?

All: Hey Envy!!!

Envy: Huh? Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Sin: At last it is your turn to beat the drum. But I must caution you—don't be too malicious!

Envy: Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Envy: (intensely eager) To begin with, O Queen, let me ask: From which tree do the seeds of sin come? (all respond in favor of themselves) Wrong! From me! (all freak out) There—you see! Ha! The desire-tree of Envy!

Without me, men would live peacefully,

he'd not care if another was more opulent than he.

None would strive to accumulate more and more,

and then, Madness, where would you be?

Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion and Madness all envy me! (wild response)

They know that only my call

lures the soul to want what is not his

and makes him fall—(faint kirtan is heard in distance)

and it all begins when he envies God!!!

That's why I will never let it end,

for my roots are stronger than an iron rod.

And nothing in this world can ever make them bend. (dissention increases)

(a kirtan is heard offstage in the distance, and this does not stop for the rest of the play. The actors must shout over it)

Sin: Shhh, quiet. Listen! What's that?

All: What's what?

Sin: That sound!

All: What sound?

Sin: That! That horrible sound. It sounds like music...

All: Music?

Sin: Yes, happy music!

All: (they stand up) Yes, yes it is!

Sin: All right, who's responsible for this?

All: Honestly, Sin, we didn't...

Sin: I warn you—if this is someone's idea of a joke, I'm not amused! I want it stopped. I want it stopped immediately! (silence, no one moves) Well, someone do something. Someone go out there and tell them to stop it this instant! (Kali enters)

All: Kali! Kali!

Sin: O Kali! How wonderful to see you, my dear! (kirtan is more noticeable in background)

Kali: (sadly) O my Queen, my poor Queen...

Sin: What's the matter, Kali?

Kali: (distraught, pacing back and forth) I never thought it could happen... Brace yourself, my queen, I have bad news.

Sin: Bad news?!

Kali: Yes... It's all over! Our doom is in the making!

Sin: Our doom?

Kali: Yes! They are chanting and spreading those horrible names!

Sin: What names?

Kali: You know—those names!

Sin: What are you talking about?

Kali: Must I spell out everything for you? The Holy Names of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead! They are planting those names in the minds and hearts of everyone, everywhere!

Sin: Oh, no! No!

Kali: Our entire empire is quaking!

Sin: But how can that be? We've sown

uncountable seeds of sin within their hearts. (All: "Yes! Yes!")

And those seeds will kill piety

like piercing, poisonous darts. (All: "They must! They must!")

Kali: (shakes his head dismally) Excuse me, don't you realize this chanting of the Lord's names nullifies all sinful seeds...

Sin: Nullifies?

All: Nullifies?

Kali: ...and all reactions to sinful deeds?

Sin: No, no, it can't be!

Kali: Yes, it can. It's useless! All our work gone for nought; it's useless, don't you see?

Sin: (in extreme anxiety) But I don't understand. It just can't be!

Kali: But it can, it can! The Supreme Lord has come to say: "Abandon all varieties of religion, just surrender unto Me and I'll protect you from all sin."

Sin: (more calmly) Oh, is that all? But that's not news! No one will listen to that when faced by Envy's might! (All: "Right!") And who will care for such words when Lust makes his strike? (All: "Right!") Our stalwart army will not fall! (All: "Never!")

Kali: (interrupts her, shouting) That's where you're wrong! Our stalwart soldiers are being used by these devotees!!!

Sin: What gall! (All: "What gall!") They must be deprogrammed at once... (All: "At once") ...once and for all!

Kali: Listen! They transform their lust into love for the Lord.

Sin: For the Lord?!

All: Disgusting!

Kali: They use their anger and envy to fight those who decry the Lord and His divine plans. Their greed becomes eagerness to attain the Lord's favor. And separation from the Lord will make even Madness stand mute with folded hands as they wait for their beloved Lord to benedict the devotees with His ecstatic flavor! These devotees seem to taste some mysterious sweet that gives them strength to control their minds!!! O my queen, what can it be that makes our treats tasteless? (Lust, Anger, Greed, Envy and Madness slink off; only Illusion remains)

Sin: Let them try to control us! Illusion will captivate them back to our view! Just wait and see!

Kali: (with sad voice) O my poor Queen, I'm afraid Illusion won't do!

Sin: (hopelessly) What do you mean, Illusion won't do?

Kali: Let me show you. Illusion, come here! Under whose control are you?

Illusion: Sin's of course. For the source of my power, it is Sin I woo.

Kali: That may be true. But beyond her milieu, in whose shadow do you stand?

Illusion: (great hesitancy) I? Well... I stand behind the Lord!

Kali: And who is your Lord?

Illusion: My Lord? Why, ultimately Krishna, of course. Who else?

Sin: Ah! Don't mention that name! (she tries to attack Illusion but Kali stops her)

Kali: Wait! And when your Lord commands you, can you afford to disobey?

Illusion: No, never. How could I disobey my Lord? (he runs off. Sin calls after the enemies)

Sin: Illusion! Envy! Greed! Those miserable clowns claimed to abound in the confines of my world. But I've found their boasts to be merely bad jokes. May they all to their deaths be hurled! (chanting continues. Kali and Sin look at each other for a moment, listening. They continue talking, but now more slowly than before)

Sin: What a cacophonous disruption! (pause) I demand to see who's doing this! (gets up to go)

Kali: (alarmed) O my consort Sin, if you wish to stay with me, I urge you not to go!!! (to kirtan party) Stop it! Stop it! My head is about to burst!!! (he sits down as if he has a great headache)

Sin: (to herself) Until this happened, our might was immeasurable! How could they deal such a blow? I must know! I must go... I must see how it could be so! (she turns, sees Kali is not watching and runs off)

Kali: (immediately looks up and sees she's gone) Wait! Wait! Sin! You'll be entrapped by our foe! (he runs after her)

(the kirtan party enters and audience participates in a loud kirtan)

The End

The Life Of Yamunacharya

The Life Of Yamunacharya

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CAST: Narrator, Yamunacharya, 2 Messengers, King, Queen, Kolahara, People, Nathamuni, Rama Mishra, Cook.

Narrator: The following drama is the true story of one of the greatest spiritual teachers in the history of medieval India. Ladies and gentlemen, the devotees of the Hare Krishna movement humbly present the life of Yamunacharya!

SCENE ONE

The Challenge

SCENE ONE

The Challenge

Narrator: Yamunacharya was born in the year 918 in the city of Madurai in South India. At the age of five, Yamunacharya went to study in the school of the renowned scholar, Bhashyacharya. There he displayed great devotion to God and exceptional intellect. He was loved by all his school friends and soon gained the special favor of his teacher. Yamuna lived peacefully and happily in Bhashyacharya's school.

Yamuna: My dear Lord Krishna, you may make me a king or a poverty-stricken beggar. You may make others respect or revile me. You may give me residence in heaven or in hell. Whatever you do, You will always remain the only goal of my life. No one else will ever become the goal of my life... (enter messengers)

Messenger 1: We are the king's messengers. Where is your teacher, Nathamuni?

Yamuna: Welcome, sirs! I'm sorry to inform you my teacher is ill. But, maybe I can help you on his behalf.

Messenger 2: Ha ha ha! You in your teacher's place? Nathamuni has been challenged by Kolahara, India's greatest scholar, and the Pandya king has ordered him to come to the palace for a public debate.

Messenger 1: Everyone challenged by Kolahara has been defeated and has had to sacrifice their right ear as a sign of submission.

Messenger 2: So, you want to go in your teacher's place?

Yamuna: My teacher is seriously ill and so he cannot go, but Kolahara will say he has become a coward. So, to protect the honor of my teacher, I will go instead.

SCENE TWO

The Debate

SCENE TWO

The Debate

(King and Queen seated on throne, with Kolahara seated nearby. Enter Yamunacharya. Everyone looks shocked)

Queen: Your Majesty, he's just a boy!

Kolahara: What? A mere child? Are you the one who is to debate with me—the great Kolahara?

Yamuna: Sri Kolahara, if you judge a person's learning by his size, then it surely follows that the water buffalo is a greater scholar than you!

Kolahara: You young rascal, how dare you challenge me! And I must debate with you? What is the difference between you and an ass? (Yamuna paces the distance between himself and Kolahara)

Yamuna: Three paces, sir.

Queen: I think that today the proud Kolahara has met his match. Just as a small spark can turn a mountain of cloth to ashes, so will this boy destroy the mountain-like pride of Kolahara.

King: How can you believe that this is possible? If you truly have faith in the child, then you must make a wager to back your words!

Queen: Very well. If the boy does not defeat and humble the proud Kolahara, I will become the servant of your maidservant.

King: A mighty wager, indeed. But, I will match it. If Yamuna defeats Kolahara in this debate, I will give him half of my kingdom. Let the debate begin!

Yamuna: Sri Kolahara, I will ask you one simple question, if you cannot answer it, then you must accept defeat. Now... (Yamunacharya swoops down and picks up a handful of sand from the stage) ...how much sand is there in my hand?

Kolahara: You rascal, this is ridiculous! How am I to answer such a useless question as this?

People: Kolahara has been defeated!

Kolahara: No, I am not defeated. I do not accept defeat. (to the King) Only if Yamunacharya can answer this question himself will I accept defeat!

King: And if he can't?

Kolahara: And if he can't, we will consider that he has been defeated by me and, as is the rule, we will have to cut off his right ear!

People: No! Kolahara has been defeated. We must cut off his right ear. No, we should cut off his head!

Yamuna: Wait! This argument is unnecessary. I can give the answer to this question. It's simple—in my hand I have a handful of sand! (applause)

King: Yamuna has answered perfectly his question, and I declare that he has won the debate. Now, as Kolahara has done to many others in the past—Yamunacharya will cut off Kolahara's right ear.

Yamuna: Your Majesty, let Kolahara keep his ear. He must simply promise never to debate again to atone for causing so much pain and hurt to so many others.

King: Yamunacharya, not only are you learned, but you are merciful as well! You will make a perfect king. I have promised to give you half my kingdom as a prize for this victory, and that promise I will now fulfill. (court applauds. King and Queen get up from throne. King sits Yamunacharya on throne. Servant brings crown on gold plate. King crowns him and puts sword in his hand. Coronation ceremony)

SCENE THREE

Yamunacharya's Degradation

SCENE THREE

Yamunacharya's Degradation

Narrator: The twelve-year-old king, Yamunacharya, became the ruler of half the kingdom of the Pandas. His subjects were satisfied and happy, for he was a shrewd and righteous monarch. Unfortunately, he became distracted from his spiritual understanding by his political dealings and the sense pleasures that go along with his high position. He forgot that this life is but a temporary stage in our eternal existence, and he gradually gave up his acts of devotion to Lord Krishna.

Yamuna: Ha ha ha! Bring me more wine! Why is my glass empty? Am I not the great King Yamuna? God? I don't need any God! I am the greatest king. Why should I go to the temple? If God wants to see me, He can make an appointment like everyone else and come to see me here in my palace. Now, where are the dancing girls? I want some entertainment; its getting boring around here. Send in the dancers! (dance is performed)

SCENE FOUR

Grandfather's Concern

SCENE FOUR

Grandfather's Concern

Nathamuni: Rama Mishra, come here, come here. I am dying now. Come close and listen attentively! You are my best disciple. You may know I have a grandson, his name is Yamunacharya. In his childhood he had much love and devotion for Lord Krishna. He was a renowned scholar of the Vedas, being the disciple of the learned Bhashyacharya. Now, he is merely a king and enjoys a life of worldly pleasure. He

has forgotten the natural happiness of his childhood devotion. Rama Mishra, my last request is that you somehow rescue him. Remind him of his eternal constitutional position as a lover of Krishna. I have faith in you! Please don't fail me!

Narrator: Rama Mishra, being a dutiful disciple, never forgot that last instruction of his spiritual master. As a poor monk, he realized that there was little chance of his even getting to see King Yamuna, and thus he would have to think of a plan to accomplish his mission.

SCENE FIVE

The Kitchen

SCENE FIVE

The Kitchen

(The kitchen. Head cook center stage with two crazy assistants on either side. Enter Rama Mishra)

Cook: What do you want?

Rama: I have heard that the king's favorite preparation is this rare variety of spinach, so I have brought some for you to cook for him.

Cook: Yes, it is true that the king loves this variety of spinach. Where did you get this from?

Rama: I know a place in the forest where the spinach grows in abundance. I can bring it for you every day if you wish.

Cook: Oh yes, please! Thank you very much!

SCENE SIX

The Meeting

SCENE SIX

The Meeting

(King Yamuna seated on throne, eating)

Yamuna: Where is that spinach preparation? Why is it not here today? Bring me the cook! (Cook enters) You rascal! Why did you not cook the spinach preparation for me today?

Cook: Your Majesty, the monk who usually brings the spinach didn't come today.

Yamuna: Who is this monk and what price does he ask for his service?

Cook: My Lord, I do not know the name or the dwelling place of that monk. He will accept no payment for his service and renders it out of love for Your Majesty.

Yamuna: If this man comes again, show him due respect and bring him to me! I wish to reward him for his service!

Cook: Yes, Your Majesty. (Cook exits. King continues eating. Cook re-enters) Your Majesty, the holy man is here!

Yamuna: Well, bring him in. Holy sage, I have heard that every day you gather and bring spinach for me and will accept no payment. I want to reward you. Is there anything I can do for you?

Rama: I have something very important to tell you, but it must be in private. (King motions—Cook and guards leave) Some months back, your grandfather, the renowned Nathamuni, left this world. Before he departed, however, he left in my care a great treasure to be given to you at the right time. Now I am asking you to accept this treasure.

Yamuna: Sir, you are certainly a most saintly person, being so renounced that you have not kept this treasure for yourself! I am ready to go immediately to claim this treasure along with four divisions of my army! Please act as our guide.

Rama: Your Majesty, I think it is best if we go alone, incognito. If we go with you dressed as a king, surrounded by so much opulence, it will be impossible for us to find the treasure. It is located several days' journey away; we'll leave tomorrow at sunrise.

Yamuna: Very well, then, we shall proceed as you have requested.

SCENE SEVEN

The Treasure

SCENE SEVEN

The Treasure

(Rama Mishra and King walk around stage)

Rama: We have been walking all day and it is getting late. We should stop here for the night. You set up the camp and I will read from the Bhagavad-Gétâ, as I do every day. (Rama Mishra walks to the front of the stage with his back to the king

and reads aloud. King becomes enchanted and listens, remembering his childhood)

Yamuna: It has been so many years since I have heard these sweet words of Lord Krishna. In my childhood, I too used to read them as a regular daily function. Hearing them again from you has brought forward a flood of such wonderful and happy memories! In comparison to such a natural happiness, all my wealth, women and kingly pleasures seem dry! Rama Mishra, I want to experience this happiness again! I want to experience love of God again! I don't want my kingdom, I don't want my position and prestige; these things are a distraction from the real goal of life! I don't even want my grandfather's treasure! I just want to become your disciple and to learn to love God! Please, will you accept me?

Rama: No, I have given your grandfather my word that I will deliver this treasure to you. I must fulfil his request, and keep my vow intact. Now, let us continue our journey together. (Rama Mishra leads Yamuna around the stage) Ah, we have finally arrived! What you are about to see is the greatest treasure in the world! But, it can only be appreciated by those who have a pure heart and are free from lust, anger and greed. (backdrop opens at the back of stage, revealing the Dieties of Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna)

Yamuna: O my Lord, although I have forgotten You for so many long years, today I am surrendering unto You. I am Your sincere and serious servant, please accept me. My dear Lord, from this day I am Yours!

My dear Lord, I may be living within some body as a human being or as a demigod, but whatever mode of life, I do not mind, because these bodies are simply by-products of the three modes of material nature, and I, who am in possession of these bodies, am surrendering myself unto You. (Nectar of Devotion, page 98)

My dear Lord, I know that the gigantic universe and gigantic space and time within the universe are covered by the ten layers of the material elements, each layer ten times larger than the previous one. The three material modes of nature, the Garbhodakashayi Vishnu, the Kshirodakashayi Vishnu, the Maha-Vishnu and beyond Them, the spiritual sky and its spiritual planets, known as Vaikuntha, and the Brahman effulgence in that spiritual sky—all of these taken together are nothing but a small exhibition of Your potency. (Nectar of Devotion, page 186-187)

Since I have begun to enjoy these transcendental exchanges of love, which are always newer and newer, whenever I remember the pleasure of past sex life, my lips curl and I wish to spit on the idea! (Nectar of Devotion, page 278)

Narrator: Yamunacharya never went back to his kingdom, and from that day onward fully dedicated himself to redeveloping his lost love for Krishna. He composed the famous book of devotional Sanskrit poetry named Stotra-Ratna,

from which the above verses are taken. Yamunacharya is remembered to this day as a renowned saint, and his legacy continues to serve as an inspiration for millions who are aspiring on the path of devotion.

The End

Bilvamangala Öhäkura (#1)

Bilvamangala Öhäkura (#1)

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CAST: Bilvamangala Öhäkura, Chintamani, Devotee Girl, Brahmana, Brahmana's Wife, Gopal (Bilvamangala's servant), 2 Friends of Bilvamangala, Sri Krishna.

SCENE ONE

Bilvamangala's house

SCENE ONE

Bilvamangala's house

(Bilvamangala is with two friends after attending his father's funeral)

1st Friend: (shaking Bilvamangala's hand vigorously and warmly) Your father was a man of great repute, Bilvamangala. His memory will not quickly disappear. As his dearest son and heir, you could do no worse than to follow his example.

2nd Friend: Be an upright son, make good your father's name, and trust in the will of Providence, who levels all men, it seems.

1st Friend: We must depart, Bilvamangala; already there are signs of a storm appearing in the evening sky. Take rest early tonight. Your mind must be very tired from the day's affairs. (the two friends exit)

Bilvamangala: (sits wearily, runs hands through hair) Withered by the cruel winds of time we are so paltry in our insignificance! Controlled by cosmic forces, we are powerless to act! Where is there a haven from this mire of sorrow? Where to rest this very brow on this night of grief and sadness? Chintamani! Chintamani! So long have I tarried from your soft-eyed glances; my heart is even now aflame with longing just to touch you! In the midst of the darkness of my distress, you are as the cooling moonshine — a soothing balm to my aches and pains! Wait no longer, my love... Gopal! Gopal! Where is that servant of mine? (Gopal, a house servant, enters) Come here immediately. Fetch my cloak and walking shoes. The time for lamentation and despairing words is gone.

Gopal: My Lord, dearest master, you command and I must obey, but what are these words I hear so hastily spoken? Today there is due cause for reverence and respect upon your father's sad demise. We cannot so impinge upon the law of custom that is held so sacred.

Bilvamangala: (thinks) Your sentiment is founded truly on the pillar of tradition. And yet I say I will follow this formality no more. There are no rites, no rituals that can hold me now.

Gopal: Dear Lord, there is no good that can come of this! Master, there is a terrible storm outside! (pulls back curtains to reveal storm outside) To wander out in such a tempest would tempt the very hand of Death himself to tear you limb from limb! This turbulence is an ill omen! It would be folly...

Bilvamangala: Enough! Enough! I will have no more of this insurrection! A servant must follow the instructions his master provides. Be gone! Do as I say! (claps hands. Gopal exits in a hurry) Tonight I will be in the lap of my love, my lady, my life — Chintamani!

SCENE TWO

Outside in the storm

SCENE TWO

Outside in the storm

(Storm effects. Enter Bilvamangala, breathing hard)

Bilvamangala: This darkness engulfs my very soul! It seems the very heavens have torn asunder and pour forth a vale of torrents! Just hear the angry voice of Indra bellowing his fury, giving warnings in the sky! Tonight the very earth is reeling, bemoaning her position!

That I commit some wrong I cannot deny. My action is questionable by some. But... Chintamani is waiting... for one who is thirsty for affection, she is the source of all sustenance. Amidst all the darkness of this wretched world, she is the beacon of our hope! But wait... (breathing hard) Yonder rushing stream has burst its narrow banks, and now has spread its flowing waters across my path! What was yesterday a dusty road is now a deep and dangerous pool — a lake too wide to wade across in safety!

Ah! A log is here... some branch from a tree, come to assist me in my journey! O Chintamani, there is no elemental force to match my desire for you! There is no storm that can prevent our meeting! Part your waters, Varuna-deva, Chintamani is waiting! (leaps astride "log")

I am coming, Chintamani! My love! My... This log gives off a foul stench in truth. There are some vermin abundant in these waters. Of that, my nostrils do not doubt. (screams) AAAHHH! What bloodied fiend from hell is this which confronts my vision?! His eyeballs like red coals are hanging from their sockets! It is some carcass of a human form that I embrace as a carrier!!! Chintamani, when will this nightmare finish? When shall I reach your sweet bower and deliverance from distress? Chintamani... (reaches Chintamani's house)

At last my journeys end approaches. This garden wall may seem a block to one who is of less resolve than I; but even as I view the light of the lamp in Chintamani's room, I feel the strength of an army of men surging through my limbs. This creeper will provide an easy ladder to the top. There... I would climb Mount Meru itself to reach you, my love... Just one more step! This creeper feels most strange... (hiss of a snake, he screams) AAAHHH!!! The very creepers are snakes and serpents! But, I cannot be defeated now! My heart is pounding! My mind is reeling! My senses are on fire for Chintamani! Chintamani! I am yours! (knocks and pounds on door)

SCENE THREE

Chintamani's Apartment

SCENE THREE

Chintamani's Apartment

(There is a fire, some chairs, a couch, a mirror on the wall. Bilvamangala is seated with a blanket around him)

Chintamani: (opens door) Bilvamangala! What a surprise! You must have travelled through the storm. Come inside! Come! You must be so cold! The warmth of the fire must be very pleasing to you after your night's ordeal!

Bilvamangala: Chintamani, it is the fire of love in my heart which is raging. Your sweet face is itself the fuel...

Chintamani: Bilvamangala, I have no wish to dampen your enthusiasm, but reason commands it! (looking in mirror on wall) A woman within this material world is just a dead body. In fact, this body is subject to disease, old age, and death. It is the cause of suffering to the eternal living being, who is never born and never dies — your immortal spirit soul.

Bilvamangala: (aghast) Chintamani, I have journeyed through a great darkness just to see you tonight! I saw you as the sweetest panacea to all my ills and miseries! Do not elude me now... Come, sit by me.

Chintamani: Dear friend, please give up this anxiety which is caused by ignorance of the self. This body is a covering, a bag of painted skin. Under the skin one finds

bunches of muscles, bundles of bones and pools of sticky blood — mixed with stool, bile, urine, mucus and rank polluted air. Enjoyed by crawling worms and germs, this body is accepted by a foolish man as his beloved. In sheer, unfounded misunderstanding, he accepts such a body as his dear companion.

Bilvamangala: Chintamani, my love, you are a shelter from the storm and throes of this miserable world of dying men! Whose arms can I embrace but yours?

Chintamani: Do you not see that these arms are made of elements five-fold, controlled by eternal time as well as by the modes of this material nature? How then can I, being already in the jaws of the serpent, be a source of sustenance to others? My dear Bilvamangala, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, in his form as eternal time that approaches us all.

Bilvamangala: What you speak flies as shafts of truth! They illuminate my shame! But what acts must I perform to remove this illusion? (desperately) What must I do?

Chintamani: “He is certainly a first-class man who awakens and understands either by himself or from others the falsity and misery of this miserable world, and thus leaves home and depends fully on the Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, residing with his heart.” (S.B. 1.13.27) Please, therefore, leave for Vrindavan immediately and humbly offer all your misdirected feelings of devotional affection to the Lord!

Bilvamangala: I will go now to Vrindavan!

SCENE FOUR

A Forest

SCENE FOUR

A Forest

Bilvamangala: “There is no man on earth as fortunate as I, who am no more attracted by the lure of Cupid's glance. The cruel chains of fear and lust, which bound this heart so hard, are broken by the hallowed name of Krishna, so sweet and nectarine.” (sweeping his arm) Just see the perfect artistry of Krishna's great creation, so properly maintained and managed by His magical design. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. He is all-pervading and everything is situated within Him, but He is still present in His own abode! How this heart is swiftly soaring to reach that holy place and there surrender fully in the grace of Krishna's lotus feet!

But now there is some time to sit and rest and taste of Him, the complete essence in the water of this stream. (he drinks. While drinking, a woman walks up from behind him. He sees her reflection in the clear water) But wait! What form is this,

attracting my eyes so? Is this some trick of nature? Some illusory display? Or is it some remembrance from a dark and dismal past? Does some young girl I did profane return to cause me anguish? Holy Name, protect me from illusion!

Girl: (singing) Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare... Jaya Radhe! Jaya Radhe!...

(she collects water from the stream, while Bilvamangala speaks as follows while looking at the girl every so often in a lusty way. She disappears after a few moments)

Bilvamangala: O traitor mind, what horror now lies lurking in your deep abyss! These senses, like some snakes from hell, are eager for their prey — and I am caught, bewildered, enveloped in their coils. But wait! There is no cause for undue sorrow! Vrindavan can wait. I must pursue this elegance which tantalizes so. I will follow her a while. (they exit)

SCENE FIVE

A Brahmana's house

SCENE FIVE

A Brahmana's house

(Very simple home scene. The Brahmana sits alone reading scriptures)

Brahmana: (reads) “Those who are entangled in the snare of household life are dutifully bound to offer all respects to that swan-like class of saintly men, who sever all undue connections with this temporary world.” (thinks) This injunction calls for some further deliberation. (Wife enters with water and is busy in background)

I should attend to higher spheres of life than trading in grains. My mercantile mentality demands assistance from some sage, some counsellor of the twice-born caste who can cultivate my transcendental understanding. And yet what chance do I have of receiving such a visitation? There are but few sages in this dry land, so destitute and barren! (there is knocking on door) But who is this making such loud noise? Am I a miracle to behold, that Fortune will address us so? (opens door)

Bilvamangala: Most noble sir, all blessings be upon you. Can this weary pilgrim beg shelter from the chilling evening air?

Brahmana: (ushering him in) O holy sir, it is indeed a wondrous web that is woven that brings you here this eve! Pray be seated, you are our honored guest. Good wife, bring fresh water! This traveller should slake his thirst. His throat is dry and parched, no doubt, from dust upon the road.

Bilvamangala: (to himself) Such charming hospitality — such a handsome couple!

Brahmana: O venerable sage, you are embarked on the godly path, it seems from your attire. I am compelled, therefore, to respectfully inquire how we can assist you on your solitary quest?

Bilvamangala: Dear sir, I am alone and yet my cup is full; it overflows the brim. I have enough and more. But to comply with your request, I will express one claim: depart this room and leave me with your wife. (he drinks water)

Brahmana: Extravagant remarks I have not known from such as you! Is this some joke you play?

Bilvamangala: I am determined, sir, upon this point and hold to scripture as my judge. It will support my request: “Those who are encumbered by the burdens of familial affairs must offer all assistance to those who are ventured on the renounced order of life.”

Brahmana: (aside) This is some test from Providence, come to prove my faith. A mendicant is above contempt; his position holds secure. I must surrender to his will and not incur his enmity. (to Wife) Dear Wife, you best bear bravely with me. Do whatever he says. (he goes out)

Wife: (to husband as he exits) My lord, this is not just! Delay such action, I implore! (looking at Bilvamangala) This meeting is not proper! (Bilvamangala walks to her, places finger underneath her chin)

Bilvamangala: You are a pretty creature — finely-formed, dark-eyed. But let's remove your silken veil. (unravelling her head dress) Don't hide your precious curls. Your features, smooth as pearl, golden as the rising sun, bewilder my intelligence. (he turns away from her) There is only one, perhaps, who could surpass such countenance... Chintamani. Chintamani... That name echoes deep within my mind! Her words are tolling even now: “Dead body, bones, blood, bile! Go to Vrindavan!” But wait, is this a madness that overcomes me? Let loose your raven locks, O Devi — I will no more detain myself!

Wife: My lord, I... I cannot.

Bilvamangala: (firmly) Give me your hairpins! (she does so and he turns away from her and toward audience, holding up the pins) A plague upon my eyes, these pits of lust! They are a curse upon my soul! Their torment now is finished! Their false deceit I will no longer bear witness! (he puts out his eyes with the pins. Agonized scream. Wife screams, Brahmana runs in and they panic)

Brahmana: What calamity is this which befalls us now?

Wife: God help us, Lord, he did himself inflict this ghastly wounding... I cannot...
(she bursts into tears and holds onto husband)

Bilvamangala: (slowly) This is no cause for grief. That these base orbs of bulbous slime are smashed, brings freedom from a most gross tyranny! Timelessly entrapped within some passing form, choking in its murky depths, the loving spirit soul is dragged, cajoled by jackals of desire. What degradations, sour and soiled, have they not performed?

Infamous I am, a worthless fool, a thief whose wits themselves are stolen by illusion. (pause) But there is no contemplation of this temporary work which will suffice now. No more I'm doomed to leer and pant through these dark, windowed holes, that were not made to understand or see, but to own. I am released from misery! Now I may actually go onwards to Vrindavan!

SCENE SIX

In Vrindavan Forest

SCENE SIX

In Vrindavan Forest

(Bilvamangala is sitting in a grove in the forest, singing Hare Krishna)

Bilvamangala: (he stops singing and sighs) Atop the waves of a myriad worlds lies the lotus of Gokula, where Krishna is the whorl. Here alone lies solace, after aeons of distress. Gopal Govinda Rama, Sri Madhusudana. (sings twice, then sound of a flute, enter Sri Krishna)

Sri Krishna: (aside) There sits My dear friend, Bilvamangala Öhäkura. He sings My names with great devotion. Let me offer him some sweet, fresh milk and please him in that way. (approaching Bilvamangala) Excuse Me, sir, My friends and I like your singing very much. Please accept this milk I've brought for you to taste.

Bilvamangala: Whose voice is this, so light and fresh? It lingers in the air. Come close, please, O gentle soul. Describe Yourself to this old blind fool.

Sri Krishna: (hesitating) I'm just a clumsy boy that idles in the fields. I tend the village cows and lark with friends in Gokula's meadows... But look! The sky is crimson gold. It's dusk. I hear My father's voice — he calls Me home to bed. More milk I'll bring later. (He disappears)

Bilvamangala: Is this a boy who attracts my mind? What sacred spell He's cast? Hanging on the forest breeze, His flute bestirs my soul and pierces through this dismal heart in ripples of sweet bliss! Is this my Lord present here? That primal source of all, whose fount of love is not measured, His virtues not yet told? Dare I dream that despair is at its last, that countless wounds from nameless deeds are

healed by His great grace? Is this my Lord, this spirited lad that stands before me now? (sound of Krishna's flute, enter Sri Krishna)

Sri Krishna: My dearest sir, I have more milk — fresh, full of cream. Please take it if you will. (He holds out cup to Bilvamangala, who catches hold of His wrist)

Bilvamangala: Come closer, let me know You more. (he puts his hands out towards Krishna's face, but Krishna sneaks away, dodging Bilvamangala. Krishna runs around him smiling)

Bilvamangala: Hah! I know who You are!

Sri Krishna: (laughing) Dear sir, I am just a simple youth!

Bilvamangala: I know You, Lord! You may escape my withered hands, but You'll not elude my heart! Ohhh, ohhh — my heart! (Bilvamangala has a heart attack and dies before Nandulal. Krishna's small cowherd boyfriends enter, singing Govinda Jaya Jaya)

Sri Krishna: Come, Bilvamangala, it's time to go home now. (kirtan)

The End

Bilvamangala Öhäkura (#2)

“Chintamani”

Bilvamangala Öhäkura (#2)

“Chintamani”

* * * * *

CAST: 2 crematorium Attendants, Sadhu, Aunt, Priest, Bilvamangala, Chintamani, Thaka (Chintamani's servant), Somagiri, Somagiri's Disciple, Ahalya, Ahalya's Girlfriend, Merchant (Ahalya's husband), Nandulal.

SCENE ONE

The Cremation Grounds

SCENE ONE

The Cremation Grounds

(Two gaunt attendants tend the pits. Smoke and gloom pervades. A Shaivite Sadhu sits to one side)

Attendant 1: So, Shankarji, whose body are we burning today?

Attendant 2: I don't know. Oh yeah, I remember — it's Bilvamangala's father. You know Bilvamangala. He's that brahmana who is always running after that girl, Chintamani. He spent a fortune on her — spent all his father's hard-earned money and mortgaged the house. He finally broke the old man's heart. Shame, shame.

Attendant 1: Tsk, tsk, tsk. Why would anyone give everything to a woman?

Attendant 2: When you're in love you'll do anything, no matter how crazy. Haven't you ever felt the pangs of love?

Attendant 1: No, but I've felt the pangs of hunger! I'd do anything for money, but for love? Never.

Attendant 2: Listen, Scatterbrains, you better make sure you bust open the skull better than you did last time, or else we don't get paid. You gotta pierce it right between the eyes, like this. See? Otherwise the brains will explode all over the family!

Attendant 1: That's what happens when you fall in love — you lose your brains.

Attendant 2: Look, you handle this right, and I'll split the remains with you 50-50. I heard the old man was loaded.

Attendant 1: What do you mean? Split what?

Attendant 2: The teeth, stupid! He's got a gold mine in his mouth.

Attendant 1: Okay, it's a deal, we split the teeth 50-50 and I keep my mouth shut. Hey, what's that sadhu sitting there for?

Attendant 2: Shhh, don't disturb him.

Attendant 1: But he must be hungry and thirsty. Sadhuji! Sadhuji! Ah, Sadhuji, drink? Some water? You are here all night in the midst of the smoke and heat of the fires of the dead.

Sadhu: (opening eyes now burning with rage) Om Shivohum! Why do you disturb Babaji?

Attendant 1: I touch your feet; please don't curse me!

Sadhu: Hmmm, soon I will reach siddhi.

Attendant 1: You want siddhis? Is that what you have come here for, Sadhuji? This is a bad place. Only dog-eaters like me work here. All bad, filthy.

Sadhu: (softening) I have done all types of tapasya in all the holy tirthas. I sat in the center of 5 fires in the heat of summer — 4 fires on 4 sides, plus the 5th one. (pause)

Attendant 1: The 5th fire?

Sadhu: The scorching sun, for 2 months straight. Then in winter I was at Gangotri, high in the Himalayas, up to my neck in ice-cold waters. I sat on a bed of thorns that always pricked my flesh. I endured all these difficult austerities, but I always had one disturbance.

Attendant 1: What is that, Sadhuji?

Sadhu: Kama! Lust himself! He is everywhere! Kama — he is so mean-minded that he even enters the holy places. Have you not seen the street dogs? Old hairless mongrels with open cuts, kicked and beaten with stones on the footpath — but still he will go limping after a bitch, his heart infatuated with Kama. Ahh, I will drive lust out of my life by staying here in the cremation grounds.

Attendant 1: Ooooh, Baba, why in this place? Nothing holy here.

Sadhu: Yes, yes, ha, ha! Who can have lusty thoughts here? Everywhere is the stench of burning flesh, the sight of bodies melting, breasts peeling off like mango skin, and brains sizzling. Yes, who can think of sex? This is the most sickening place. He won't come here. He won't come here. He wouldn't dare!

Attendants: Who, Sadhu? Who?

Sadhu: Kama, of course, you fools, you chandalas. Go back to your work and leave me alone!

Attendant 2: Look, here comes the funeral now. I bet that guy's got at least a dozen gold teeth.

Attendant 1: But where's Bilvamangala? I don't see him in the procession.

Attendant 2: Ah, he's probably out with that prostitute. I wouldn't put it past him!

Attendant 1: There he is, dawdling in the back. Looks like he's trying to make a getaway. (funeral procession draws closer. Corpse is carried in and placed onto the funeral pyre. Sounds of thunder and lightning)

Priest: I think it is going to rain very soon. We should begin right away! If you had gotten here any later, we could not light the fire. We must be quick. Where is the son?

Aunt: Bilvamangala!

Priest: Where is Bilvamangala?

Bilvamangala: Here I am. Please hurry. It is getting late. I don't like this, Auntie. It looks like a terrible storm. Let me go!

Priest: It is the son's duty to perform the funeral rites for his departed father. I do not know what you are thinking of, and why you are so impatient, but unless you perform this cremation ceremony, you are not a worthy son.

Aunt: I know what you are thinking of Bilvamangala — and I'm disgusted with you! I know, you are off to see that prostitute, Chintamani!

Bilvamangala: No! No! Please let me go!

Aunt: No, it's your duty. Stay here and do your dead father one last service. Pray for his soul's safe journey to a higher birth in the heavenly planets, or back to Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. Doesn't this place sober you up? This place of death. No, you are mad, mad for a woman, and even the sight of your own dead father doesn't teach you that this life is but a journey to death. A molten hot form of a woman awaits you in hell as a reward for your lust, Bilvamangala.

Bilvamangala: Stop it! Stop it!

Aunt: You stop! Just see your father's body. Look at it. (addresses corpse) O my brother, what did you do to deserve a son like this?

Bilvamangala: It's no use, Auntie, I can't look at it.

Aunt: What makes you so squeamish? This body is only a lump of flesh and bones. The real person is the soul. You have never really seen your father — only his body. Now look at it and see it for what it is. When the soul was in it, your father was a handsome man — but now only this empty shell remains behind. The real beautiful person is the soul, not the body. Love the soul and be free of this curse.

Bilvamangala: No, no, I can't. Let me go. (runs off in tears)

Aunt: Priest, I will finish the duties for my dead brother.

Priest: Here, light the fire with this torch. (thunder continues to next scene, continuous rain)

SCENE TWO

Riverbank near the cremation ghat

SCENE TWO

Riverbank near the cremation ghat

(Raging storm)

Bilvamangala: Oh, I'm no good, but that scene was was horrible! My father's dead body... I couldn't stand the sight. But, now I'm away! I'm free of them. Free to see Chintamani. She's just there — across the river and over the wall. The storm won't stop me. Nothing can stop me now! If only there were some boat. Can't I even find a log? At any other time there would be dozens lying here by the river. Can't I find just one? Oh I'm in luck, a boatman. Hey you, get up and take me to that house across the river. Wake up, you son of a pig! (pick him up and shakes him) Haven't you ever been in love? Huh? Speak! (slaps him) Ahh, he's dead... Now what shall I do? I know. That's it, of course. Dead bodies float! This is perfect — just as if I had it all planned out. O mighty river, let me pass! Now, now, O Chintamani... (jumps in river with corpse) Thank you, you smelly maggot. I'll pay you in you next life. Wouldn't Auntie like that?

SCENE THREE

Outside Chintamani's house

SCENE THREE

Outside Chintamani's house

(Storm is still raging)

Bilvamangala: Finally, I made it to the house of my dear Chintamani. Oh no, all the gates are locked! She probably closed them early because of the storm. I'll just climb over the wall and then I'll be in her arms again. Great! It's a rope hanging from the wall. Very strange, it has the texture of snake skin, and it feels like it's beginning to stretch out of shape. Whatever it was, I made it to the top... Whoah! (he falls through window) Help! Help! Open up! Let me in! Chintamani!

Chintamani: What's the matter, Thaka? What's the matter?

Thaka: Madam, I think it's a thief. Somebody fell and is crying out in pain. (Bilvamangala crashes through door)

Chintamani: What? Who is it?

Bilvamangala: It's me, it's me! I'm hurt! Oh, Chintamani!

Chintamani: Who are you?

Thaka: Oh, it's your young gentleman friend!

Bilvamangala: It's me — your favorite lover!

Chintamani: Mohan? Sudhir?

Bilvamangala: Mohan? Sudhir? No, it's me — Bilva! I'm Bilva!

Chintamani: What's that? Bilvamangala? The fool's come to tease the life out of me! What makes him groan like that? You idiot, why do you groan like that?

Thaka: Madam, he fell from the top of the wall. He must have hurt himself badly.

Chintamani: Don't worry, he'll live — if only to cause me trouble. Come, Thaka, take him by the hand and help him get up. Now — get up!

Thaka: Horrible! Whew! I can't stand it. What is that loathsome smell. You smell horrible! (sprays perfume around) What is it?

Bilvamangala: I don't know. Chintamani... I had to see you.

Chintamani: You are mad. How in the world did you cross the river in this raging storm?

Bilvamangala: I love you, Chintamani. Just to see you, I jumped in the river and floated on a log. I love you.

Chintamani: Do you expect me to believe that? And what is that horrid odor on your body?

Bilvamangala: It's from the dead man.

Chintamani: From the dead man? From what dead man? Did you kill someone?

Bilvamangala: I floated on a dead body. I didn't want to tell you, but that "log" was actually a corpse. O Chintamani, I love you.

Chintamani: You are crazy! And you're bleeding!

Bilvamangala: Oh, I cut myself on the wall.

Chintamani: But how did you climb over the wall?

Bilvamangala: Why Chintamani, you left a rope there fastened to the wall.

Chintamani: Thaka! Thaka! Did you hear the joke! I left a rope on my wall so men could climb up! Just imagine!

Bilvamangala: It is true, Chintamani — I found a rope there, and I climbed up the wall.

Chintamani: Thaka, I have never been troubled so much in all my life — never! For weeks he has been pestering me. And when I have asked him for money, he has had nothing for me but excuses. He says he hasn't a thing left, but still he comes. And now he brings a ladder and scales my wall!

Bilvamangala: It's the truth, Chintamani, I had no ladder. If you don't believe me, take a look for yourself!

Chintamani: Where? Let me see. Oh Thaka, Thaka, it's a snake! A cobra!

Bilvamangala: What? A cobra?

Thaka: Madam, I know what's happened. If a cobra has his mouth in a hole, no amount of pulling by the tail can drag him out of it. This snake's been pulled so hard he's given up the ghost.

Chintamani: You got up with the help of a deadly snake. Why do you stare at me that way?

Bilvamangala: Chintamani, perhaps you have never given your heart to anyone. If you had, you would know there are times when nothing matters: rope or snake — what's the difference?

Chintamani: You are crazy!

Bilvamangala: And did you never find out till now that I am crazy? You sleep, and all night long I gaze upon your face. If I but hear you sigh, the whole world seems empty to me in comparison. All that I possessed has been sold for debt; I have not cared. I have clothed myself with gossip and ill-fame as with a garment. And still you have not known that I am crazy! O Chintamani, Chintamani!

Chintamani: What makes you talk like that?

Bilvamangala: I love you, Chintamani. I'm madly in love.

Chintamani: This is not love, but lust. I doubt you no longer. You are mad indeed! You have neither shame, not hatred, not fear. You grasp a corpse, thinking it a log, and you grasp a snake, thinking it a rope. What am I worth that you risked your life? Great endeavors are for winning great goals. Heroes struggle in battle to win valuable treasures; kings wage war for achieving expansive power in the world. You risked everything for me — a mere prostitute. You mad fool! One life can be risked for the sake of the family. The family can be sacrificed for the sake of the village. The village may be sacrificed for the sake of the nation, but everything should be sacrificed for God — only God.

Bilvamangala: What do you mean?

Chintamani: If you had taken half this much trouble on the battlefield, you would have been a great hero. If you had gone through all this for God, people would call you a great saint... Ah, what might you not have attained if you had turned your thoughts to the lotus feet of the Lord instead of to me — a degraded prostitute. What am I? I'm not even this body that you stare at so fondly, which will grow old and die. This body passes, but devotion to the Lord is with us forever.

Bilvamangala: How is that?

Chintamani: A rich man may endeavor his whole life, but at the time of death he must leave it all and be born again naked. But Krishna-bhakti is never lost. Even a little trouble undertaken for the Lord's sake will never be forgotten by Him. If a devotee chants while lying down, the Lord sits by such a devotee. If the devotee sits up and takes the name of the Lord, the Lord stands by the devotee. If the devotee stands and chants the Holy Name of Hari, the Lord dances, and if the devotee dances and chant "Hari, Hari" the Lord embraces such an advanced soul.

Bilvamangala: What are you saying?

Chintamani: It is true.

Bilvamangala: You are not the same Chintamani I used to know. I feel that I know you now in a different way. Who are you and who am I?

Chintamani: I am actually your guru. I have followed you from your past life into this life to bring you to your perfection. For this is your last birth, and I may now return to my Lord, Sri Krishna. Your soul is safe now. Do not be shaken again. In your last life you were my disciple, but I detected the demon of lust deeply rooted in your heart. Now you are enlightened by the events of this night. I had to take another birth in the material world just to show you the truth. Do not come back again to this place with lusty motives.

Bilvamangala: Then, to what have I given my heart? For what have I embraced a corpse? For this body! When it is finished it floats upon the river, becomes food for a jackal, or turns to ashes, and the wind simply scatters it in all directions. O God, tell me where Thou art and let me surrender unto Thee — utterly... heart and soul! Where shall I go? Alas! I am so degraded that I made my spiritual master come back here and save me. O Chintamani, where shall I go now?

Chintamani: Go and seek Somagiri Pandit. He will finish my work.

SCENE FOUR

The Ashram of Somagiri Pandit

SCENE FOUR

The Ashram of Somagiri Pandit

(Somagiri sits in front of his bhajan kutir, surrounded by his disciples singing Hari-kirtan: “Govinda Hari, Gopala Hari, Jaya Jaya Deva Hari.” Bilvamangala humbly sits by the disciples and joins in. The disciples move away from him more and more until Somagiri sees the disturbance and stops the kirtan)

Somagiri: What is that? Who is this man?

Disciple: He is Bilvamangala, Guruji, a depraved man, very sinful. He was driven away by the prostitute named Chintamani, and in despair he has taken the life of renunciation. Who knows how long this frivolous mood of detachment will last?

Somagiri: (angry) Why do you say that? Have you not heard me giving this teaching?

vartamana ca yat papam yad bhitan yad bhavisyate,

tat sarvam surdihatpesa govinda mala kirtanat

All sins past and present are burned up in the fire of Govinda-kirtan! What is more powerful? The curse of sin, or the purifying Name of Sri Hari?

Disciple: The Holy Name!

Bilvamangala: (shakes head) I am low and depraved. I bow down at your feet. Please instruct me.

Somagiri: Everyone is very lowly. Do not lament, just come here and listen. (Bilvamangala sits next to Somagiri, who sings:) Bhaja hunre mana sri nandanandana... etc.

Bilvamangala: Oh, Master, Guruji, I am so fallen, but you are giving me your mercy. What should I do? I am your disciple. (he bows, holding Somagiri's feet)

Somagiri: “The head, though crowned with a silk turban, is only a heavy burden if not bowed down before the Lord or His representative who can award mukti... The eyes which do not look at the form of Vishnu are like those on the plumes of a peacock, and the legs which do not move to the holy places where the Lord is remembered are considered to be like tree trunks.”

(S.B. 2.3.21-22)

Use your legs, then, and go to Vrindavan, where you can see the beautiful Deities of the Lord. But don't let your wicked eyes lead you astray, for even the wooden image of a woman can cause lusty desires! Never mind about your past sinful activities, Bilvamangala, but do not sin again.

Bilvamangala: Yes, master, I promise.

Somagiri: Then go to Vrindavan. (resumes singing as Bilvamangala bows down and exits)

Bilvamangala: Ah, my mind! In no way can I make you remain quiet. Very well. Wander, then, where you will — but I shall be keeping watch over you. And you, tongue — cease not to utter the Holy Name. (sits in meditation with eyes closed. Two women enter — Ahalya and a Girlfriend)

Girlfriend: Look, sister, look at that tramp!

Ahalya: Oh! Don't say that. He must be some holy man. Don't you see he is meditating?

Girlfriend: Heavens, no! He is mad. (to Bilvamangala) Hey there, you crazy man! Are you hungry?

Bilvamangala: Hush! Is there no quiet here? (as he opens his eyes, he sees Ahalya, then says to himself) Are you still tempted, O eyes? And are you, O mind, still the slave of the eyes?

Girlfriend: (to Ahalya) Look, sister, the man is staring at you. Come — his eyes are red! He may be drunk. (the two women walk away)

Bilvamangala: (to himself) Eyes, let me see how long you will keep me enslaved! (starts following the women)

Girlfriend: O sister, he is following us!

Ahalya: Come! Let's go inside the house. (they exit)

Bilvamangala: Ah, eyes, love's topmost warriors, you bring home a deadly serpent as if it were a friend. Fretting to find happiness, the deluded mind suspect not your guile and makes room for his enemy in the very shrine of my heart — where God alone should dwell. There the serpent distills its venom. Again this evil thing takes place: again the eyes, by beauty tempted, lead home the serpent; and again, though sorely suffering, the foolish heart bids it welcome. To such a sad round of misery there is no end; no respite is there from passion. Still the eyes deceitfully declare: "Lo, here is that treasure which, once possessed, brings peace." Powerful beyond words is habit! Mind, you are a beast!

SCENE FIVE

Before a Merchant's house

SCENE FIVE

Before a Merchant's house

(Bilvamangala knocks at the door, Merchant answers)

Merchant: Greetings, O Sage. Where is your home?

Bilvamangala: Whenever I stay, that is my home.

Merchant: Have you renounced the world?

Bilvamangala: Yes.

Merchant: Please accept my hospitality.

Bilvamangala: I have come for that.

Merchant: It is my good fortune. Pray enter.

Bilvamangala: But I have a strange request.

Merchant: Kindly tell me what it is.

Bilvamangala: First, allow me to introduce myself. I am a degenerate soul. A prostitute would not love me, and in desperation I left the world.

Merchant: Whoever you may be, you are my guest — God himself in the form of a guest. Kindly come in.

Bilvamangala: I have not yet told you why I have come here.

Merchant: Please tell me.

Bilvamangala: It is your wife. I have beheld her beauty. From the moment I cast my eyes upon her, I have been restless. Hoping always to see her again, I wait and wait. If, then, it be your desire to serve your guest, promise that you will leave your wife alone with me. Let this woman, adorned with jewels, grant my wishes tonight. Thus I lay open to you my depraved self; do, sir, as you will.

Merchant: (aside) What new test, O Lord, is this! Speak Thou to my heart. Shall my guest go away unsatisfied? Who knows in which form Thou may come to try us? My guest shall not be disappointed. Virtue is reality; by its precept I must abide. (aloud) Sir, please enter. Honored guest, I yield to your desire. Tonight you shall be husband to my wife.

Bilvamangala: (to himself) See now how my eyes have again made of me a beast. I have yet to learn how far they can drag me down! (he exits)

SCENE SIX

Merchant's inner apartment

SCENE SIX

Merchant's inner apartment

Merchant: My dear Ahalya, prepare yourself. Our guest would like to enjoy you.

Ahalya: O my lord, what are you saying? You want me to give myself to him — a stranger? How can I do this? Chastity is the treasured virtue of a dharma-patni.

Merchant: Yes, dharma... it is our dharma to receive this holy man, our guest. Athita devo bhavan yajna tapasya — the dharma of the brahmachari is to perform sacrifice; the dharma of the sannyasi is to perform austerities; and the dharma of the grihasthas is to give in charity. This man is a sadhu, so I do not know — perhaps the Lord is testing us. Perhaps the Lord is disguised as this sadhu. The dharma of a wife is to obey her husband. The dharma of the householder is to satisfy their guests, so there is no sin in the performance of our dharma.

Ahalya: Very well, I shall obey. You are my husband, my lord, that I know. I shall do your will. Whether is be good or evil is for God to judge. (approaches Bilvamangala) I am here; you may do with me as you like. You are our honored guest.

Bilvamangala: O these eyes! These eyes! I cannot control them. Better to destroy them.

Merchant: What is the matter? What is the matter? (to wife) What did you do? What did you say?

Ahalya: Nothing. Nothing!

Merchant: Is she not pleasing to you?

Bilvamangala: Yes, and her hairpins are very lovely. May I see one? And the other one? (holds both hairpins) Yes, these are very beautiful. (pierces his eyes with the pins) Now, I'm free! Free! Now I only have eyes for Krishna! Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya, caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri-gurave namah — I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master pierced my eyes with the pins of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. I must go to Vrindavan. How will I find Vrindavan?

Merchant: Mukam koroti vacalam pangum langhayate girim, yat kripa tam aham vande sri gurum dina-taranam — By the grace of Sri Guru, a lame man can scale mountains and a dumb mute can speak. So by the grace of your spiritual master, you are sure to find Vrindavan.

SCENE SEVEN

A forest near Vrindavan

SCENE SEVEN

A forest near Vrindavan

(Bilvamangala is walking blindly in the forest, groping his way, bumping into trees, etc. Krishna enters)

Nandulal: Hey, funny man, where are you going?

Bilvamangala: I want to go to Vrindavan. Can you lead me there?

Nandulal: Yes, I can take you there. (keeps slipping out of Bilvamangala's grasp)

Bilvamangala: Take my hand. You keep slipping away. Let me tie your hand with this cloth, then you won't get away. What is your name?

Nandulal: Nandulal.

Bilvamangala: I can't tie your hand. Hold still!

Nandulal: Oh, funny man, give me the rope. I'll show you how to tie a knot. (ties Bilvamangala's hand onto a tree, thus making him go around in a circle)

Bilvamangala: I've been walking for so long now. I hear bells ringing and the blowing of conchshells. The brahmanas must be performing the evening arati. Another day has come and gone. Aren't we there yet? I'm tired. Let me rest.

Nandulal: No, it's not too far now. Let's go. I promise I'll take you to Vrindavan and you'll meet Krishna for sure. Have you ever heard Krishna play on His flute?

Bilvamangala: No, have you?

Nandulal: I have a flute, I'll play it for you! (He plays on flute)

Bilvamangala: I am eagerly waiting to see that Boy of Vrindavan, whose bodily beauty is captivating the whole universe, whose eyes expanded like lotus petals are always bounded by black eyebrows... and His lips are colored like copper. Through those lips comes a sound vibration which drives one madder than a mad elephant! Oh, I want so much to see im at Vrindavan! (Bilvamangala realizes that Nandulal is actually Krishna) O Nandulal, You naughty Boy! You are very cunning! I recognize You now. You are the Lord of my heart. You may escape these weak hands, but I have You trapped in my heart — and You will not be able to escape!

(Nandulal strikes three-fold bending pose for audience as Bilvamangala utters final verse)

Bilvamangala: All glories to Chintamani and my initiating spiritual master, Somagiri! All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who wears peacock feather in His crown! Under the shade of His lotus feet, which are like desire trees, Jayasri (Radharani) enjoys the transcendental mellow of an eternal consort. (C.C. Adi 1.57, quoting Bilvamangala's Krishna-Karnamritam)

The End

The Disciplic Succession

The Disciplic Succession

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura. Bimala Prasad (Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté), Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, Narendra, Abhay Charan (Çréla Prabhupäda).

(Note: Although this play is unfinished, it can still be performed as is. And anyone is welcome to continue composing the glorification of Çréla Prabhupäda's devotional life story along these lines.)

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, the spiritual master of Çréla Prabhupäda, was born as Bimala Prasad, the son of the great spiritual master named Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura. As Bimala Prasad grew up, he became famous for his erudite devotional scholarship. At the age of 7, he could recite the entire 700 verses of the Bhagavad-Gétä by heart. At 25, he was well versed in Sanskrit, mathematics and astronomy. He wrote many scholarly books and articles. One day, Bimala was sitting with his father:

Bhaktivinoda: My son, I want you go to Gaura Kishor Das Babaji and beg for initiation.

Narrator: So, Bimala Prasad went to the hut in Navadvipa where Çréla Gaura Kishor Das Babaji lived.

Bimala Prasad: (falling at Gaura Kishor's feet, offering obeisances) O my exalted Gurudeva! My father, Kedarnath Datta, has instructed me to seek initiation from you. Please accept me as your disciple.

Gaura Kishor: How can I be your spiritual master? I do not know how to read or write, and you are a great scholar. I cannot accept you. Go back to your father!

Narrator: So, Bimala Prasad became very dejected and returned to his father's home.

Bimala Prasad: Father! He won't accept me as his disciple. He told me to return home.

Bhaktivinoda: Go back and try again. You must be very determined to get his mercy!

Bimala Prasad: Yes, my dear father, I will go.

Narrator: Bimala Prasad goes to Gaura Kishor's hut again and pays obeisances.

Bimala Prasad: My dear master, please, please accept me as your disciple. My father has told me that I must have you as my guru.

Gaura Kishor: No! Go back to your father! I told you I couldn't. Go back!

Bimala Prasad: (returns home) My dear father, no matter what I say, he won't accept me!

Bhaktivinoda: (very angrily) You must become his disciple. If you don't, then don't bother coming back home!

Narrator: Bimala Prasad again went to his spiritual master. This time he was very determined. He waited on a bridge for Gaura Kishor to pass by.

Bimala Prasad: My dear spiritual master, you must give me your initiation. If you do not bless my life, then I will jump off this bridge. My life at present has no value.

Gaura Kishor: Bimala, stop! I just wanted to test your determination. You have pleased me greatly by your sincere desire, so I will immediately give you initiation.

Bimala Prasad: Thank You!

Gaura Kishor: Your name is Varshabhanavi-dayita Das. Always chant Hare Krishna, at least 64 rounds a day, and follow the regulative principles. Preach the absolute truth and keep aside all other works. I give you my blessings.

Bimala Prasad: (pays dandavats) Namo Gaura Kishoraya, etc... (stands up) Jai Gurudeva!

Narrator: Finally receiving initiation, Varshabhanavi-dayita Das joyfully returns to his father to tell him the good news.

Varshabhanavi-dayita Das: Father, by your mercy, I have received the blessings of Çréla Gaura Kishor Das Babaji. He has given me the name Varshabhanavi-dayita Das!

Bhaktivinoda: I am very pleased with you, my son.

Narrator: Thus, Varshabhanavi-dayita Das received initiation from Çréla Gaura Kishor Das Babaji. Later, Gaura Kishor Das passed away in 1915. Afterwards, in 1918, Varshabhanavi-dayita Das took sannyasa before a picture of his spiritual master. (Siddhanta Sarasvaté acts this out) He then assumed the title Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Goswami.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Narrator: While World War I raged on in Europe, 21 year old Abhay Charan De entered Scottish Churches College in Calcutta, India. Abhay had a very rigorous schedule. He had hardly any time for worshipping Lord Krishna, and after some time he joined the political movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. One day, a friend urged Abhay to meet Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Goswami.

Narendra: (insistently) You must come and see Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta! He is a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So many others have gone to hear him, and they all say he is wonderful! We are all eager to get your opinion of him.

Abhay: No, I have seen so many sadhus, I am not going.

Narendra: This sadhu is different. At least come and see for yourself.

Abhay: Alright, Narendra, for you I will go.

Narrator: So, Abhay agreed to go. They walked through the city, and finally they came to the quarters of Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta. When Abhay went in, he saw the tall, slender sadhu sitting there. They offered their dandavats, and while the two friends were still preparing to sit, Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja said:

Bhaktisiddhanta: You are educated young men. Why don't you preach Lord Chaitanya's message in the English language throughout the whole world?

Abhay: Who will hear Lord Chaitanya's message? We are a dependent country. First, India must become independent. Then we can spread Indian culture.

Bhaktisiddhanta: (in a quiet voice) Krishna Consciousness doesn't have to wait for a change in politics, nor is it dependent on who rules. Krishna Consciousness is so important, so exclusively vital, that it cannot wait.

Narrator: Abhay was struck by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté's boldness. The whole world was in chaos. So many notable people agreed with what Abhay said, yet Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja was dismissing everything and everyone as if they were of no consequence.

Abhay: (to Narendra) How could he say such a thing? (he continues to listen)

Bhaktisiddhanta: Whether one power or another rules is a temporary situation. The eternal reality is Krishna Consciousness, and the real self is the spirit soul. No man-made system can actually help humanity. When one takes himself to be the temporary body and regards the nation of his birth as worshipable, he comes under the spell of illusion. The leaders and followers of the world's political movements are simply increasing this illusion. Real welfare work should help prepare a person for his next life and help him re-establish his relationship with the Supreme Lord.

Narrator: Because Abhay was raised in a Vaishnava family, he understood the teachings of Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja, and he concluded that this was the sadhu he had been looking for. Narendra and Abhay talked with Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Maharaja for two hours. Finally it was getting late and they had to go. (they offer dandavats and go outside)

Narendra: So, Abhay, what is your impression? What did you think of him?

Abhay: He's wonderful! The message of Lord Chaitanya is in the hands of a very expert devotee. Here is the person who can establish a worldwide religious movement.

...(to be continued)...

Çréla Prabhupāda's Mission To America

Çréla Prabhupāda's Mission To America

* * * * *

CAST: Abhay Charan / Çréla Prabhupāda, Narendranath, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, Captain and Mrs. Pandia, Devotees.

SCENE ONE

Çréla Prabhupāda Meets His Spiritual Master

SCENE ONE

Çréla Prabhupāda Meets His Spiritual Master

(Scene opens with Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta and disciples in the background. Enter Narendranath, pulling Çréla Prabhupāda as a young man named Abhay Charan)

Abhay: Narendranath! I'm not going!

Narendranath: Oh please, Abhay, I'm sure you will like him... he is a wonderful sadhu!

Abhay: Oh yes, I know all these sadhus! Most of them are simply beggars and ganja smokers in the dress of mendicants!

Narendranath: But this one is different, Abhay. He is a pure and powerful Vaishnava.

Abhay: Narendranath! I wish you wouldn't behave like this! I told you I'm not going...

Narendranath: Look, Abhay, I tell you he is extraordinary. He is such a learned scholar, and a great devotee of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You must meet him! Please!

Abhay: Oh, I...

Narendranath: At least you should see him and judge for yourself.

Abhay: You're so persistent! All right!

Narendranath: You won't regret this Abhay, I promise you.

Abhay: Well, we shall see.

Bhaktisiddhanta: There has not been, there will not be, such benefactors of the highest merit as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His devotees have been. The offer of other benefits is only a deception; it is rather a great harm, whereas the benefit done by Him and His followers is the truest and greatest eternal benefit... It is not for the benefit of one particular country, causing mischief to another; but it benefits the whole universe... The kindness that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has shown to jivas absolves them eternally from all wants, from all inconveniences and from all distresses... (Abhay and Narendranath enter, they pay their obeisances and are still rising)

Bhaktisiddhanta: You are educated young men. Why don't you preach Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message throughout the whole world?

Abhay: (taken back) How can we spread Indian culture if we are under British rule? First India must become independent, otherwise who will hear your Chaitanya's message?

Bhaktisiddhanta: Krishna consciousness does not have to wait for a change in Indian politics, nor is it dependent on who rules. It is so important, so exclusively important, that it cannot wait!

Abhay: How can you dismiss the cause of independence, as if it were of no importance, when so many of our spiritually minded leaders and saints—even Gandhi himself—are stressing national pride?

Bhaktisiddhanta: Whether one power or another rules is a temporary situation; the eternal reality is Krishna or God consciousness, and the real self is the spiritual soul. Therefore no man-made political system can actually help humanity. This is the verdict of the Vedas. Everyone is an eternal servant of God, but if one takes himself to be the temporary body, and if one regards the nation of his birth as worshipable, then he is in the greatest illusion. The leaders and followers of the world's political movements, including the independence movement, are simply cultivating this illusion, and therefore they are no better than cows and asses. Real welfare work, whether individual, social or political, should help prepare a person for his next life and help him to re-establish his eternal relationship with Krishna.

Abhay: Yes, that is true, but oppression of the people is a reality... and the British slaughter of innocent citizens is a reality. Surely, at the present time, the people's cause is the only relevant movement, and spiritual life is a luxury which can be afforded only after independence.

Bhaktisiddhanta: Lord Sri Krishna is the highest Vedic authority, and in the Bhagavad-Gétä he declares: sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja, aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah—that one should give up all so-called dharmas and religious duties and surrender unto Him, the Personality of Godhead. The Çrémad-Bhägavatam confirms this: dharmah projjhita kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam—all other forms of religion are impure and should be thrown out; only Bhagavata-dharma—performing one's duties to please the Supreme Lord—should remain. The problem is that the people have become faithless. They no longer believe that devotional service to God can remove all anomalies, even on the political scene. How can someone claim to be a leader of the people if he is ignorant of the soul and identifies with this dead body as the self? He is simply a fool, and yet they are all following... blind men led by another blind man into the ditch. There is no scarcity in this world... the only scarcity is of Krishna consciousness. But all these men—Subhash Chandra Bose, Bannerjee, Lajpat Rai, Gandhi—they have all failed to solve the real problem of society; rather, they simply added to the chaos and confusion.

This whole world is simply a society of cheaters and cheated. It is not a fit place for a gentleman. Therefore one should simply aspire to leave this material world and go back to home, back to Godhead. The urgent need is to render the highest good to humanity by educating people about the eternal soul and its intimate loving relationship with Krishna. This is Lord Chaitanya's instruction to everyone born in India: bharata-bhumite haila manusya-janma yara, janma sarthaka kari

kara para-upakara. So, do not hesitate... take up this important preaching mission and become an instrument in fulfilling Lord Chaitanya's prediction. And what is that prediction? Prthivite ache yata nagaradi grama, sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama—that one day the Holy Name of the Lord will be known in every town and every village of the world. Hare Krishna! (Abhay pays his respectful obeisances, rises and leaves with Narendranath... they appear again, front stage)

Narendranath: So, Abhay, what was your impression? What do you think of him?

Abhay: He is wonderful! The message of Lord Chaitanya is in the hands of a very expert person!

Narendranath: I knew you would like him, Abhay.

Abhay: Yes, he is a very nice saintly person. Narendranath, I think, were it not for my wife and family commitments, I would immediately join him. (pause... then thoughtfully) Still, in my heart, I have accepted him. Yes, I have accepted him!

SCENE TWO

Çréla Prabhupāda's Journey To America

SCENE TWO

Çréla Prabhupāda's Journey To America

(Scene opens with Çréla Prabhupāda sitting behind a makeshift desk—his trunk—on board the steamship Jaladuta during the long journey from Calcutta to Boston, U.S.A... A few large volumes of Çrémad-Bhāgavatam are visible. He is sitting in the light of a lantern, wearing glasses, and he looks weak in health. As he is writing, he pauses occasionally to think. He seems to be very thoughtful and grave, and at same time there is an unmistakable mood of determination, victory, ultimate happiness and peace about him. As he writes, his thoughts are heard)

Prabhupāda: Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Sri Vrindavan and my Lords Sri Govinda, Gopinath, Radha-Damodara. I depend fully on Their mercy, so far away from Vrindavan. I have left Bharata-bhumi, just to execute the order of Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, in pursuance of Lord Chaitanya's order. I have no qualification, but have taken up the risk, just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. By his strong desire, the Holy Name of the Lord Gauranga will spread throughout all the countries of the western world. In all the cities, town and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers and streams, everyone will chant the Holy Name of Krishna.

Although my Guru Maharaja ordered me to accomplish this mission, I am not worthy or fit to do it. Therefore, O Lord, now I am begging for your mercy so that I may become worthy, for you are the wisest and more experienced of all. Today that remembrance of You came to me in a very nice way. Because I have a great

longing, I called to You. I am Your eternal servant and therefore I desire Your association so much. O Lord Krishna, except for You, there is no other means for success...

(there is a knock on the door. Captain and Mrs. Pandia enter)

Prabhupāda: Captain Pandia... Mrs. Pandia! Hare Krishna!

Cpt. Pandia: Maharaja, how do you feel now? Has your health improved?

Prabhupāda: Oh yes, yes. Do not worry! The chest pains have gone now, and but for a slight headache, I am feeling much better.

Mrs. Pandia: Oh, this is good news. We were really worried about you, you know, Swamiji!

Prabhupāda: If the Atlantic had shown its usual face, perhaps I would have died. But Lord Krishna has taken charge of the ship.

Cpt. Pandia: Yes, I believe you are right. I have sailed these waters a hundred times, but never in my entire career have I seen such a calm Atlantic crossing!

Prabhupāda: It is Krishna's mercy.

Cpt. Pandia: Yes!

Mrs. Pandia: Swamiji, perhaps you will come back with us, so that we may have another crossing such as this one! (they all laugh)

Prabhupāda: Yes, yes, surely I would return with you. But I have my mission to fulfill!

Cpt. Pandia: Yes. I would like to help you, Maharaja. Is there anything we can do before you go?

Prabhupāda: Mmmm? Yes... you take these copies of *Çrémad-Bhāgavatam*—this is the First Canto in three volumes—simply try to understand it, chant Hare Krishna, and you will be happy, that's all. This is the best thing you can do for me.

Cpt. Pandia: This is... most kind...

Mrs. Pandia: Oh Swamiji, we cannot possibly thank you enough...

Cpt. Pandia: Maharaja, here's twenty dollars. Please accept it as a donation for the books. It's not much, but it may help you.

Prabhupāda: (touching the money to his head) Thank you very much!

Mrs. Pandia: Your future looks very bright, Swamiji, I can tell these things. That you have passed beyond this crisis shows that you have the blessings of Lord Krishna.

Prabhupāda: Hare Krishna!

Cpt. & Mrs. Pandia: Hare Krishna! (they leave. Çréla Prabhupāda rises, and with the help of his stick he walks to the front. Leaning on the ship's rail, he peers out across the ocean to Boston's bleak and dirty skyline)

Prabhupāda: My dear Lord Krishna, You are so merciful upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me. But I guess You have some business here, otherwise why would You bring me to this terrible place? Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of passion and ignorance. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vasudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it. But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible, because You are the most expert mystic. Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like.

SCENE THREE

Çréla Prabhupāda's Preaching In America

SCENE THREE

Çréla Prabhupāda's Preaching In America

(A slide show should accompany the Narrator's praise of Çréla Prabhupāda's accomplishments)

Narrator: Çréla Prabhupāda arrived in America, practically penniless and hardly knowing in which direction he should go. For a while he wandered here and there... to Butler, Pennsylvania, then to New York, where he stayed with Dr. Mishra (a Mayavadi yogi), and then to the Bowery—Skid Row, full of bums and drunkards. There he shared a loft with a drug-crazed hippie, till one day the boy finally went mad and Prabhupāda was on the street with nowhere else to go. In this way, alone, for one year he was preaching—through the bitter New York winter—impoverished and a stranger in a city so degraded...

Then, at last, on the Lower East Side, one by one, bedraggled refugees of Kali-yuga—hippies, fed up with materialism, and disillusioned with the so-called “flower power movement”—came to him for answers and for shelter from the rain of confusion. So he simply gave them kirtan and, out of curiosity or looking for some kind of mystical experience, they chanted Hare Krishna—although unknowingly, they began their path home to the spiritual sky. With great patience and compassion, Çréla Prabhupāda gave the message he had brought, and

though the first students were so crazy, he spelled the truth out to them all, just like a kindly father: “You are not these bodies, you are spirit souls,” he said. “We are all God's servants, so just chant Hare Krishna and be happy!” Many were just too far gone to hear him, but a few were sincere seekers of the truth, and they stayed, listened, learned and followed.

Soon the Swamiji (as he was then affectionately known among his followers) had gathered around himself a faithful band of boys and girls, who gradually began to take to Krishna consciousness. Won over by kirtan, prasadam and Prabhupāda's devotion to Lord Krishna, they gave up illicit sex, drugs, meat and gambling, and he, in turn, accepted them as his own disciples. But as soon as a few of them were strong enough to carry on in New York, immediately he left and went on to San Francisco, where with chanting, dancing, prasadam and philosophy, so many hopeless souls were attracted and saved from the web of material life.

In just a few years, the seed had been planted in New York, San Francisco, Montreal, Los Angeles... and across the sea to England, France, Australia and Russia. And Çréla Prabhupāda went travelling on relentlessly—preaching and taking the world by storm. And wherever Çréla Prabhupāda went with his disciples, people were astonished, journalists were excited, religionists dumbfounded and scientists were smashed! But above all, the peoples' hearts were changed.

In just twelve short years—from Çréla Prabhupāda's arrival in the West until his triumphant return to Goloka Vrindavan, the Supreme abode—this world was benefitted with so many of his gifts: more than one hundred beautiful temples, farms, castles, restaurants and palaces, full of thousands of ecstatic Vaishnava sons, daughters, grand-disciples... Sri Mayapura-Chandrodaya Mandir, Vrindavan's Krishna-Balarama temple, West Virginia's New Vrindavan, and the Bhaktivedanta Manor in London, England, to name but a few. He gave us worship of Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna, Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai and Jagannath-Subhadra-Balarama. And festivals like Gaura-Purnima, Janmashtami and Ratha-yatra flooding this world with nectar. He gave us transcendental dramas, art, music, dioramas, schools to teach our children, farms for developing cow-protection—but above all else, he gave us his books! “They are the basis,” he would say, and he gave every single breath for writing them—seventy volumes, in fifty languages, printed in the hundreds of thousands and millions, distributed world-wide. He gave us the foundation for a golden age, a blue-print for the future; but more than that, he left his own example—a lifetime of surrender and devotional endeavor, for us to take our strength and inspiration from.

SCENE FOUR

Çréla Prabhupāda's Arrival

SCENE FOUR

Çréla Prabhupāda's Arrival

Narrator: It is a few minutes before Çréla Prabhupāda's arrival. The occasion is the celebration of Vyasa-Puja held at the Bhaktivedanta Manor in England in 1973. Devotees are running around panic-stricken and ecstatic, trying to get everything ready. The Temple Commander appears in overalls, blurts out a few instructions to the devotees around him, who run off in different directions, and then proceeds to bang some nails in the wall. Just then, the telephone rings and the Temple Commander answers it. Çréla Prabhupāda is on his way and will be at the temple at any moment! The devotee's anxiety reaches a climax. Then suddenly the arrival kirtan is heard and Çréla Prabhupāda has arrived!

Çréla Prabhupāda's small but commanding figure walks regally into the temple amidst bowing disciples and uncontrolled chanting of "Jai Prabhupāda!" The Deity curtains are opened and Çréla Prabhupāda bows down before Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna and then rises, standing reverentially before Them, his first fingers tapping together lightly, in time with the "Govindam" prayers. After a few minutes, Çréla Prabhupāda turns and walks majestically to his vyasasana where he sits and begins to chant "Jaya Radha-Madhava." With his karatala ringing sweetly, and the mridanga following, Çréla Prabhupāda takes the devotees out into a deep sea of chanting... After only a few minutes, the kirtan ends and his Divine Grace begins to speak...

Prabhupāda: Sons and daughters—I am so much obliged to you that you have become so enthusiastic for offering Vyasa-puja. When Krishna sees that a living entity is very anxious to understand Him or to revive his Krishna consciousness, then Krishna gives him all opportunity, especially by manifesting himself as the spiritual master... antar bahih... the spiritual master is therefore Krishna's manifestation, Krishna's mercy manifestation to help a person to develop his Krishna consciousness... Therefore, to advance in Krishna consciousness, we require two kinds of help—one from Krishna and another from spiritual master. It is stated in the Chaitanya-Charitamrita... You'll be glad to know that the 17-volume book, Chaitanya-Charitmrita, is now published!

Devotees: Jai!

Prabhupāda: Kiba vipra kiba nyasi sudra kene naya, yei Krishna tattva vettha sei guru haya. I am sometimes criticized by my godbrothers, that I have become a "marriage-maker," but they do not know why I take this risk. I have got many disciples, they are married couples, but all of them, husband and wife, they are helping this movement. I am very much hopeful that my disciples who are now participating will continue to advance, so, even if I die, my movement will not stop. I am very much hopeful. All these nice boys and girls... Bhaktivinoda Öhākura wanted that European and American people may understand the philosophy of Chaitanya cult, and take part in it. That was his desire...

My guru maharaja, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Goswami Prabhupāda, he also attempted to send his disciples to preach Chaitanya cult in the western world. First meeting, perhaps you know, he asked me to preach. So at

that time I was young man, only twenty-five years old, and I was also householder. So I should have joined and executed his desire immediately, but due to my ill luck, I could not immediately execute his order. But it was in my heart, that it is to be done. So it is better late than never, I executed his order at the age of seventy years, not at the age of twenty-five year. So actually I wasted so much time, I can understand that. From twenty-five... The message was there when I was twenty-five years old, but I begun at the age of seventy years. But I did not forget the message, otherwise how could I do? That is a fact. I was simply finding out the opportunity to do it. So anyway, although I began very late at the age of seventy years, so by the help of my disciples this movement is gaining ground and is spreading all over the world. So therefore I have to thank you. It is all due to you. It is not my credit, but it is your credit, that you are helping me in executing the order of my Guru Maharaja...

So this movement, Krishna consciousness movement—that you already know, that it is the most essential, most important movement in the human society—so this movement will go on... Nobody can stop... You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master. It is not difficult. It is difficult when you manufacture something. But if you simply present what you have heard from your spiritual master, it is very easy... One may be rascal number one from material estimation, but if he simply strictly follows whatever is said by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or representative spiritual master, then he becomes a guru.

So, it is not very difficult... Amara ajnaya guru haya... And what is the difficulty? Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says don't feel any difficulty, because as spiritual master, what you have to do? Yare dekha tare kaha Krishna upadesa... Whomever you meet, you simply speak to him the instruction which Krishna gives. What Krishna... The instruction He gives? That is also very easy. What is that? Krishna says: Man-mana bhava mad-bhaktah mad-yaji mam namaskuru. Krishna says, "Just become My devotee, always think of Me, offer Me obeisances and worship Me..." And at last Krishna says: Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja.

So if you simply preach this cult... "My dear friend, my dear brother, you surrender to Krishna," you'll become spiritual master. Become spiritual master! You go door to door. No other talks, simply say: "My dear friend, you are great sadhu!" Although he may be rascal number one, still you call him: "He sadhava." "Yes, I am sadhu, yes. What is your proposal?" Then you say to him, "Kindly forget all nonsense that you have learned! That's all. I am flattering you because I want that you forget everything... All this yogis and this and that, meditation... Please, kick out all this!" "Then what, after this?" "Chaitanya candra carane kurutanuraga... Just adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya!" Then you become spiritual master. That's all. So, if you want to become recognized by Krishna very quickly, you take up this process of becoming spiritual master and present the Bhagavad-Gétä As It Is, your life is perfect. Thank you very much!

Devotees: All glories to Çréla Prabhupāda!

Çréla Prabhupāda: Chant Hare Krishna!

(Devotees begin chanting and Çréla Prabhupāda stays for a few minutes before rising and leaving the temple room. Kirtan continues and becomes very ecstatic)

The End

Chaitanya-lila Plays

The Appearance of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

The Appearance of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Jagannath Mishra, Shachi-Mata, Nilambara Chakravarti, 2 Demigods, Advaita Acharya, Moon and Rahu.

Narrator: namah om visnu padaya krsna presthaya bhu-tale

srimate bhaktivedanta svamin iti namine

namaste sarasvati deve gaura-vani pracarine

nirvisesa sunyavadi pascatya desa tarine

bhaja sri krsna caitanya prabhu nityananda

sri advaita gadadhara srivasadi gaura bhakta vrnda

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

Before the appearance of Lord Chaitanya, all the devotees of Navadvipa used to gather in the house of Advaita Acharya. They took great pleasure in always talking of Krishna, always worshiping Krishna and always chanting the maha-mantra: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. Sri Advaita Prabhu felt pained to see all the people without Krishna consciousness, simply wallowing in material sense enjoyment.

SCENE ONE

Outside Advaita Acharya's house

SCENE ONE

Outside Advaita Acharya's house

(Advaita Acharya walks on, looking very sad. There is a small altar of Shalagrama-shila)

Advaita: My heart is so heavy as I look all around, (sighs)

to see all the people by Maya tightly bound,

neglecting the shastras, which teach us life's goal:

PURE LOVE for Lord Krishna, which gives bliss to the soul.

(Advaita Acharya then walks around, thinking deeply. Then he performs a small aratik to Shalagrama-shila. Gurukula children sing for the aratik, after paying obeisances:)

O Lord, only You can show them the way

to become devotees, for this I do pray.

O come and deliver this world from all shame —

teach them the glory of God's Holy Name.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Narrator: In the year 1486, in the month of Magha, Lord Chaitanya entered into the bodies of His parents, Jagannath Mishra and Shachi-Devi. Having within her womb the Personality of Godhead, Shachi-Mata's body appeared effulgent, and it was illuminating the house of Jagannath Mishra.

(Shachi-Mata is sitting alone, sewing and singing “Hare Krishna.” Demigods enter from above on the right side of stage. Shachi-Mata is unaware of their presence)

Demigod 1: Just look at Mother Shachi's face.

Demigod 2: Surely she has received Lord Krishna's grace!

Demigod 1: Such auspicious signs we are seeing.

Demigod 2: This child can't be an ordinary human being!

Demigod 1: I wonder what Lord Krishna has in mind?

Demigod 2: Perhaps this child has come to save mankind!

(Shachi-Mata then notices the demigods. She bows her head in respect, and the demigods exit as she does this. When she again looks up, she is confused to see they are gone; she looks for them, rubs her eyes, etc. Jagannath Mishra then enters. Shachi bows to him and brings him a plate of food)

Shachi-Mata: Prabhu, I thought I just saw some demigods there. (she points, gazing with folded hands as if in prayer) What is the meaning of this, please?

Jagannath: Strange things have happened to me today as well...

People offer me gifts wherever I go,

and they show me great respect.

But why, I do not know!

I was worrying that something might be wrong,

because your pregnancy is lasting so long.

Shachi-Mata: Where is my father? Has he not come with you?

Jagannath: He is following close behind. Dear wife,

you become more effulgent every day—

as if the Goddess of Fortune

had come with us to stay.

(Nilambara Chakravarti enters. Shachi-Mata touches his feet and brings him a seat, food and drink)

Shachi-Mata: My dear father!

Nilambara: Hare Krishna!

Jagannath: Now your learned father will impart

the astrological meaning of the birth chart.

In this way some knowledge we will gain,

for the great Nilambara Chakravarti can explain.

Shachi-Mata: O father, tell us when the child will come, and why He's been so long within my womb. (Nilambara Chakravarti begins to pull out charts, etc.)

Jagannath: By your wisdom you can calculate
the nature of our child and His birth date.

Nilambara: Now wait my children, be patient and be still —
I'll tell you if the omen's good or ill. (looks at charts)

Aahah, the figure of the lion does appear
both in the zodiac and in the time of birth.

And according to the influences here—
a most auspicious moment to appear on earth.

Jupiter is in Sagittarius,
and Ravi, the sun, is in Aquarius.

Chandra is in the eleventh lunar house,

Ah! This my interest does arouse

In Capricorn are Shravana and Mars —

A very good position for the stars.

I see the joining of so many constellations —

these are most auspicious calculations,

and beyond my wildest expectations!

This child will bring the whole world jubilation!

Rahu will eclipse the moon,

and so the birth will take place soon!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: When the spotless moon of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu becomes visible, what would be the need for a moon full of black marks on its body? Lord Chaitanya was born during a total eclipse of the moon when Rahu, the black planet, covered the full moon...

(Dance scene: Rahu and Moon cavort about—eventually Rahu covers the moon as stage lights black out. Meanwhile, bathers in river on other side of stage are chanting “Hare Krishna”)

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Birth scene of Lord Chaitanya, devotee couples bring gifts. The astrologer, Nilambara, studies Lord Chaitanya's chart)

Nilambara: This child will liberate the universe by His preaching of the Vaishnava cult.

Give prasad to all the brahmanas

to celebrate His fame,

And all the assembled devotees—

CHANT THE HOLY NAME!!!

(parents brings out sweets and all sing:) JAI SHACHI-NANDANA! HARI BOL!

(big kirtan)

The End

Nimai's Childhood Pastimes

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila

Nimai's Childhood Pastimes

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Advaita Acharya, Mother Shachi, Nimai, 2 Ladies, 2 Thieves, Jagannath Mishra, Brahmana.

SCENE ONE

Advaita Acharya's Concern

SCENE ONE

Advaita Acharya's Concern

Narrator: In the Age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting of the Holy Names of God to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Krishna. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Krishna Himself. He is accompanied by His associates. Advaita Acharya is an incarnation of the Lord as a devotee. His loud calling was the cause for Lord Krishna's appearance as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Advaita Acharya found the world devoid of devotional service to Sri Krishna because people were engrossed in material affairs.

Advaita: Everyone is engaged in material enjoyment. No one is interested in the transcendental service of the Lord, which can give relief from the cycle of birth and death. How can I act for the people's benefit? If Sri Krishna was to appear as an incarnation, He Himself could preach devotion by His personal example. In this age of Kali, chanting of the Holy Name is the only religion; but, how will the Lord appear? I know, I shall worship Lord Krishna in a purified state of mind and constantly petition Him in humbleness.

Narrator: Thinking in this way, Advaita Acharya began worshiping the Lord. Always remembering the lotus feet of Sri Krishna, He constantly offered Tulasi buds and water from the Ganges. He appealed to Sri Krishna with loud calls, and thus made it possible for Lord Krishna to appear.

On the full moon eve of the month of Phalguna, during a lunar eclipse, the Lord appeared. Because of the eclipse, everyone was chanting "Hari Hari!" in great jubilation. (Kirtan party enters and chants "Haribol!" Mother Shachi carries out baby Nimai. Jagannath Mishra is also there. Kirtan party then sings "When Lord Chaitanya was a Boy.")

SCENE TWO

Baby Nimai Cries

SCENE TWO

Baby Nimai Cries

Narrator: After some days, the Lord began to crawl on his hands and knees, and He caused various wonders to be seen. (Nimai is sitting while singers sing "A Snake Crawled into the Courtyard." The snake crawls in—parents look worried and yell "Garuda!"—they pray to Ananta and the snake slips away. Jagannath Mishra exits. Nimai is center stage, some ladies enter and surround Nimai, doing various activities. Nimai begins crying)

Shachi: Oh no, don't cry, little one!

1st Lady: It's alright, little Nimai. (Nimai cries louder. Mother Shachi begins singing Hare Krishna, He stops)

2nd Lady: Oh look, He stopped crying!

1st Lady: Yes, when you chant, He stops.

2nd Lady: Oh, but look, He's starting to cry again! (Nimai cries)

1st Lady: Quickly, let's chant again! (they chant, Nimai gradually stops crying)

2nd Lady: Oh good, He stopped again.

1st Lady: I think Nimai is playing a game with us. (Nimai begins crying again)

2nd Lady: Now we must always chant the maha-mantra! (they all chant and Nimai smiles)

SCENE THREE

Nimai Kidnapped by Two Thieves

SCENE THREE

Nimai Kidnapped by Two Thieves

Narrator: In this way, the Lord was showing that His life's purpose was to spread this sankirtan movement. In His childhood, the Lord was once taken away by two thieves, outside His own house...

Thief 1: Hey, look over there!

Thief 2: What? I don't see anything but a little boy.

Thief 1: No, look at all those jewels on Him!

Thief 2: Let's take Him away, kill Him and rob Him of all His jewels!

Thief 1: Good idea! Let's go.

Thief 2: Hi there, little boy! Want to come with us?

Thief 1: We have a surprise for you!

Nimai: What is it?

Thief 2: Sweets! All children love sweets.

Nimai: Oh good, let's go!

Thief 1: First, You have to come with us. (they walk away with Nimai. After a circle or two)

Thief 2: Let's go deeper into the woods so we can kill Him and rob Him of all His jewels!

Thief 1: Yeah! This is a good place! (they hear Shachi calling)

Shachi: Nimai! Nimai! Where are you?

Thief 2: What was that?

Thief 1: It sounded like a voice!

Thief 2: Hey! We're right back where we started from!

Thief 1: Let's get out of here!

Shachi: Nimai, there You are—I've been looking all over for You! It's time for your dinner. Your father is waiting for you!

Nimai: I'm sorry to be gone so long, Mother; I just went for a walk in the woods.

SCENE FOUR

Nimai Eats the Brahmana's Offering

SCENE FOUR

Nimai Eats the Brahmana's Offering

Narrator: On another occasion, the Lord ate the foodstuffs of a Brahmana guest three times, and later, in confidence, the Lord delivered that Brahmana from material engagement. (knock at door)

Jagannath: Shachidevi! Someone is at the door. Please go see who it is. (Mother Shachi opens the door)

Shachi: Oh, just a moment, I'll go get my husband.

Jagannath: Come in, my dear Brahmana. Please come in. You must be tired from travelling from one place of pilgrimage to another. Please sit down. Shachidevi, please go get this Brahmana something cool to drink. A Brahmana is welcome in my house anytime. Is there anything else I can get for you?

Brahmana: Oh, no, thank you. I am fine, but I would like some ingredients to prepare an offering for my Gopal Deity.

Jagannath: Yes, yes. Shachidevi, please go get our guest some milk, rice and sugar so that he can prepare sweet-rice for his Gopal Deity. You may have this room for your worship. (they exit)

Brahmana: Thank you. Hmm, let's see... I will make an altar over here. Then, I will prepare some sweet-rice. (he mixes, etc., and sings "Govinda Jaya Jaya, Gopala Jaya Jaya, Radha Ramana Hari, Govinda Jaya Jaya.") Now, it is ready to offer. (he bows down and begins to offer "Namo brahmanya devaya..." when Nimai approaches and eats the bhoga. Brahmana looks up) What are you doing? You are spoiling my offering! Jagannath Mishra! Jagannath Mishra!

Jagannath: Nimai! You shouldn't have done that. Come on, let's go.

Brahmana: Oh well, children are innocent. (the Brahmana prepares again as before. When he begins to offer, Nimai again eats the bhoga. The Brahmana looks up) What are you doing? You've spoiled my offering again! Jagannath Mishra! Your son has spoiled my offering again!

Jagannath: Nimai, You naughty boy! This time I will put You to bed!

Brahmana: I'll prepare it again. (he repeats the same procedure. Nimai comes in and eats the bhoga) What has been done? What has been done? I guess Lord Vishnu does want to eat!

Nimai: My dear Brahmana, formerly I was the son of Mother Yashoda. At that time, you were a guest in the house of Nanda Maharaja and I disturbed you in the same way. I am very much pleased with your devotion.

Brahmana: Thank you, Lord. You are very kind.

Nimai: Do not disclose this incident to anyone. Go on in your worship of Me in the form of Gopal.

Brahmana: Thank you, Lord. (they exit)

SCENE FIVE

Nimai Eats Dirt

SCENE FIVE

Nimai Eats Dirt

Narrator: One day, when the Lord was enjoying playful sports with the other children, Mother Shachi brought a dish filled with fused rice and sweetmeats, and asked Nimai to sit down and eat them.

Shachi: It's time for You to eat; I must go and do my household chores now, but I will be back soon. (she leaves. Nimai rejects the food, picks up dirt and eats it instead. Then she returns) Nimai! What is this? What is this? Why have you been eating dirt?

Nimai: Why are you so angry, Mother? You have already given me dirt to eat. This is dirt, and the sweetmeats are just a transformation of dirt. This is dirt. That is dirt. So, what is the difference, Mother?

Shachi: Who has taught you this philosophical nonsense that justifies eating dirt? If we eat dirt transformed into grains, our bodies become nourished and strong. But if we eat this plain dirt off the ground, our bodies become diseased and will be destroyed!

Nimai: Why didn't you teach Me this before, Mother? From now on, when I'm hungry, I will not eat dirt.

Shachi: Jai!

(kirtan)

The End

The Wedding Of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu And Lakshmi Priya

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila Chapter 10

adapted by Madhurya-Lilananda Devi Dasi

The Wedding Of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu And Lakshmi Priya

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* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Nimai, 3 Village Girls, Lakshmi Priya, Mata Shachi, Vanamali, Ishana, Vallabhacharya, Vallabhacharya's Wife, Extras for dance.

Narrator: (Purport by Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté from Chaitanya Bhagavata)

Normally, in the material world, people like to hear about festivals of marriage. But by hearing those things people become more bound to material attachments.

But, hearing about the marriage of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Maya, does not have the same kind of effect. Actually, Lord Chaitanya's whole pastime is for liberating the people from the material world. If someone thinks that Lord Chaitanya's marriage is a material affair, then that person is in the worst kind of Maya. But one should know, of course, that all type of enjoyment is actually the property of the Lord. One who takes shelter of Him as His servant and hears about the transcendental variegatedness of His devotional service, can never fall into any kind of inauspiciousness in their lives. So, in that place where Bhagavan, the reservoir of transcendental happiness is present, there can't be any room for sense gratification. We should never think that the Lord is under the sway of Maya, but He is always transcendental to Maya's influence. One who is absorbed in the transcendental happiness of serving the Lord and hearing His glories is liberated from the bondage of the material attachments in the material world; they are never kept under the bondage of material sense gratification. Such devotees never become materialistic enjoyers.

SCENE ONE

By the Ganges

SCENE ONE

By the Ganges

(Young girls enter, lay out a cloth and put their paraphernalia of worship on it. Nimai enters and watches them from other side of stage for a minute)

Girl 1: Please, get some Ganges water for Lord Shiva.

Girl 2: Here are the garlands, be careful with them.

Girl 3: I have the sweets and rice for the offering. We must be very careful with our worship this month.

Girl 1: If we are, maybe Lord Shiva will be kind and give us good husbands.

(Nimai walks over and addresses the girls)

Nimai: Worship Me, and I shall give you good husbands and good benedictions. The Ganges and goddess Durga are My maidservants. Not to speak of the other demigods, even Lord Shiva is My servant. (Nimai grabs the flower garland and sandalwood pulp and puts them on. He starts to eat the bananas and sweets. The girls become angry and start to try to take the things back, but Nimai prevents them from doing so)

Girl 2: Dear Nimai, You are just like our brother in our village relationship. It is not good for You to act like this.

Girl 3: Please don't take our things for worshiping the demigods.

Girl 1: Please don't disturb us in this way. Leave us alone!

Nimai: (while eating the offering) My dear sisters, I give you the benedictions that your husbands will be very handsome. They will be learned, clever, and youthful and possess wealth and rice. Not only that, but each of you will have seven sons, who will all live long lives and be very intelligent.

(Girls look at each other and start to giggle, then look back at Nimai and act angry again)

Girl 2: We don't have to listen to You—we're leaving!

Girl 3: You are just teasing us, Nimai. Please don't follow us and bother us any more. (Girls start to pack up their offerings)

Nimai: If you are miserly and do not give Me the offerings, then every one of you will have an old husband at least four co-wives. (Girls suddenly stop what they are doing)

Girl 1: Do you think He knows something that we don't?

Girl 2: Maybe He is empowered by the demigods.

Girl 3: What if the curse is effective? What should we do?

Girl 1: Maybe we should give Him the offerings. What do you think?

Girl 2: I think we should give Him the offerings and be safe. (Girls bring Nimai the offerings and He sits to eat it)

Nimai: (holding up his hand) I give you My benedictions for a happy marriage. (Girls are standing there giggling when Lakshmi Priya comes in with her offering in a basket)

Lakshmi: Am I late? (she stops when she sees Nimai and what is happening. She offers her obeisances, gets out her offerings and starts to worship Nimai. The other girls slowly leave the stage whispering to each other. Nimai stops eating the other offerings to accept hers)

Nimai: Just worship Me, for I am the Supreme Lord. If you worship Me, certainly you will get the benedictions you desire. "My dear gopis, I accept your desire to have Me as your husband, and thus worship Me. I wish your desire to be fulfilled because it deserves to be so." (Lakshmi Priya offers her obeisances, watches Nimai as He leaves and then she leaves to the other side)

SCENE TWO

The courtyard of Mata Shachi's house

SCENE TWO

The courtyard of Mata Shachi's house

(Nimai is sitting studying, and Mata Shachi is sewing, or doing household duties. Mata Shachi watches Nimai and then walks to center stage, where she thinks out loud, unheard by Nimai)

Shachi: (to the audience) My Nimai is such a great scholar. All the residents of Navadvipa respect Him so. He is now in His full youth, and soon He will be a young man. I wonder if I should think about a suitable wife for Him. I know of the daughter of Vallabhacharya—she is very beautiful and devoted to Lord Krishna. But, maybe Nimai isn't ready yet. He is always studying and teaching His students. Vishvarupa, His elder brother, went away and took sannyasa when he found out that his father was planning his marriage. And his father has recently left this world. Maybe I should wait. I don't think this would be a good time to bring it up. (Mata Shachi goes off stage. Nimai puts his books away and gets up to go. As He walks off stage, Lakshmi Priya passes Him, carrying a water pot. As soon as she sees Him, she offers her obeisances. Then, realizing what she did, she covers her face shyly with her cloth and leaves. Nimai smiles and watches her go)

Nimai: (speaking to the audience) I did not take sannyasa, and since I am remaining at home it is My duty to act as a householder. Without a wife there is no meaning to householder life. Merely a house is not a home, for it is a wife that gives the home meaning. If one lives at home with a wife, together they can fulfill all the interests of human life. (Nimai leaves the stage)

Narrator: The same day, Vanamali, the village marriage-maker, happens to come to the house of Shachi Mata. He offers her his respects, and with great affection she gives him a place to sit down. (actors do this as Narrator is talking. Mata Shachi brings a straw mat and some water. Then she sits down, too)

Vanamali: Shachi Mata, why are you not thinking about the marriage of your son. Vallabhacharya is living here in Navadvipa. In his house they are very strict, pure vegetarians. They are very pure brahmanas. There is no defect in their family or behavior. Vallabhacharya has a very beautiful and chaste daughter; she is almost like Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune. What about trying to make an engagement with Vallabhacharya's family for your son to marry his daughter, Lakshmi Priya? If you think this is a good match, then I can make the arrangements immediately.

Shachi: My dear brahmana. I already know of this girl. She is very beautiful and devoted to Lord Krishna. I was also thinking that she would be a suitable daughter-in-law. But I'm not sure that this is the best time for my Nimai to marry. He has recently lost His father. Also, He is so much involved with His studies and His school, and He is still so young. I think that He should first grow a little older.

There is plenty of time later for these things. I don't think Nimai should marry just now.

Vanamali: (looking very disappointed) Nimai is a very handsome young man. It is time that He is married. What does He think of this? Have you discussed it with Him?

Shachi: Well, no, I haven't. But, He is still too young. I will discuss it with Him some time later.

Vanamali: (getting up to leave, Mata Shachi stands, too) But, you have no objection to the girl or her family?

Shachi: Oh, no! She is a very nice girl; I was already thinking of her as a suitable wife for Nimai.

Vanamali: But not now?

Shachi: No, not now.

Vanamali: I can't tell you how disappointed I am with your decision. Please reconsider this, and I will come back again to see you. (Vanamali turns and Mata Shachi leaves the stage. He is very saddened by the words of Mata Shachi. As he is walking to the other side of the stage, Nimai enters. Vanamali embraces Nimai)

Nimai: Please tell me, my dear brahmana, where have you been? Who's house were you visiting?

Vanamali: I went to see your mother. We were talking about your marriage.

Nimai: What did she say?

Vanamali: She would not listen to my words. She did not want to discuss your marriage. I don't know why she wouldn't listen to my words. (when Nimai hears this, He is silent for a minute, thinking)

Nimai: I must go now, My students will be here soon.

Vanamali: Yes, I have matters to attend to also, Namaste.

Nimai: Hare Krishna! (Vanamali leaves, and Mata Shachi enters from the other side. Nimai goes to her smiling) Mata, why didn't you listen to Vanamali? I just met him on the road. You should receive a brahmana with favorable words when he comes to visit, and listen to what he says.

Shachi: You think that I should be more favorable to what a brahmana says?

Nimai: Yes, Vanamali is very intelligent. You should be very kind to him. I have to go now. My students will be here soon. (Nimai leaves)

Shachi: Ishana! (her servant comes in) Go and tell Vanamali to come to see me tomorrow. (Ishana leaves, Mata Shachi leaves)

Narrator: The next day when Vanamali returns, Mata Shachi has news more to his liking. She tells him to arrange the marriage without delay. He is very happy with this news and, taking the dust of her feet, he proceeds to the house of Vallabhacharya.

SCENE THREE

Vallabhacharya's house

SCENE THREE

Vallabhacharya's house

(Vallabhacharya along with his wife and Lakshmi Priya are worshipping the family Deity. When they are done, Vanamali enters. He is brought a seat and something to drink by Lakshmi Priya and her mother, and then they leave the stage. Vallabhacharya sits down next to Vanamali)

Vallabha: My dear brahmana, please accept our obeisances. Please tell me how I can be of service to you. If there is anything that you need, I will do my best to get it for you. You are a great devotee of Lord Krishna, and by serving the devotees one can get the mercy of the Lord.

Vanamali: My dear Vallabhacharya, I just want you to listen to my words with great care and attention. This will bring great benefit to you and your family. You should immediately, on the most auspicious moment, arrange for the marriage of your daughter without delay. The son of Jagannath Mishra, whose name is Vishvambhar, and who is the greatest pandit and the ocean of all good qualities, is the suitable person for your daughter, Lakshmi Priya. I am presenting this to you, and you should give full consideration. If you think it appropriate, then you should accept this arrangement without delay.

Vallabha: Your words bring great joy to my heart. Who could get a better husband for his daughter. I must be very fortunate—Krishna is very merciful upon me. Only if Lakshmi Devi herself is satisfied with my daughter is it possible for her to be married to such a bridegroom. I very happily accept your suggestion; please do the needful immediately. But, I have one problem that I am very shy to talk about: I am actually very poor—I don't have anything that I can give except my daughter. As a dowry I can only give five pieces of spice. This is my offering—you can agree whether it is acceptable or not.

Vanamali: (very happy) Vallabhacharya, your words are so pleasing for me to hear. Please do not worry about anything. I am sure that everything can be successfully arranged. Now I must go inform Shachi Mata and make the arrangements.

(wedding dance)

The End

The Deities Of Gauridas Pandit

from the Chaitanya-Bhagavata

adapted by Madhurya-Lilananda Devi Dasi

The Deities Of Gauridas Pandit

from the Chaitanya-Bhagavata

adapted by Madhurya-Lilananda Devi Dasi

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CAST: Narrator, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, Gauridas Pandit, Hridaya Chaitanya, 4 Devotees.

Narrator: Gauridas Pandit was a great devotee of Lord Chaitanya that lived near Navadvipa in West Bengal. Lord Chaitanya was very merciful to him by personally being present while Deities were being made for Gauridas Pandit to worship. These Deities were very unusual and had many unique pastimes.

Chaitanya: Gauridas Pandit, it is time for Us to leave. We have been here much too long.

Nityananda: Yes, We really must leave now.

Gauridas: No, you can't leave! Who will I talk to? Who will be my friend? If You leave, then how will I be able to live? You have to stay here with me!

Chaitanya: How can I stay? I have so many other devotees that I have to see. We can't stay here all the time.

Gauridas: Well, then, if You can't stay here, then I will have Deities made of You and Nityananda for me to worship while You are gone. That will give me some happiness while You are away.

Chaitanya: I can't have Deities made in My presence! This is not My pastime.

Gauridas: No! No! I don't care. Either You give me a set of Deities of You and Nitai, or You both stay here with me. I won't let You go. So You decide.

Chaitanya: All right. How can I say “no” to My devotee?

Narrator: So, special Deities were carved for Gauridas right in the presence of Lord Chaitanya. When they were done, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu approached Gauridas for his permission to leave. (actors for the Deities are standing on the altar when the curtain is opened)

Chaitanya: All right, Gauridas, the Deities are ready now. It is time for Us to go.

Gauridas: No, I've changed my mind.

Chaitanya: (surprised) What do you mean you've changed your mind?

Gauridas: I've changed my mind. You must stay! You say that the Deities are non-different from You, so let the Deities go while You and Nityananda Prabhu stay here with me. (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu look at each other and smile)

Chaitanya & Nityananda: All right. (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu hold up their hands like the Deities, and the Deities on the altar put their hands down and start walking away)

Gauridas: No! No! You're tricking me. Stop! Come back!

Deities: All right, We'll stay. (the Deities put up Their arms and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu put down Their arms and walk away)

Gauridas: No, no—it's You Two I want! I'm sure of it!

Chaitanya and Nityananda: All right. We'll stay. (they hold up Their hands and the Deities start walking off)

Gauridas: (running after the new Gaura and Nitai) No! No! You must stay here! You're tricking me! Don't leave me!!! No! Let Them go! (pointing to the Deities) You stay here with me.

Chaitanya & Nityananda: All right.

Gauridas: No, no, come back. You go and You go! You stay and You stay!

Narrator: This happened so many times that after a while Gauridas forgot which set was originally Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu, and which ones were the Deities. Finally, in frustration, Gauridas agrees to let two leave. For many years, Gauridas Pandit very faithfully and devotedly worships his Gaura-Nitai Deities. One year, around the time of Gaura Purnima, he had to leave for a while.

Gauridas: Hridayananda, come here. (his disciple, Hridayananda, comes in and offers obeisances) Hridayananda, I must go away for a few days. I want you to take care of my Gaura-Nitai Deities while I am gone.

Hridayananda: This is a great honor! Thank you very much! I will be very careful with Their worship.

Gauridas: I know I can trust you because you are a pure devotee of Their Lordships. (Gauridas leaves)

Hridayananda: I must be very careful in worshiping my spiritual master's Deities. Let me see, Lord Chaitanya's birthday is very soon. We had better hold a huge festival for the pleasure of the Deities. (he thinks for a minute) We will need lots of prasadam to distribute. We can invite all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya from the neighboring villages. I better make a list of what we will need. (he walks off stage)

Narrator: Hridayananda organized a huge festival. He ordered all kinds of vegetables, fruits, grains, milk, yogurt, and ghee. Many devotees were invited from neighboring villages, and first-class arrangements were made for them. (Hridayananda is organizing the festival, people are walking back and forth with bags of grain, baskets of vegetables, and jugs of milk. Hridayananda is directing things as people ask him questions. Gauridas enters on the side and watches for a minute, unseen by Hridayananda. In an angry mood he walks over to Hridayananda and says:)

Gauridas: What is going on here? Hridayananda, what is all this?

Hridayananda: (offers obeisances to his guru) We are getting ready for the Gaura Purnima festival!

Gauridas: You are having a festival and you didn't ask me? Without the permission of your spiritual master, you just go ahead and have a festival? No! You can't have this festival!

Hridayananda: (very humbly) Yes, Gurudeva.

Gauridas: Forget about this festival! Go and chant your japa by the Ganges!

Hridayananda: Yes, Gurudeva. (he offers obeisances and goes to the side of the stage and sits and starts chanting. A produce seller enters. The man goes to Hridayananda, who directs him to Gauridas Pandit)

Devotee 1: Where do these vegetables and grains go?

Gauridas: (surprised) What? Vegetables and grains? Oh, I guess to the temple kitchen.

Devotee 2: Where does this milk go?

Gauridas: Milk? I don't know. Put it over there. (points to where the last devotee put the produce)

Devotee 3: (comes in with a big burlap sack) Where does all this rice go? I have six more men with rice, too!

Gauridas: That's quite a lot of rice! Take it to the temple kitchen, I guess.

Devotee 4: There are 50 devotees from the next village to the north, 75 devotees from the village to the south, and 150 devotees from the village across the Ganges that want to know where they will be staying during the festival.

Gauridas: Oh dear, Hridayananda, come here right now! (Hridayananda runs to his guru and offers obeisances)

Gauridas: All right, have your festival. There is so much produce—we have to use it up. And we wouldn't want to disappoint all these devotees!

Hridayananda: Jai! Haribol! (Hridayananda starts directing everyone. Several more devotees have come in, needing to know where to go)

Hridayananda: Prabhu, put this in the festival kitchen. This goes to the temple, that goes to the men's quarters. Can you get a group together to roll puris? Please make sure that the offering is on time!

Devotee 1: The offering is ready for the Deities now. (Hridayananda goes over to Gauridas)

Hridayananda: The offering is ready for your Gaura-Nitai Deities now.

Gauridas: Good, bring it over while I get ready. Go and start the kirtan. (Hridayananda brings the plate to Gauridas, who puts the offering plate on a table. He is standing so that he is not facing the Deities. He is doing Ācamana and getting things ready. Hridayananda has gone to the other side of the stage and has started a kirtan with the devotees. While Gauridas has his back turned to the Deities, Chaitanya and Nityananda look over to the kirtan and decide to join it. They sneak off the altar and join the kirtan, standing in the back. No one notices them. Gauridas turns around to put the plate on the altar and sees that the Deities are gone)

Gauridas: Yaaaaa!!! Where are Nitai-Gaura?! Where are Nitai-Gaura?! They were just here! The Deities are gone! (he runs to center stage) Where are Nitai-Gaura? NO! NO! NO! They are cheating me again! They've run off! (he runs around looking for Them behind some of the props. Finally he sees Them dancing with the devotees in the kirtan)

Gauridas: There They are—They are trying to cheat me again! (he picks up a stick and starts to chase Them around the stage. Gaura-Nitai look around and start to run, trying several times to hide)

Gauridas: Get back in the temple right now! Nitai-Gaura, don't You cheat me, You get back in the temple right now! Don't You run off like this!!! (Nitai-Gaura hide in Hridayananda's heart. To do this, They hide behind some scenery. While Hridayananda has had his back turned in the kirtan, he has taken out of his shirt a big picture of Gaura-Nitai on a red heart on a string around his neck)

Gauridas: There They are! They are hiding in your heart, Hridayananda!

Hridayananda: (surprised) In my heart?! (he looks at his chest, so does everyone else)

Gauridas: Nitai-Gaura are hiding in your heart! (he walks over to Hridayananda, shaking his stick and addressing picture) Get out of his heart immediately! Get back in the temple where You are supposed to be! (Nityananda Prabhu and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu leave Their hiding place and Hridayananda turns around so he can put the picture back in his shirt. Gauridas follows Gaura and Nitai onto the altar)

Gauridas: (yelling) Don't You ever do that again! (a bit softer) If You leave, then I'll be friendless! I'll have no one to talk to, no one to offer prasadam to! You just can't go and run away like that! It is very disturbing! (Gaura-Nitai stand back up on the altar like Deities. Gauridas puts the offering in front of Them)

Gauridas: Now take your prasadam—it's getting cold! (he closes the curtains and leaves) Hridayananda, come here. (Hridayananda comes over, the other devotees follow) From now on your name will be Hridaya-chaitanya because Lord Chaitanya hid in your heart.

Devotees: Jai! Haribol!

Gauridas: And don't ever leave the Deities' curtain open longer than a minute or two! I don't want Nitai-Gaura getting attached to any other devotees and running off! Now, start the kirtan again! (kirtan)

The End

The Deliverance Of Jagai And Madhai

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Madhya-lila Chapter 13

The Deliverance Of Jagai And Madhai

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Madhya-lila Chapter 13

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CAST: Narrator, Haridas Öhäkura, Nityananda Prabhu, Householder, Jagai, Madhai, Lord Chaitanya.

SCENE ONE

Nityananda and Haridas Go Preaching

SCENE ONE

Nityananda and Haridas Go Preaching

(On the streets of Navadvipa)

Narrator: The Lord's activities are unlimited. If Ananta Shesha with His unlimited hoods cannot describe the wonderful pastimes of Gaurahari, then what qualifications do I, a simple narrator, with one limited mouth, have to describe the Lord's pastimes? If I omit some pastimes of Lord Gaurahari, then I apologize to you, my nectar-seekers. Forgive me, for we are limited here to only a short period of time.

Once, on the instruction of the Lord, both Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura went door to door on the streets of Navadvipa, giving the nectar of the Holy Name to whoever they met. (enter Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura)

Haridas: My dear Lord Nityananda, Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has personally ordered us: "Whomever you meet, simply speak to him about Krishna." Surely there is no more fortunate position than to be preaching on the order of Lord Chaitanya!

Nityananda: Yes, Haridas, you are right. We must give out Lord Chaitanya's mercy. The fallen people of this age are all so tightly bound up in materialistic life. If we do not give them an opportunity to hear and chant the Holy Name of Krishna, they are destined for a hellish existence in their next life.

Haridas: Come! There is not a moment to waste! We must press on and visit a few more doors before nightfall!

Nityananda: Here is a house. Let us try this one. (they knock on the door and a householder appears after some time. Lord Nityananda and Haridas both fall at his feet and begin to submit their plea to him) My dear sir, please give up your sinful life, chant the Holy Names of Krishna and adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu!

Householder: My dear friends, what you say may be right, but what can I do? All my hours are spent in maintaining family members... I have no time for religion!

Nityananda: You say you have no time—but death may come at any moment, and you cannot say you have no time then! Listen, you do not have to neglect your family, but as a householder, it is your duty to free your family from the cycle of birth and death. Otherwise what is the use of simply filling their bellies? Even the animals can do that!

Haridas: This valuable human life is meant only for reviving our eternal relationship with Krishna. If you do this, by chanting the Holy Names and living a pure life, do you think the Supreme Lord, who is maintaining all living entities in the universe, will let your family starve?

Householder: I never thought about it like that before! You are quite right... I must not waste any more time! But how can I change my ways?

Nityananda: The first and foremost thing to do is to always remember Krishna by chanting His Holy Names. Now repeat after Me: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. If you always chant like this and live your life according to the principles of the Bhagavad-Gétä, then you will very quickly develop your Krishna Consciousness, and you along with your family will become very happy and free from all anxieties!

Householder: Thank You! Thank You very much! I will certainly follow Your instructions, believe me!

Haridas: Jai! We will visit you again when we come back this way.

Householder: Now please, You have been so kind to me. I must repay You in some way... (at that moment a horrible shouting and disturbing sound is heard offstage)

Haridas: What on earth was that?

Householder: Oh, no! It's those two rogues, Jagai and Madhai again!

Nityananda: Who are they?

Householder: They are the meanest pair of dacoits who ever walked the land of Bengal! Nothing and no one is safe when they are on the loose! I'm going inside and bolting the door... I wouldn't wait around here if I were You!

Haridas: Perhaps we should avoid these two fellows. We do not want to cause any trouble.

Nityananda: Haridas, surely we must be merciful to these two fallen souls. For if they are delivered from their sinful ways, then the good name of Lord Chaitanya

will be still more glorified! (Jagai and Madhai appear, stumbling and falling around in a drunken condition. Shouting and swearing, they see an old man passing by)

Madhai: Here, Jagai! Look at this old man!

Jagai: Come on, Madhai, let's do him in!

Madhai: Yeah, I'll break his neck! (they move in and begin to harass the old man. At that time, Lord Nityananda and Haridas fall at their feet and loudly implore the two rogues)

Nityananda: My dear friends, please chant the Holy Name of Krishna and give up your sinful life! (Jagai and Madhai are taken aback and the old man uses this opportunity to limp off stage)

Jagai: What? Vaishnavas? Ugh! (spits)

Madhai: You're the scum of the earth!

Jagai: Come on, Madhai! Let's teach these fools a lesson!

Madhai: Yeah! Come here, you two! (they give chase to Lord Nityananda and Haridas, who run for their lives)

SCENE TWO

Lord Chaitanya Hears the Sankirtan Report

SCENE TWO

Lord Chaitanya Hears the Sankirtan Report

(In Srivasa Öhäkura's house, Lord Chaitanya is surrounded by His devotees)

Chaitanya: The essence of all Vedic knowledge is included in the eight syllables Hare Krishna, Hare Rama. This is the reality of all Vedanta. The chanting of the Holy Names is the only way to cross the ocean of nescience, and is the chief means of attaining love of Godhead. By humility and meekness one attracts the attention of Krishna. Therefore, if one becomes very humble and meek, he can easily attain the lotus feet of Krishna in this age of Kali. In this way, whatever one does in executing devotional service must be accompanied with the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord. (Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura enter) Nityananda Prabhu! Haridas! What is the news of today's preaching work?

Nityananda: My dear Lord, by Your unlimited mercy, many fallen souls were delivered! (Lord Chaitanya and other devotees all shout: "Jai! Haribol!") But there were two sinful rogues who would not listen to us. Somehow or other they avoided Your mercy, My Lord.

Haridas: Yes, dear Lord. These men were two demonic brothers named Jagai and Madhai. When we asked them to chant, they simply attacked us with filthy language and then chased us for miles. By Krishna's grace we narrowly escaped, but they would have killed us had we been caught!

Nityananda: It is a great misfortune that they could not be given the mercy.

Chaitanya: My dear devotees! I am very pleased that you tried to deliver such a degraded pair of fellows. Actually, I know of these two brothers, Jagai and Madhai. Formerly they were good young boys named Jagannath and Madhava, born in a respectable brahmana family, but due to bad association they have become meat-eaters, woman-hunters and sinners of the worst kind. But do not be downhearted! If at first you don't succeed, then try again... somehow or other, they may be delivered, for everything is possible by the grace of Krishna.

Nityananda: Yes! We will go to them again tomorrow and preach to them! By Your mercy, they will be delivered!

Devotees: Jai! Haribol! Gaura Haribol!

SCENE THREE

The Deliverance of Jagai and Madhai

SCENE THREE

The Deliverance of Jagai and Madhai

(On the streets of Navadvipa. Jagai and Madhai are on stage arguing. Enter Lord Nityananda and Haridas)

Jagai: Hey look! It's those nonsense God-mongers again!

Madhai: What? Come back for more, have you? Well, take this! (Madhai throws a piece of clay pot at Lord Nityananda, which appears to draw blood)

Nityananda: It does not matter that you have done this; I still request you to chant the Holy Name of Lord Krishna!

Jagai: How astonishing! I have never seen such tolerance, Madhai! He must be a saintly person! (to Lord Nityananda) My dear sir, I am very sorry! Please forgive me and please pardon my brother!

Madhai: Hey, what's wrong with you, Jagai? You lost your brain? Out of my way, you fool, I'm going to teach this Vaishnava not to mess with me!

Jagai: (trying to stop Madhai) No, Madhai, don't do it!

Haridas: Nrisimhadeva! Nrisimhadeva! (suddenly Lord Chaitanya appears in a fierce and angry mood)

Chaitanya: How dare you hurt Lord Nityananda! I will destroy you for this! (He raises His chakra weapon)

Nityananda: (stopping the Lord) Wait, My Lord! Your mission is not to kill, but to deliver such rascals as this! If You kill these two rogues, then You may as well kill all the people of this age, for they are all practically as fallen as these two! Please be merciful to them, I beg You!

Chaitanya: All right, I will spare you, but on one condition only: you must solemnly promise that from this moment onwards, you will give up all your sinful habits and take up the chanting of Krishna's Holy Names as your only shelter! (the two brothers are both on their knees by now and they begin to beg the Lord)

Jagai: Oh yes, my Lord, I'll do anything You ask! Anything!

Madhai: I'll turn over a new leaf, I promise!

Chaitanya: Come now, my dear friends, do not fear! Although you were most fallen, by the mercy of Lord Nityananda you have now become the most fortunate!

Jagai & Madhai: Oh thank You, My Lord! Thank You! (Lord Chaitanya raises them up and embraces them)

Nityananda: Dear Lord Gauranga, You are so kind to the Kali-yuga living entities, for although everyone is so sinful in this age, You are freely giving the highest benediction—pure loving service to Krishna—to anyone who simply takes shelter of Your lotus feet. Let's chant the Holy Names right now! (kirtan) Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ki jai!

The End

The Story Of Amogha (#1)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

The Story Of Amogha (#1)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

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CAST: Narrator, Lord Chaitanya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Sati, Amogha.

Narrator: One day, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya came before Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with folded hands and submitted a request. Since all the Vaishnavas had returned to Bengal, there was a good chance that the Lord would accept an invitation.

Sarvabhauma: Please come take lunch at my house for one month.

Lord Chaitanya: I can only come for one day because I am a sannyasi.

Sarvabhauma: Please come for at least ten days.

Narrator: In this way, by and by, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu reduced the duration to five days. Thus, for five days He regularly accepted the invitation to lunch. Having this arrangement confirmed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Bhattacharya became very glad and immediately invited the Lord to his house on that very day. After returning to his home, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya informed his wife Sati of the auspicious news, and she began cooking with great pleasure. Sarvabhauma personally began to help his wife cook. Sati was very experienced, and she knew how to cook nicely. When everything was ready, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came there alone after finishing His midday duties. He was a little astonished to see the gorgeous arrangement.

Lord Chaitanya: Look how much prasadam has been cooked in six hours!

Sarvabhauma: It is only by Your mercy, my Lord.

Lord Chaitanya: It will be impossible to eat all this!

Sarvabhauma: I know how much You can eat. In Jagannath Puri, You eat fifty-two times a day, and at Govardhana-puja, You eat mountains of prasadam! You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas I am a tiny living being. So take a little prasada from my house.

Narrator: Hearing this, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled and sat down to eat. Bhattacharya, with great pleasure, first offered Him the prasada from the Jagannath temple. At this time Bhattacharya had a son-in-law named Amogha, who was the husband of his daughter, Shathi. Although born in an aristocratic brahmana family, this Amogha was a great fault-finder. Amogha wanted to see Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu eat, but he was not allowed to enter. Indeed, Bhattacharya guarded the threshold of his house with a stick in his hand. However, as soon as Bhattacharya began distributing prasada and was a little inattentive, Amogha came in. Seeing the quantity of food, he began to blaspheme.

Amogha: This food would be enough to feed twelve men, but this sannyasi is eating all of it alone! (as soon as Amogha says this, Sarvabhauma turns his eyes upon him. Seeing Bhattacharya's anger, Amogha immediately leaves. Sarvabhauma runs after him to strike him with a stick, but Amogha flees so fast

that Sarvabhauma cannot catch him. When Sarvabhauma returns, he looks at Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and says:)

Sarvabhauma: That stupid Amogha!

Sati: (striking her head and chest) Let my daughter become a widow!

Narrator: Seeing the lamentation of both husband and wife, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu tried to pacify them. According to their desire, He ate the prasada and was very satisfied. Sarvabhauma then placed a flower garland over Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. After offering obeisances, Sarvabhauma submitted the following humble statement:

Sarvabhauma: I brought You to my home just to have You offended. Please forgive me.

Lord Chaitanya: What Amogha says is true. What is your offense? (after saying this, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu left and returned to His residence. Sarvabhauma offers his respects to the Lord and says to his wife:)

Sarvabhauma: Amogha should be killed, or else I should kill myself. But that would be wrong since we are both brahmanas. Instead, I will never look at Amogha again.

Sati: And our daughter won't be his wife anymore.

Narrator: That night Amogha fled, and in the morning he immediately fell sick with cholera. As soon as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard that Amogha was going to die, He immediately ran to him in great haste. Placing His hand on Amogha's chest, He spoke as follows:

Lord Chaitanya: A brahmana's heart is supposed to be clean so Krishna can sit there. Why have you allowed your heart to become dirty? You are very fortunate. Sarvabhauma's association has made your heart clean again. Now get up and chant Hare Krishna!

Narrator: After hearing Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and being touched by Him, Amogha, who was on his deathbed, immediately stood up and began to chant the holy name of Krishna. Thus he became mad with ecstatic love and began to dance emotionally. While Amogha danced in ecstatic love, he manifested all the ecstatic symptoms — trembling, tears, jubilation, trance, perspiration, and a faltering voice. Seeing these waves of ecstatic emotion, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began to laugh. Amogha then fell before the Lord's lotus feet and submissively said:

Amogha: O merciful Lord, please excuse me! (he begins slapping his own cheeks) By this mouth I have blasphemed You!

Lord Chaitanya: Everyone in Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's house is very dear to Me, including his maids and servants and even his dog. Amogha, always chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and do not commit any further offenses.

Narrator: After giving Amogha this instruction, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to Sarvabhauma's house. Upon seeing the Lord, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya immediately offered his obeisances.

Sarvabhauma: Why did You bring Amogha back to life? It would have been better had he died.

Lord Chaitanya: Now that he has become a Vaishnava, he is offenseless. You can bestow your mercy upon him without hesitation.

Narrator: Thereafter, Amogha became an unalloyed devotee of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He danced in ecstasy and peacefully chanted the holy name of Lord Krishna. In this way, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed His various pastimes. Whoever sees them or hears of them becomes truly astonished.

The End

The Story Of Amogha (#2)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

The Story Of Amogha (#2)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

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CAST: Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Lord Chaitanya, Sati-Mata (Sarvabhauma's Wife), Gopinath Acharya, Amogha.

SCENE ONE

Lord Chaitanya's residence

SCENE ONE

Lord Chaitanya's residence

Sarvabhauma: My dear Lord, since all the Vaishnavas have now returned to Bengal, I request that You kindly take lunch at my house every day for the next month.

Lord Chaitanya: This is not possible, for it is completely against the religious principles of a sannyasi.

Sarvabhauma: In that case, I request that You please come to my house for the next twenty days.

Lord Chaitanya: Bhattacharya, it is not a religious principle of the renounced order! I shall accept lunch at your house for one day only.

Sarvabhauma: O Lord, please be merciful to me. After many millions of lifetimes, I have achieved Your association. Do not treat me in such a way.

Lord Chaitanya: What can I say to you? What will become of My regulative principles? Because I cannot refuse you, I will accept lunch at your house for five days.

Sarvabhauma: Please come this very day at noon, so that we may provide food for You. (they exit)

SCENE TWO

The house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya

SCENE TWO

The house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya

(On stage, Sarvabhauma and wife are making preparations)

Sarvabhauma: Quickly now, is all prepared? It is almost noon and the Lord will be here very soon. Yes, you have done very well! I am sure the Lord will be very pleased to accept such nice preparations that have been offered to the Lord. I only hope that our son-in-law, Amogha, does not decide to come here. That rascal is very envious of the Lord and is always looking for some chance to find fault. But if he shows his face here today, I will give him a sound beating that he will not forget for a long time! (Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu enters) My Lord, there is no limit to Your mercy, for You are willing to come to the house of this unfortunate non-devotee! (he washes the Lord's feet) Now, my Lord, please come and accept prasadam.

Lord Chaitanya: This is wonderful! How was this arrangement of rice and vegetables finished within six hours? Even a hundred men cooking could not possibly finish all these preparations within so short a time! I know that the food has already been offered to Lord Krishna, since I see that there are Tulasi flowers on the plates. You are most fortunate and your endeavor is successful, for you have offered such a wonderful variety of food to Radha and Krishna. Now take away Krishna's sitting place and give Me prasada on a different plate.

Sarvabhauma: It is not so wonderful, my Lord. Everything has been made possible by the mercy of He who will eat the food. Now please sit in this place and take lunch.

Lord Chaitanya: This place is worshipable because it was used by Krishna!

Sarvabhauma: Both the food and the sitting place are the Lord's mercy. If you can eat the remnants of the food, what is the offense in Your sitting in this place?

Lord Chaitanya: Yes, you have spoken correctly — the shastras enjoin that the devotees can partake of everything left by Krishna, but there is so much food here that it is impossible to eat it all.

Sarvabhauma: I know how much You can eat. Here in Jagannath Puri You eat hundreds of buckets of prasada 52 times a day, and in Dwaraka You eat daily in 16,000 different places. At the Govardhana-puja ceremony You ate stacks of rice, in comparison to which this is not even a morsel for You. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas I am a most insignificant living being. Therefore You may accept a little quantity of food from my house. (Lord Chaitanya sits down to eat. Bhattacharya is guarding the door but, while he is serving the Lord, Amogha cunningly enters)

Amogha: This much food is sufficient to satisfy ten or twelve men, but this sannyasi alone is eating so much!

Sarvabhauma: Alas, the Lord has been blasphemed in my house. Now I will teach you a lesson! (he takes a stick and chases Amogha around the room and out the door) This Amogha is lower than a street-dog! Alas, alas, that ever my daughter was given to such an abominable person! (calls) Help! Come and help me here! (Sati-Mata runs in)

Sati: My dear husband, what great calamity has occurred here in the Lord's presence?!

Sarvabhauma: Blasphemy! The Lord, while taking prasada, has been criticized by our most abominable son-in-law, Amogha!!!

Sati: What! How could such a calamity befall us? Now with all my heart I pray that my daughter, Shathi, will soon become a widow!

Lord Chaitanya: My dear Bhattacharya, do not lament so bitterly. Pacify yourself now that I have taken prasada at your house as you desired.

Sarvabhauma: I have invited You to my house only to have You blasphemed! This is a great offense. Please excuse me. I beg Your pardon. (Bhattacharya brings Lord Chaitanya spices, sandalwood and a garland)

Lord Chaitanya: What Amogha has said is correct, therefore it is not blasphemy. What is your offense? Now I must depart, but I request you to please don't take this incident seriously and reproach yourself.

Sarvabhauma: O Mahaprabhu, I surely have committed a great offense against You. I am the lowest of men and am certainly not fit to serve You!

Lord Chaitanya: There is no offense. Now please, I beg you, do not take this matter so seriously. (he exits)

Sarvabhauma: If the man who blasphemed Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is killed or if I give up my own life, this sinful action may be atoned. However, neither of these ideas are befitting because both bodies belong to brahmanas. Instead, I shall avoid the face of that blasphemer. I shall never even speak his name. Inform my daughter Shathi to abandon the relationship with her husband because he has fallen down. For when a husband is fallen, his relationship must be given up. This offense I have committed to the Lord grieves my heart so greatly.

SCENE THREE

Lord Chaitanya's residence

SCENE THREE

Lord Chaitanya's residence

Lord Chaitanya: My dear Govinda, please tell Me what is happening at the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Both he and his wife were greatly afflicted at My being criticized yesterday by their son-in-law, Amogha.

Gopinath: My Lord, here is a great wonder. Both Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and his wife are staying in their house and fasting, while Amogha has fallen sick with cholera and is now dying!

Lord Chaitanya: This is all most disturbing! I must go immediately to Amogha's house!

SCENE FOUR

Amogha's house

SCENE FOUR

Amogha's house

(Amogha is in his bed. Lord Chaitanya places His hand on Amogha's chest)

Lord Chaitanya: The heart of a brahmana is by nature very clean, therefore it is a proper place for Krishna to sit. Why have you allowed jealousy to sit here also, making yourself like a chandala? However, because of your association with Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, all your contamination is vanquished and you are now able to chant the Holy Name of the Lord. Get up, Amogha, and chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. If you do so, Krishna will certainly bestow His mercy upon you. (Amogha gets up and begins to chant and dance)

Amogha: O merciful Lord, please excuse my offense. By this mouth I have blasphemed You. (Amogha slaps his own mouth until Gopinath Acharya stops him)

Lord Chaitanya: You are the object of My affection because you are the son-in-law of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Everyone in his house is very dear to Me, including his maids, his servants and even his dog. Amogha, always chant the Holy Name of the Lord and do not commit any further offenses.

Amogha: My Lord, I am the most abominable person, and surely I was destined to die of cholera due to my offenses at Your lotus feet. But not only have You saved me from death, out of Your causeless mercy, but You have delivered love of God to me! Certainly You are the most merciful of all incarnations, for You are freely giving the priceless gift of love of God even to the lowest of men.

Lord Chaitanya: Surely Krishna has saved you from the most abominable existence, due to His causeless mercy upon you. Now, Gopinath, go to the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and tell him to give up all his lamentation. For this Amogha, who was formerly a most offensive person, is now chanting the Holy Name of the Lord and has become a most exalted devotee. EVERYONE CHANT THE HARE KRISHNA MANTRA!!! (kirtan)

The End

The Story Of Amogha (#3)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

The Story Of Amogha (#3)

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

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CAST: Narrator, Lord Chaitanya, Satyaraja Khan, Vasudeva Datta, Mukunda Das, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Sati-Mata (Sarvabhauma's Wife), Amogha.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: After the Ratha-yatra festival in Jagannath Puri one year, Lord Chaitanya spoke very confidentially to Lord Nityananda. Later the devotees could guess the subject of Their conversation, for Lord Chaitanya called for them and asked them to return to Bengal. Bidding farewell to all the devotees, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu requested them to come to Jagannath Puri each year to see Him. Then, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, spoke to all the devotees with great love. First the Lord spoke to Lord Nityananda:

Lord Chaitanya: Go to Bengal and preach to everyone. Give Krishna Consciousness, devotional service, to even the lowest of men... and do not worry, I will come and see You. I shall keep Myself invisible and watch while You dance.

And you, Srivasa Öhäkura, perform Hari-nama Sankirtan each day and know it for certain that I will come there and dance. You will be able to see Me, but others will not. Here, take this prasada of Lord Jagannath's and this holy cloth, and offer them along with my obeisances to my mother, Shachi-devi. Actually, each day I go and visit her.

Once, my mother Shachi offered food to her Deity. She cooked all the foods that are my favorites. Taking the food upon her lap, my mother was crying, thinking that I was gone and these foods are all dear to Me. While she was thinking like that, I immediately went there and ate everything. Seeing the empty dish, she wiped the tears away and wondered, "Who has eaten all that food? Why is the plate empty?" She thought that maybe her Bala-Gopal Deity had eaten it, or maybe some animal had come, or maybe she had forgotten to fill the plates at all. So, she cleansed the eating place and again began offering the food. Because of her love, I am drawn there to eat. My mother actually knows this in her heart and feels happiness, but when she thinks about it, she cannot believe that it is really true. This happened on the last Vijaya-dashami day—you can ask her about it when you see her. Please ask her about it, and make her believe that I go there to see her. Go now.

Satyaraja Khan: My Lord?

Lord Chaitanya: Satyaraja Khan, yes.

Satyaraja Khan: I have a question for You.

Lord Chaitanya: Please ask Me.

Satyaraja Khan: My Lord, I am a householder, and I am a materialistic man. I don't know how to advance in spiritual life. Please, I humbly request You to give me some instructions.

Lord Chaitanya: Always chant the name of Krishna! Never stop chanting... and whenever possible, serve Krishna and Krishna's devotees—the Vaishnavas.

Satyaraja Khan: How can I recognize who is a Vaishnava?

Lord Chaitanya: Whoever chants the Holy Name of Krishna is understood to be a Vaishnava, therefore you should offer all respects to him. Where is Mukunda? Oh, here is Mukunda Das! Everyone please hear! On the outside, Mukunda appears to be the King's doctor, but inside he has a deep love for Krishna! One day, Mukunda was seated with the Mohammedan King on a high platform, and Mukunda was telling the King about a medical treatment. While they were talking, a servant brought a fan made of peacock feathers to shade the head of the King. Just by seeing the peacock feather fan, Mukunda thought of Krishna, became absorbed in ecstasy and fell off the platform to the ground. Mukunda told the King that his fall was due to epilepsy, but the King could understand that Mukunda was a great soul, a lover of God. And Vasudeva Datta! Vasudeva Datta is so great that if I had 1,000 mouths, I could not repeat all of his glories.

Vasudeva: My dear Lord, I have but one request; I beg that you will accept this request.

Lord Chaitanya: Whatever a pure devotee wants, Lord Krishna surely gives it to him. Krishna has no other duty than to fulfill the desire of His pure devotee. What is your desire?

Vasudeva: My Lord, my heart breaks to see the suffering of all the conditioned souls. I request you to transfer the karma of their sinful lives upon my head...

Lord Chaitanya: That is an astonishing request!

Vasudeva: Let me suffer forever in hell—I'll accept all the sinful reactions of all living entities, but please finish their detested material life!

Lord Chaitanya: You are the incarnation of Prahlada Maharaja, and Lord Krishna has bestowed His complete mercy upon You. Whosoever's welfare you desire immediately becomes a Vaishnava, and Krishna delivers all Vaishnavas from the reactions to their sinful activities!

Vasudeva: Thank You for Your kindness.

Lord Chaitanya: Simply by your prayer, all the living entities within the universe can be liberated; thus there is no need for you to suffer for their sinful lives.

Narrator: Due to impending separation from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, all the devotees began to cry, and the Lord also was morose due to separation from the devotees.

Lord Chaitanya: Now it is time for all of you to go. I will see you next year.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Narrator: After all the devotees left, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya came before Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with folded hands. He thought that since all the devotees had returned to Bengal, there was a good chance that the Lord would accept his request.

Sarvabhauma: My dear Lord Chaitanya, I would be so pleased if You would grant me one favor.

Lord Chaitanya: What is Your favor?

Sarvabhauma: If You would have lunch at my house every day for one month, I would be completely satisfied.

Lord Chaitanya: I am sorry, my dear Sarvabhauma. It is against the religious principles of a sannyasi to eat at a devotee's house continuously for many days.

Sarvabhauma: Then please come for twenty days then; that isn't so many.

Lord Chaitanya: Not even for twenty days! It is against the principles of the renounced order of life!

Sarvabhauma: Then surely you can have lunch at my house for fifteen days.

Lord Chaitanya: I'll accept lunch at your house for only one day.

Sarvabhauma: Please accept my invitation for at least ten days, please Lord Chaitanya, please!

Narrator: In great love, Lord Chaitanya was requested again and again by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya to eat at his home for many days. Finally, Lord Chaitanya reduced the days to five.

Lord Chaitanya: All right, Sarvabhauma, I will take lunch at your house for only five days this month and not one day more.

Sarvabhauma: Thank You so much! Oh, my dear Lord Chaitanya, I have one more request to make of You.

Lord Chaitanya: What is that request?

Sarvabhauma: If You come with many other sannyasis, I will not be able to give either You or them the proper respect. My simple request is that when You come for lunch, please come alone, or at most with Your secretary, Swarupa Damodara. I can feed the other great sannyasis at other times during the month. When You come, Lord, please come alone.

Lord Chaitanya: Yes, Sarvabhauma, that is acceptable to Me.

Sarvabhauma: Oh, Lord Chaitanya... I have one more simple... little... request... Is that all right?

Lord Chaitanya: What is your request?

Sarvabhauma: Please come today!!!

Lord Chaitanya: All right!!!

Sarvabhauma: Jai, Jai, Jai, Haribol, Haribol, Haribol! Sati-mata, Sati, my good wife, Sati-mata! Come immediately, Sati Mata, I have great news, come immediately!!!

Sati-Mata: What is it, O Bhattacharya? What news do you have?

Sarvabhauma: Lord Chaitanya has accepted my invitation to come for lunch!

Sati-Mata: That's wonderful!!! We can cook vegetables, and His favorite rice, fried curd, squash, pumpkins, chutneys, condensed milk, sandesh... what day is the Lord coming so that we can start preparing everything nicely?

Sarvabhauma: Sati-mata, the Lord is coming today!!!

Sati-Mata: Ohhhhhhhhhhh!!!

Both: We had better get started!!!

Narrator: Within a very short time, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and his wife, Sati-Mata, who was as affectionate to the Lord as His own mother, cooked an enormous feast. They cooked spinach, vegetables, rice with ghee, shukta, buttermilk minced with dahl, fifteen different vegetable preparations, fried dahl and pumpkin, fried banana flowers, newly grown nimba leaves, fried squash, soups, chutneys, five or six sour preparations, mung dahl bharatas, banana cakes, coconut cakes, sweet rice, condensed mango milk, churned curd, and a variety of sandesh sweetmeats. Indeed, all the eatables available in Bengal and Orissa were all prepared for the Lord. Bhattacharya prepared this great variety of food and spread a white cloth over it, and Tulasi manjaris were placed above the mound of rice. Also, included in the offering to Lord Chaitanya was sweet rice and cakes which were Jagannath prasadam. When everything was ready, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came there alone, for He knew the heart of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

Sarvabhauma: Here He comes! My dear Lord Chaitanya, thank You so much for coming! Please allow me to wash Your lotus feet! Please sit here to take Your lunch.

Lord Chaitanya: This is most uncommon!!! How was this huge arrangement of rice and vegetables finished within just six hours?

Sarvabhauma: It is not so wonderful—everything has been made possible by the mercy of He who will eat the food.

Lord Chaitanya: I see Tulasi leaves on the rice! You are so fortunate that you are offering this wonderful food to Radha and Krishna! I am also so fortunate to be allowed to take a little bit of the remnants of this food. Take away Krishna's sitting place and show me where I should sit. Where is a little plate for Me?

Sarvabhauma: You should sit right here and You should eat everything!

Lord Chaitanya: Everything?

Sarvabhauma: I know how much You can eat. After all, in the temple here in Jagannath Puri, You eat 52 times a day and eat hundreds of buckets filled with prasada. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and I am an insignificant living being. Therefore You can accept this little quantity of food from my house.

Lord Chaitanya: I will accept Your offering.

Narrator: Lord Chaitanya smiled and sat down to eat, and the Bhattacharya began to serve Him with great pleasure. (Amogha comes to the door, and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya tries to keep him away)

Sarvabhauma: Go away! Go away!! Go away!!!

Lord Chaitanya: Please, let Me have a little more rice.

Narrator: Just then, Amogha, the son-in-law of the Bhattacharya entered... He was a great fault-finder and blasphemer. Seeing the great quantity of food, Amogha began to blaspheme the Lord! (Amogha enters)

Amogha: Just see!!! This one sannyasi is alone eating enough for 10 or 12 men!!! So much food!!! So much!!! Just see!!! Just see!!!

Sarvabhauma: Your rascal!!! Sati-Mata, get my stick!!! Get out! Get out of my house immediately, you rascal!!! Sati-Mata, my stick quickly!!! That no-good son-in-law of mine! I curse him a million times! That brahma-bandhu!!! That blasphemer!!!

Lord Chaitanya: (laughs) Do not take it so seriously.

Sarvabhauma: My dear Lord Chaitanya, I am so sorry! Please excuse me. I beg your pardon. I brought You as a guest to my own home, and now see what has happened! Blasphemy in my own home!

Lord Chaitanya: What Amogha said is correct—look how much food I have eaten! So where is his blasphemy and where is your offense?

Sarvabhauma: You must forgive us, Lord! This is a terrible blasphemy against You in our own house. Forgive us.

Lord Chaitanya: Sarvabhauma, you are great devotee. Do not worry so much about it. I must go now. Please go about your everyday duties.

Sarvabhauma: Sati-Mata!!! Sati-Mata! Sati-Mata, come here!!!

Sati-Mata: Yes, Bhattacharya, I heard what happened! How horrible! I curse my daughter so that she will become a widow!!!

Sarvabhauma: Because both the rascal Amogha and myself are brahmanas, I cannot kill either him or myself! From this day forward, I will never see his face again. Let us go tell our daughter that she must leave this blasphemer's home immediately. When the husband falls down, it is the wife's duty to give up the relationship.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: The next day, Gopinath Acharya went to see Lord Chaitanya. Gopinath informed the Lord that due to the offense of their son-in-law, both Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and his wife were fasting, and that during the night Amogha had fled, but was struck down with cholera and was dying. As soon as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard that Amogha was going to die, He immediately ran to see him in great haste.

Lord Chaitanya: Amogha, Amogha, the heart of a brahmana is by nature very clean, therefore it is a proper place for Krishna to sit. Why have you allowed jealousy to also sit there? Do not contaminate your heart like this!!! Amogha, because you are a relative of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, the contamination in your heart is now gone!!! You are now able to chant the Hare Krishna mahamantra. If you do so, Krishna will unfailingly bestow His mercy on you.

Amogha: (sits up and begins to chant) Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare!!! Haribol, Haribol!!! (dances) O merciful Lord, please excuse my offense, this mouth is my enemy because it has blasphemed You.

Lord Chaitanya: Amogha, I have so much love for you because you are related to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Everyone in Sarvabhauma's house is very dear to Me, including his maids and servants, and even his dog... what to speak of his family members!

Amogha: Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, You are very merciful!

Lord Chaitanya: Always chant the Hare Krishna mantra and do not commit any further offenses.

Amogha: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare!!!

Narrator: Thereafter, Amogha became an unalloyed devotee of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He danced in ecstasy and peacefully chanted the Holy Name of Lord Krishna. Thus the Lord enjoyed eating in the home of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, and within that one pastime, many pastimes were manifested. Lord Chaitanya showed His great mercy by excusing Amogha's offense, and He did this simply because Amogha was a relative of His devotee Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Whoever hears this pastime of Lord Chaitanya's with faith and love will attain the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet very soon.

(kirtan) SRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU KI JAI!!!

The End

Lord Chaitanya Bids Farewell To The Bengal Devotees

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

Lord Chaitanya Bids Farewell To The Bengal Devotees

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapter 15

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CAST: Lord Chaitanya, Satyaraja Khan, Vasudeva Datta, Various Devotees.

(Lord Chaitanya and his devotees explode upon the stage and the kirtan builds up to an ecstatic climax and then ends. Lord Chaitanya sits surrounded by the devotees and speaks movingly:)

Lord Chaitanya: My dear devotees, to see all of you before Me is the pleasure of My life, so how can My heart bear it now that all of you must return to Bengal? Please return here every year to see Me. Advaita Acharya, I consider you to be My spiritual master. Please give love of Krishna to all, even the lowest of men. And My dear Nityananda, you should spread devotional service throughout Bengal. Take with you Ramadas and Gadadhara, and sometimes I will also come to see your dancing, which purifies the three worlds.

O Srivasa, when you perform sankirtan in your house, know for certain that I am present there. Please take prasada from Lord Jagannath to my mother...

My dear Raghava Pandit. I am obliged to you, due to your pure love for Me. Everyone please hear of the pure devotion of Raghava Pandit. Every day, he prepares the finest fruits with great care and attention, and offers them to the Deity along with cakes, sweet rice and all the finest foods and paraphernalia. Everyone is satisfied by his service...

All you inhabitants of Kulina-grama must come to Me every year and bring silken rope to carry Lord Jagannath.

Satyaraja Khan: O Lord, I am a materialistic man, entangled in household life. What is my duty?

Lord Chaitanya: Always chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and try to serve Him and His devotees, the Vaishnavas.

Satyaraja Khan: My Lord, how can one recognize a Vaishnava? What are his common symptoms?

Lord Chaitanya: Anyone who chants the Holy Name even once is considered to be worshipable, for by so doing all his previous sinful activities are nullified. There are no barriers in this chanting, and anyone can worship the Lord in this way and become purified, even the lowest of men. This chanting awakens one's dormant love for Krishna. Therefore anyone who is chanting the Holy Name of the Lord is understood to be a Vaishnava and worthy of one's worship.

Ah, Vasudeva Datta, what can I say about your pure love for Sri Govinda? Your love for Krishna is so strong that it can illuminate the darkness hearts of all the fallen souls. (Vasudeva Datta becomes embarrassed and touches the Lord's lotus feet)

Vasudeva Datta: My dear Lord, You appear just to deliver all the conditioned souls. As you are the Supreme independent Lord, I have one petition to make before You: O Lord, my heart breaks to see the sufferings of the entangled living entities, therefore I request you to transfer the karma of their sinful lives upon my head. O Lord, let me always remain in a hellish condition, but please let their sufferings finish. (Sri Chaitanya is overwhelmed)

Lord Chaitanya: Such a statement is not astonishing, for you are actually Prahlada Maharaja, and Krishna has bestowed all mercy upon you! Whatever you desire, Krishna will give, there is no need for you to suffer! My dear Vasudeva Datta, the purity of your love is unmatched, and because of that love all living beings in the universe will certainly be liberated!

Now, My dear devotees, you must return to Bengal, but do not think that I will be separated from you, for wherever the Holy Name of Sri Hari is chanted by His devotees, certainly I am present. Come now... take heart! Let there be kirtan! (A very slow and ecstatic kirtan begins and all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya dance)

The End

Sanatana Goswami And The Process Of Devotion

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapters 19 & 20

Sanatana Goswami And The Process Of Devotion

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila Chapters 19 & 20

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CAST: Sanatana Goswami, Hussain Shah, Brahmana, Ishana, Lord Chaitanya, Sri Kanta, Chandrashekhara, Jailer, Guard, Innkeeper, Palmist, Washerwoman.

Narrator: Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who possesses unlimited, wonderful opulences. By His mercy, even a person born as the lowest of men can spread the science of devotional service. All glories to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! All glories to Prabhu Nityananda! All glories to all the devotees of the Lord!

Çréla Sanatana Goswami, the elder brother of Çréla Rupa Goswami, was a most important minister in the government of Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal, and was considered a great scholar. Sanatana possessed all the opulences of a royal position, but he gave up everything just to accept the youthful goddess of renunciation. He is the object of pleasure for the devotees who know the science of devotional service. Please hear with faith and love this pastime of Lord Chaitanya's mercy upon Sanatana Goswami. When one hears these topics, one's heart will be cleansed of all contamination.

SCENE ONE

Sanatana's home

SCENE ONE

Sanatana's home

Sanatana: My dear brahmana, you are so kind to come to my home today. Please, for my benefit, speak on Çrémad-Bhāgavatam.

Brahmana: nasta-prayesv abhadresu nityam bhagavata sevaya / bhagavaty uttama-sloke bhaktir bhavati naisthiki—“By regularly hearing the Bhāgavatam and by rendering service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is practically destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

So, one interested in spiritual life must not only approach the book Bhagavata, but he must also approach the person Bhagavata. One who has never received the dust of the feet of a pure devotee upon his head is certainly a dead body.

Sanatana: Lord Chaitanya said that a person who comes in contact with a bona fide spiritual master is very fortunate.

Brahmana: Yes, one who is serious about spiritual life is given the intelligence to approach a spiritual master, by the grace of Krishna. And by the grace of the spiritual master, one becomes advanced in Krishna Consciousness.

Ishana: Hussain Shah, the Nawab of Bengal, is here to see you.

Hussain: O my most brilliant gem, how have you been keeping yourself?

Sanatana: Please sit down and accept some fruit.

Hussain: Yesterday, I sent my doctor to see you, and he reported to me that you are not ill. As far as he could see, you are completely healthy. So, when will you return to your office at the royal court?

Sanatana: I'm not returning at all.

Hussain: Just see how he jokes with me to give pain to my heart! I am depending on you to carry out so many of my activities, but you have given up your governmental duty to sit at home all day. Come now—what is your intention? Please tell me frankly.

Sanatana: You can no longer expect any service from me. Please arrange for someone else to tend to the management.

Hussain: My brother, I am always busy attacking other states and fighting everywhere. It gives me great pleasure to bring back riches to fill my coffers. And while I am engaged in this business, you, my brother, should look after the state management! If you do not, how will things continue?

Sanatana: You are the supreme ruler of Bengal and are completely independent. If you think that I'm at fault, then you must act accordingly.

Hussain: Enough! Guard! Guard, arrest him! Even though you are of Hindu birth, your logic, your boldness and your wit captured my heart and I knew, upon our first meeting, that your talents were meant for a higher purpose. So, I took you into my court and accepted you as my younger brother! But now, on the pretext of bad health, you have avoided your service. Instead, you have fallen in with these readers of fables, these parasites of your society, who go by the name of brahmanas! Whatever advancement you have made at my royal court, you are casting aside without a second thought! Like a man possessed, you are accepting

day as night and night as day! How it pains me to see you in this abominable condition! Take him away! (exits)

SCENE TWO

Jail cell

SCENE TWO

Jail cell

Ishana: Sanatana...

Sanatana: Ishana, what are you doing here?

Ishana: I have a letter from your brother, Rupa. He has also left this for you. (gives him letter and 2 sacks of coins) I must go now.

Sanatana: Surely, there is news of Lord Chaitanya! (reads the letter)

Jailer: This way, my lord—he's in the last cell. (Sanatana quickly lays down. Jailer enters with Hussain Shah and says to Sanatana) Come on, come on! Get up and greet your illustrious visitor, Hussain Shah.

Hussain: So, how do you like prison life?

Sanatana: This entire world is a prison. Some are shackled with iron chains, and some with gold and jewels.

Hussain: I see that this week of confinement has not disturbed your humor. I am here to give you another chance. I don't know if any news creeps into these cells, but perhaps you've heard—today I'll be off to attack Orissa, and I wish you to come along on this campaign.

Sanatana: You are going to Orissa to give pain to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For this reason, I am powerless to go with you.

Hussain: So be it. Jailer, shut the door.

Jailer: Yes, my lord. (they exit)

Sanatana: (reads) "Lord Chaitanya is no longer in Jagannath Puri but has already departed for Vrindavan. Anupama and myself are leaving immediately to join Him, and you must get released and come to meet us. I have left you 10,000 coins. Use them to get out of prison. Somehow or other, get yourself released and come to Vrindavan."

Such wonders can only be accomplished by the mercy of Lord Chaitanya! Now I must act with due haste! Jailer! Jailer!

Jailer: Yes?

Sanatana: May I trouble you for a moment?

Jailer: What is it you want? Water... something to eat... a blanket? I'll try to help you in any way you ask.

Sanatana: My dear sir, you are a saintly person, a compassionate person. You are very fortunate and you have full knowledge of the revealed scriptures. In the Vedas it is stated: "If one releases a conditioned soul or an imprisoned person, according to religious principles, he himself is also released from material bondage by the Supreme Personality of Godhead." I've done a lot for you in the past. Now I am in difficulty. Please get me out of here.

Jailer: No, no, I'm sorry. I can't do that.

Sanatana: Wait, look here—here is 5,000 gold coins! Please accept them. By releasing me, you will receive the results of pious activities and become a rich man as well.

Jailer: I am willing to release you... but I'm afraid. The Shah will cut off my head!

Sanatana: There is no danger. The Nawab has gone south. If he returns, tell him that Sanatana went to pass stool near the bank of the Ganges and when he saw the Ganges, he jumped in. Tell him, "I looked for a long time but could find no trace of him. He jumped in with his shackles and therefore he drowned and was washed away by the waves." There is no reason to be afraid, for I shall not remain in this country. I shall become a mendicant and go to the holy city of Mecca.

Jailer: Well... I don't know...

Sanatana: (shows second bag of coins) I was going to save this, but I want you to have it all.

Jailer: Allah be praised! Allah be praised! Alright, but quick! Get underway before dawn breaks. (unlocks shackles) Come on, let's go!

SCENE THREE

The Inn

SCENE THREE

The Inn

Sanatana: Ishana, here's the inn we were told about.

Innkeeper: Come in! Come in! This abode is a shelter for weary travellers such as yourselves! Sit down and take some drink!

Palmist: Your hand—it is the hand of a gentleman who has no business in the forest!

Sanatana: My servant and I are making our way through the forest, but not without great difficulty.

Palmist: You are very determined. I am certain that you will reach your destination.

Sanatana: Only by the grace of Lord Chaitanya.

Palmist: I must say, you do have an unusual palm! It has been my pleasure to meet you! (goes over to Innkeeper)

Innkeeper: So what do you have to tell?

Palmist: This man is most extraordinary! He has great spiritual attributes!

Innkeeper: Yes, yes, but how much money does he have?

Palmist: He possesses eight gold coins.

Innkeeper: Eight gold coins! Tonight, I'll lead them down some obscure path. My man will be waiting and then... (takes out knife and holds it to his neck. Then he addresses Sanatana) Well, gentlemen, I understand you're having some difficulty in your journey. Don't worry! I will help you out of this jungle this very evening. In the meantime, make yourselves at home. Eat, drink... you are my honored guests. I'll get a room ready for you!

Sanatana: You are very kind. (Innkeeper exits)

Ishana: This is a stroke of good fortune!

Sanatana: Ishana, do you understand the nature of diplomacy?

Ishana: What do you mean?

Sanatana: This man is offering us such respect—that means he wants something.

Ishana: But master, what could it be?

Sanatana: Well, I have nothing. I think you have some valuables with you.

Ishana: Well, I... uh... I have seven gold coins.

Sanatana: Why have you brought this death knell with you? Give them to me.

Innkeeper: Your room is ready.

Sanatana: You are very kind. I must repay you for all your help. Here, take these gold coins and get me through the jungle. I'm a prisoner of the government and I can't go along the common road.

Innkeeper: I knew you had the coins and on this very night I would have killed you for them! It is very good that you have offered them to me. I am now relieved from sinful activity.

Sanatana: Will you still help me?

Innkeeper: Of course, of course! I won't even accept these gold coins, but I shall get you through the jungle simply to perform a pious activity.

Sanatana: If you do not accept these coins then someone else will kill me for them. You keep them.

Innkeeper: In this world there is danger at every step. We must accept that fact. But you should not be deterred in enjoying what is yours.

Sanatana: Nothing is mine. Everything in this universe is owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things which are necessary and nothing else. So you keep the coins. I am on my way to see Lord Chaitanya and I have no need for such things.

Innkeeper: That you have come to my inn, is truly a benediction. Alright then, come!

Sanatana: Ishana, I know that you have another gold coin. Keep it and return home. (Ishana exits) At the court of Hussain Shah I had so much material wealth, social position, good education, friends and servants, but I can see now that these were all impediments to my spiritual life. Now I am free. My only desire is to surrender at the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya. I only want His causeless devotional service in my life birth after birth.

SCENE FOUR

Hajipur

SCENE FOUR

Hajipur

Sri Kanta: Sanatana!

Sanatana: Yes. Who is it?

Sri Kanta: It is I, your brother-in-law, Sri Kanta. And what brings you to Hajipur, looking like a mendicant?

Sanatana: Sri Krishna is directing the wanderings of all living entities.

Sri Kanta: Sanatana, please tell me why you are not at the court of Hussain Shah?

Sanatana: He has become displeased with me because I am no longer interested in serving him.

Sri Kanta: Sanatana, what are you saying? Certainly he treated you with the respect and affection one has for a brother.

Sanatana: Yes, and when I would no longer lend my support to his nefarious plans, he threw me in prison. Such is the way of relationships based on sense gratification. When there is some discord, then it is finished. All relationships are like that... except for one—the relationship between the spiritual master and his disciple.

Sri Kanta: But to leave the royal court—this is rash behavior! Perhaps it was the daily pressure of your governmental duties. Please think it over.

Sanatana: I have thought it over quite well and I am on my way to serve my spiritual master.

Sri Kanta: Stay with me for a few days. Now, get rid of these dirty clothes and dress like a gentleman. I will get you everything you need.

Sanatana: You come like a ghost in the night to lure me back to those things which I have given up. I won't stay here for another minute.

Sri Kanta: Sanatana...

Sanatana: If you really want to help me, then please get me across the Ganges.

Sri Kanta: Of course I will help you. Here, at least take this blanket. It's a chilly night. (Sri Kanta gives Sanatana a fancy blanket, and they exit)

SCENE FIVE

Chandrashekhara's house

SCENE FIVE

Chandrashekhara's house

Lord Chaitanya: The Vedic literatures explain that Krishna is the central point of attraction, and His service should be our only activity. To attain the platform of love of Krishna is life's ultimate goal. Therefore, Krishna, Krishna's service and love of Krishna are the three great riches of life.

Chandrashekhara: But the flowery language of the Vedas gives way to so much interpretation and speculation. Therefore, to perfect one's life is a very difficult task, isn't it?

Lord Chaitanya: Whether one accepts Vedic literature, directly or indirectly, ultimately all knowledge points to Lord Krishna. Then, when complete knowledge of Him is realized, the bondage of Maya, the illusory energy, is broken. Chandrashekhara Prabhu?

Chandrashekhara: Yes, my Lord?

Lord Chaitanya: There is a devotee at your door. Please call him in.

Chandrashekhara: I don't see any devotee, my Lord.

Lord Chaitanya: Is there anyone at your door at all?

Chandrashekhara: Just some Muslim mendicant.

Lord Chaitanya: Please bring him in.

Chandrashekhara: Daravesh, please come in. Lord Chaitanya is calling you. (he comes in and Lord Chaitanya embraces him) This is extraordinary!

Sanatana: O my Lord, do not touch me.

Lord Chaitanya: I am touching you just to purify Myself because by the force of your devotional service you can purify the whole universe! My dear Vaishnava, seeing a person like you is the perfection of the one's eyesight. Touching your lotus feet is the perfection of the sense of touch. Glorifying your good qualities is the tongue's real activity. In this world it is very difficult to find a pure devotee of the Lord.

Sanatana: My dear Lord, please do not speak like this. I am most fallen. For so many years I have been in the service of meat eaters...

Lord Chaitanya: Krishna is very merciful and He is the deliverer of all fallen souls. My dear Sanatana, Krishna has saved you from life's deepest hell! He is an ocean of mercy!

Sanatana: I do not know who Krishna is. By Your mercy only have I been released from Maya's clutches.

Lord Chaitanya: You must tell Me about your escape from prison! I met your brother, Rupa, at Prayag. He told Me that he had put aside a large sum of money for your release. He and Anupama have already gone to Vrindavan. As for now, I want you to go and shave. Chandrashekhara Prabhu!

Chandrashekhara: Yes, my Lord?

Lord Chaitanya: Make Sanatana gentle. Show him where to bathe. Get him some new garments and then bring him some prasadam.

Chandrashekhara: Yes, my Lord!

SCENE SIX

The Ganges

SCENE SIX

The Ganges

Sanatana: Even though I have accepted the renounced order of life, still Lord Chaitanya is not very pleased with me. He repeatedly glances at my woolen blanket. I can see He does not approve of it. I must aim at giving up all varieties of sense gratification. I have an idea... O washerwoman!

Washerwoman: Yes, who is it that wants to speak with me?

Sanatana: Please, I beg to make a request of you...

Washerwoman: Yes, yes, of course. I can see you are a saintly person and worthy of receiving charity. What do you want?

Sanatana: Trade me your old quilt for this fine woolen blanket.

Washerwoman: I am a poor simple washerwoman and you are a respectable gentleman. Why do you joke with me? You have such a valuable blanket, and instead you want my old torn quilt? Why are you joking with me like this?

Sanatana: I'm not joking. Please take this blanket and give me your old quilt. (they exchange blankets)

Washerwoman: Well, uh... It's not stolen, is it?

Sanatana: Certainly not. Thank you very much!

Washerwoman: What kind of a madman is he? (exits)

Sanatana: The Supreme Personality of Godhead has saved me from the sinful life of material existence. By His desire my last piece of material attachment is now gone. (Lord Chaitanya enters)

Lord Chaitanya: O Sanatana, you have a new blanket!

Sanatana: Yes, my Lord.

Lord Chaitanya: It is contradictory to be in the renounced order of life and wear a valuable blanket. One loses his spiritual strength by doing this and will become the object of jokes. Lord Krishna is very merciful. He has nullified your attachment for material things. Why should Krishna allow you to maintain any last bit of attachment? After curing a disease, a good physician does not allow any of the disease to remain. For you, the miseries of worldly existence no longer exist. You are fit to propagate the cult of devotional service. Therefore, gradually hear all the truths about it from Me. I shall tell you about them.

Narrator: Sanatana Goswami thus inquired into all phases of devotional service, and Lord Chaitanya taught him the most confidential subjects as found in the authoritative scriptures like Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-Gétä, Hari-Vamsha and others.

Lord Chaitanya: Now, Sanatana, go to Vrindavan and excavate the different sites of Krishna's pastimes in Mathura. Construct temples in Vrindavan and write many books on the principles of Vaishnavism.

Narrator: Sanatana executed all the desires of the Lord. He constructed the famous temple of Madana Mohan at Vrindavan, and he wrote many books on the principles of devotional service. Indeed, all his associates, called the Goswamis of Vrindavan, wrote volumes of literature on the science of self realization—a task which was continued by their disciples and is carried on down to the present day. By the meeting of Sanatana and Lord Chaitanya, we learn that in order to understand spiritual subject matter, one must approach a spiritual master. (kirtan)

The End

Lord Chaitanya Liberates The Dog

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila, Chapter 1

adapted by Dasarath Suta Das

Lord Chaitanya Liberates The Dog

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila, Chapter 1

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SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

CAST: Narrator, Shivananda Sena, Dog, Boatman, Devotees, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Narrator: When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Jagannath Puri after His tour of Vrindavan, Swarupa Damodara Goswami immediately sent news of the Lord's arrival to the devotees in Navadvipa, West Bengal. Upon hearing this news, mother Shachi and all the other devotees of Navadvipa were very joyful, and they departed together for the long trip on foot to Nilachala (Jagannath Puri). Thus all the devotees of Kulina-gram and Sri Khanda, as well as Advaita Acharya, came together to meet Shivananda Sena. Shivananda Sena arranged for the journey. He maintained everyone and provided residential quarters. While going to Jagannath Puri, Shivananda Sena allowed a dog to go along with them. He supplied it food to eat and maintained it. One day, when they needed to cross a river, an Orissan boatman would not allow the dog to get in the boat.

Boatman: Hey, wait a minute here! Your party is welcome to come in my boat, but that street dog has to stay behind!

Shivananda: This dog is traveling along with us. He must come across the river in your boat, for I cannot leave him behind.

Boatman: I'm sorry, sir, this is my boat and I'm not allowing any filthy dog on board!

Shivananda: I will gladly pay extra for the dog's passage. Here is one pana (80 pieces) of conchshells for you to let him come along.

Boatman: No, no, I cannot compromise on my principles. No dogs aboard my boat!

Shivananda: Then please take these ten pana (800 pieces) of conchshells to take the dog across the river.

Boatman: Oh well, maybe just this once I will be happy to oblige you! Thank you very much, sir—everyone watch your step as you come aboard! (all exit)

Narrator: One day while Shivananda was detained by a tollman, his servant forgot to give the dog its usual portion of cooked rice. At night, when Shivananda Sena returned and was taking his meal, he inquired from the servant whether the dog had gotten its meal.

Shivananda: Ah, this Krishna-prasadam is very nice! Tell me, while I was gone did you feed the dog as usual?

Devotee: Oh, the dog! I completely forgot about feeding him!

Shivananda: What?! How could you forget? That dog is a devotee, too, as well as our friend! Oh, this is terrible! Where is the dog right now?

Devotee: I don't know, I haven't seen him for quite a while.

Shivananda: Oh no, this is a grave offense we have committed unto a devotee! This makes me very unhappy. We've got to find the dog right away. Let's organize a search party. Everyone! Come over here! You ten men, immediately spread out and try to find the dog.

Devotee: (they search and then return) We're sorry, Shivananda Prabhu, we looked everywhere but could find no trace of the dog.

Shivananda: This makes me very unhappy. Now I shall fast for the night. If I could not feed even the humblest member of our party, why then should I personally enjoy eating a meal? Let us take rest now. (Devotees rest as lights fade and Narrator speaks)

Narrator: Shivananda Sena's attachment to the dog was a great boon for that animal. The dog appears to have been a street dog. Since it naturally began to follow Shivananda Sena while he was going to Jagannath Puri with his party, he accepted it into his party and maintained it the same way he was maintaining the other devotees. It appears that although on one occasion the dog was not allowed aboard a boat, Shivananda did not leave the dog behind but paid more money just to induce the boatman to take the dog across the river. Then when the servant forgot to feed the dog and the dog disappeared, Shivananda, being very anxious, sent ten men to find it. When they could not find it, Shivananda observed a fast. Thus it appears that somehow or other Shivananda had become attached to the dog.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Narrator: In the morning everyone again looked for the dog, but it could not be found anywhere. Thus in great anxiety they all walked onwards to Jagannath Puri, where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu met them as usual. When all the devotees came to the place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, they saw the same dog, sitting a little apart from the Lord. All the Vaishnavas were astonished.

Devotee: Shivananda, look! There's the dog sitting near the Lord! It appears that the dog went ahead of us and arrived in Puri first.

Shivananda: Behold Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, smiling in His own way and throwing remnants of green coconut pulp to the dog!

Lord Chaitanya: Chant the holy names Rama, Krishna, and Hari!

Dog: Rama! Krishna! Hari!

Lord Chaitanya: Chant Krishna! Krishna!

Dog: Krishna! Krishna!

Devotee: This is amazing! We've never seen anything like it! The dog is eating the coconut pulp and chanting "Krishna, Krishna" again and again!

Shivananda: Seeing the dog sitting in that way and chanting the name of Krishna, I shall immediately offer my obeisances to the dog just to counteract my offenses to it. (he bows down. Dog suddenly vanishes)

Devotee: Where did the dog suddenly go? It was just here enjoying the prasadam remnants of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Did anybody see where it went?

Lord Chaitanya: That dog has obtained its spiritual body and departed for Vaikuntha, the spiritual kingdom. This is the result of sadhu-sanga, association with all of you great souls. By your mercy the dog was promoted back home, back to Godhead. Therefore, everyone in the human form of life should be induced to associate with devotees. By rendering a little service, even by eating prasadam, not to speak of chanting and dancing, everyone could be promoted to Vaikunth-loka. By your mercy, all the people of the world will be transferred to Vaikunth-loka, even without their knowledge. Everyone should be given a chance to take prasadam and thus be induced to chant the holy names Hare Krishna and also dance in ecstasy. By these three processes, although performed without knowledge or education, even an animal went back to Godhead. (everyone does soft kirtan)

Narrator: Such are the transcendental pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the son of mother Shachi. He even delivered a dog simply by inducing it to chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. The dog got the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and was immediately promoted to Vaikuntha to become an eternal devotee. Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura has therefore sung in Sharanagati, song 19—tumi to' Öhäkura, tomara kukkura, boliya janaha more—He thus offers to become the dog of a Vaishnava. There are many other instances in which the pet animal of a devotee was delivered back home to Vaikuntha-loka, back to Godhead. Such is the benefit of somehow or other becoming the favorite of a Vaishnava. We may conclude that even as dogs we must take shelter of a devotee. The benefit will be the same as that which accrues to an advanced devotee under a Vaishnava's care.

The End

Rupa Goswami's Second Meeting With Lord Chaitanya

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila Chapter 1

adapted by Dasarath Suta Das

Rupa Goswami's Second Meeting With Lord Chaitanya

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila Chapter 1

adapted by Dasarath Suta Das

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Rupa Goswami, Haridas Öhäkura, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Swarupa Damodara, Ramananda Roy. (optional—Advaita, Nityananda, Sarvabhauma)

(NOTE: This play is intended to be performed for devotees only. Note also that when Rupa Goswami reads his nectar-verses to the devotees, the actor may thus read them without having to memorize them.)

INVOCATION

INVOCATION

Narrator: I offer my respectful obeisances to Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, by whose mercy even a lame man can cross over a mountain and a dumb man can recite Vedic literature.

Glory to the all-merciful Radha and Madana-Mohana! I am lame and ill-advised, yet They are my directors, and Their lotus feet are everything to me.

In a temple of jewels in Vrindavan, underneath a desire tree, Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, served by Their most confidential associates, sit upon an effulgent throne. I offer my humble obeisances unto Them.

Sri Çréla Gopinath, who originated the transcendental mellow of the Rasa-dance, stands on the shore at Vamshi-vata and attracts the attention of the cowherd damsels with the sound of His celebrated flute. May they all confer upon us their benediction.

All glories to Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! All glories to Lord Nityananda! All glories to Advaita Acharya! All glories to the devotees of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu!

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(During narration, Rupa Goswami walks around stage as if traveling)

Narrator: Following the order of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Çréla Rupa Goswami returned to Vrindavan. He desired to write a drama concerning the pastimes of Lord Krishna, and in Vrindavan he began writing it. In particular, he composed the introductory verses to invoke good fortune. Later, on his way back to Gaudadesha, Rupa Goswami had been thinking of how to write the action of the drama, and thus he had made some notes and begun composing some verses. In this way Rupa reached Bengal, and then departed to see Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri, for he was very eager to see Him.

In the province of Orissa there is a place known as Satyabhama-pura. Çréla Rupa Goswami rested for a night in that village on his way to Jagannath Puri. (Rupa lies down to rest) While resting in Satyabhama-pura, he dreamed that a celestially beautiful woman had come before him and very mercifully gave him the following order. (Satyabhama Devi appears briefly on side of stage)

Satyabhama: O Rupa! Please write a separate drama about me. By my mercy, it will be extraordinarily beautiful.

Rupa: (suddenly wakes up) It is the order of Satyabhama that I write a separate drama for her. I have brought together in one work all the pastimes performed by Lord Krishna in Vrindavan as well as in Dwaraka. Now I shall have to divide them into two dramas.

Narrator: Thus absorbed in thought, Rupa Goswami quickly reached Jagannath Puri. When he arrived, he approached the hut of Haridas Öhäkura. Out of affectionate love and mercy, Haridas Öhäkura addressed Çréla Rupa Goswami. (Haridas enters)

Haridas: Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has already informed me that you would come here. Every day after seeing the noontime upala-bhoga ceremony at the Jagannath temple, the Lord usually comes here to see me. (Lord Chaitanya suddenly arrives with His devotees, Rupa and Haridas immediately offer obeisances)

Haridas: O Lord, this is Rupa Goswami offering You obeisances. (Lord Chaitanya embraces Rupa, then sits down with them)

Chaitanya: O Haridas! O Rupa! I am so fortunate to see you here. What is the auspicious news?

Haridas: O Lord! Everything here is fine, according to Your mercy.

Rupa: By Your mercy, O Lord, I have arrived here safely from Vrindavan. I have been very anxious to see You!

Chaitanya: What is the news about Sanatana Goswami?

Rupa: I did not meet him. I came by the path on the bank of the Ganges, whereas Sanatana Goswami came by the public road. Therefore we did not meet. In Prayaga I heard that he had already gone to Vrindavan.

Chaitanya: Very well. I shall have his association some other time. During your stay here in Puri, you may reside in that hut which is nearby Haridas's. Now I want you to meet all My personal associates. This is Advaita Acharya, this is Nityananda Prabhu, this is Swarupa Damodara, this is Ramananda Roy, this is Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. (Rupa Goswami offers obeisances unto their lotus feet, and all the devotees individually embrace him)

Chaitanya: (addresses Advaita Acharya and Nityananda Prabhu) You should both show Your mercy wholeheartedly to Rupa Goswami. May Rupa Goswami, by Your mercy, become so powerful that he will be able to write many books that describe the transcendental mellows of devotional service. (Advaita and Nityananda lavish mercy upon Rupa. Lord Chaitanya then addresses Rupa) Every day I shall come here to see you, and whatever prasada I received from the Jagannath temple I will deliver to you and Haridas.

Rupa: Thus receiving the transcendental favor of You and Your devotees, O Lord, I feel unlimited pleasure!

Chaitanya: Before I go now to perform My noontime duties, I have one thing to say to you: Do not try to take Krishna out of Vrindavan, for He does not go anywhere else at any time. The Krishna known as Yadu-kumara is Vasudeva Krishna, who is different from the Krishna who is the son of Nanda Maharaja. Yadu-kumara Krishna manifests His pastimes in the cities of Mathura and Dwaraka, but Krishna the son of Nanda Maharaja never leaves Vrindavan at any time. (Lord Chaitanya leaves along with His associates)

Rupa: I am somewhat surprised by this statement of the Lord! Satyabhama ordered me to write two different dramas. Now I understand that this order has been confirmed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Formerly I wrote the two dramas as one composition; now I shall divide it and describe the incidents in two separate works. I shall also have to write two separate invocations of good fortune and two introductions. Let me think deeply about the matter and then describe these two different sets of incidents. I think I will compose the Vidagdha-Madhava to describe Lord Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavan, and the Lalita-Madhava to describe His pastimes in Dwaraka and Mathura. (he exits)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Rupa is sitting on side of stage, observing the Ratha-yatra kirtan party going by chanting Jai Jagannath)

Narrator: During the Ratha-yatra ceremony Rupa Goswami saw Lord Jagannath riding on His chariot. He also saw Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu dancing and chanting in front of the ratha. Generally Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu recited a verse while dancing and chanting before the ratha, but no one knew why He was reciting that particular verse. Only Swarupa Damodara Goswami knew the purpose for which the Lord recited that verse. According to the Lord's attitude, Swarupa Damodara used to quote other verses to enable the Lord to relish different mellows of ecstatic love. Rupa Goswami, however, could also understand the intention of the Lord, and thus he composed another verse that later appealed to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Chaitanya: (comes to front of kirtan party and recites verse) "That very personality who stole My heart during my youth is now again My master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Chaitra. The same fragrance of malati flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the kadamba forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet still My mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the Reva under the Vetasi tree. That is My desire." (after recitation, kirtan party leaves stage, leaving only Rupa to write and then recite his own verse)

Rupa: Let's see... here is another expression that is compatible with the Lord's statement:

"My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Krishna on this field of Kuru-kshetra. I am the same Radharani, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamuna beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vrindavan."

Well, now it's time for me to go and bathe in the sea. I'll just set this palm leaf up here in the corner of my thatched roof and work on this book later. (he does so and exits. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu enters)

Chaitanya: Rupa! O Rupa Goswami! Where are you? I've come to see you! O Rupa! Huh? What's this palm leaf sticking out of Rupa's thatched roof? Why, it's a Sanskrit verse... (He reads it:)

"My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Krishna on this field of Kuru-kshetra. I am the same Radharani, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamuna beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vrindavan."

Oh My Goodness! This verse is causing Me to be overwhelmed by ecstatic love!
(Rupa Goswami returns, having finished bathing in the sea)

Rupa: O my Lord! (falls flat offering obeisances. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu slaps him mildly in love)

Chaitanya: My heart is very confidential. How did you know My heart in this way?
(He firmly embraces Rupa Goswami, then calls for Swarupa Damodara) O Swarupa Damodara!

Swarupa: (enters quickly) Yes, my Lord?

Chaitanya: Please look at this amazing verse composed by Rupa Goswami! Read it over and examine it carefully. How could Rupa Goswami have understood My heart?

Swarupa: (reads verse silently) I can ascertain that You have already bestowed Your causeless mercy upon him; otherwise, no one could understand this meaning.

Chaitanya: Rupa Goswami met Me at Prayaga. Knowing him to be a suitable person, I naturally bestowed My mercy upon him. I thereupon also bestowed upon him My transcendental potency. Now you also should give him instructions. In particular, instruct him in the science of rasa, transcendental mellows.

Swarupa: As soon as I saw the unique composition of this verse, I could immediately understand that You had bestowed upon him Your special mercy. As it is stated in the doctrines of nyaya, or logic—"By seeing a result, one can understand the cause of that result."

Chaitanya: (approaches Rupa again) What kind of book are you writing? (He holds up a page of Rupa's palm leaf manuscript) When I see this fine handwriting, My mind is very pleased. The handwriting of Rupa Goswami is just like rows of pearls! (He silently reads for a moment) Oh dear, what is this verse written here?! As soon as I read it, I find Myself overwhelmed by ecstatic love!

"I do not know how much nectar the two syllables `Krish-na' have produced. When the holy name of Krishna is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert."

Haridas: (becomes jubilant and starts dancing) Upon hearing the vibration of such a verse, all I can do is dance and praise its meaning! How wonderful! How wonderful! Yes, the holy name is this nectarean! Oh how we wish to chant it with many mouths, to hear it with millions of ears!

Narrator: Thus Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu embraced both Haridas and Rupa Goswami and left for the seaside to perform His noontime duties. (the Lord and His associates exit)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: On the next day, after visiting the temple of Jagannath as usual, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu met Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Ramananda Roy, and Swarupa Damodara. They all went together to see Çréla Rupa Goswami, and on the way the Lord greatly praised Rupa's qualities. When Haridas Öhäkura and Rupa Goswami saw that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had come with His intimate devotees, they both immediately fell down like logs and offered prayers to their lotus feet. The Lord then sat down in an elevated place with His devotees. Rupa Goswami and Haridas Öhäkura sat at the foot of the elevated place where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was sitting.

Swarupa: Please come up here and sit on the same level as the Lord and His associates.

Rupa & Haridas: No, no, we cannot do so.

Ramananda: Please don't feel like this. I assure you it is alright. Come up here and be seated.

Rupa & Haridas: Thank you, but we are fine right where we are.

Chaitanya: Rupa Goswami! Now read that verse We had previously heard.

Rupa: (in great shyness he remains silent)

Swarupa: I will recite the verse. Brace yourself, O devotees, for when you hear it your minds will be struck with wonder:

“My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Krishna on this field of Kuru-kshetra. I am the same Radharani, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamuna beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vrindavan.”

Ramananda: (to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) How wonderful! Without Your special mercy, O Lord, how could this Rupa Goswami have understood Your heart? Previously, dear Lord, You had also empowered my heart so that I could express elevated and conclusive statements to which even Lord Brahma has no access. Had You not already bestowed Your mercy on Rupa Goswami, it would not have been possible for him to express Your innermost feelings.

Chaitanya: My dear Rupa, please recite that other verse from your drama which, upon being heard, makes all people's unhappiness and lamentation go away.

Rupa: Whatever it was, I cannot remember it right now.

Chaitanya: Oh, please do not deprive us of this sweet nectar! Kindly recite that amazing verse about the holy name of Lord Krishna!

Rupa: "I do not know how much nectar the two syllables `Krish-na' have produced. When the holy name of Krishna is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert."

Ramananda: Oh, how wonderful! Just by hearing this verse, all the devotees are filled with transcendental bliss and are struck with wonder!

Swarupa: Although we have heard many statements glorifying the holy name of the Lord, we have never heard such sweet descriptions as those of Rupa Goswami!

Ramananda: O Rupa! What kind of drama are you writing? We can understand that it is a mine of conclusive statements.

Swarupa: Rupa Goswami wanted to compose a drama about the pastimes of Lord Krishna. He planned to describe in one book both the pastimes of Vrindavan and those of Dwaraka and Mathura. He began it in that way, but now, following the order of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he has divided it into two plays, one concerning Lord Krishna's pastimes of Vrindavan and the other concerning the pastimes of Mathura and Dwaraka. The two plays are called Vidagdha-Madhava and Lalita-Madhava. Both of them wonderfully describe ecstatic emotional love of God.

Ramananda: O Rupa! Please recite the introductory verse of Vidagdha-Madhava so that I can hear and examine it.

Rupa: "May the pastimes of Sri Krishna reduce the miseries existing in the material world and nullify all unwanted desires. The pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are like shikharini, a blend of yogurt and sugar candy. They overpower the pride of even the nectar produced on the moon, for they distribute the sweet fragrance of the concentrated loving affairs of Srimati Radharani and the gopis."

Ramananda: Wonderful! Now please recite the description of the glories of your worshipable Deity (ishta-deva).

Rupa: (he hesitates) I, uh... I am too embarrassed because Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is present.

Chaitanya: Why are you embarrassed? You should recite it so the devotees can hear the good fruit of your writing.

Rupa: anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau
 samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam
 harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
 sada hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah

“May the Supreme Lord, who is known as the son of Srimati Shachi-devi, be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has descended in the age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love.”

Chaitanya: Oh, no! I disapprove of this verse. In My opinion, it is just an exaggerated interpretation.

Ramananda: It's wonderful! All the devotees present greatly appreciated this verse. We express our gratitude to you, Sri Rupa, for your transcendental recitation. Now how have you introduced the assembly of the players at a suitable time?

Rupa: “Springtime had arrived, and the full moon of that season inspired the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is complete in everything, with new attraction to meet the beautiful Srimati Radharani at night to increase the beauty of Their pastimes.”

Ramananda: Wonderful! Please recite the further introductory portion so that I may hear and examine it. Next should come the method of inducing the audience to become more and more eager to hear by praising the time and place, the hero and the audience.

Rupa: “The devotees now present are constantly thinking of the Supreme Lord and are therefore highly advanced. This work named Vidagdha-Madhava depicts the characteristic pastimes of Lord Krishna with decorations of poetic ornaments. And the inner grounds of the forest of Vrindavan provide a suitable platform for the dancing of Krishna with the gopis. Therefore I think that the pious activities of persons like us, who have tried to advance in devotional service, have now attained maturity.”

“O learned devotees, I am by nature ignorant and low, yet even though it is from me that Vidagdha-Madhava has come, it is filled with descriptions of the

transcendental attributes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, will not such literature bring about the attainment of the highest goal of life? Although a fire may be ignited by a low-class man, it can nevertheless purify gold. Although I am very low by nature, this book may help cleanse the dirt from within the hearts of the golden devotees.”

Ramananda: Wonderful! Please explain purva-raga, or the previous attachment felt by two lovers who have not yet met.

Rupa: This verse is spoken by Mukhara, Srimati Radharani's grandmother, in a conversation with Purna-masi: “Upon seeing peacock feathers in front of Her, this girl suddenly begins trembling. When She sometimes sees a necklace of gunja (small red berries), She sheds tears and cries loudly. I do not know what kind of new ecstatic influence has entered the heart of this poor girl. It has imbued Her with the dancing attitude of a player creating wonderful, unprecedented dances on a stage.”

Next, experiencing previous attachment to Krishna (purva-raga), Srimati Radharani thought: “Since I have heard the name of a person called Krishna, I have practically lost My good sense. Then, there is another person who plays His flute in such a way that after I hear the vibration, intense madness arises in My heart. And again there is still another person to whom My mind becomes attached when I see His beautiful lightning-like effulgence in His picture. Therefore I think that I am greatly condemned, for I have become simultaneously attached to three persons. It would be better for Me to die because of this.”

Srimati Radharani continued: “My dear girlfriend, these palpitations of My heart are extremely difficult to cure. Even if one applied some medical treatment, it would only end in defamation.”

“O dearly beautiful Krishna, the artistic loveliness of Your picture is now impressed within My mind. Since You are now living within My mind, wherever I wish to run because I am agitated by impressions of You, I find that You, O My friend, are blocking My way.”

Srimati Radharani said to Her constant companion Vishakha: “My dear girlfriend, if Krishna is unkind to Me, there will be no need for you to cry, for it will not be due to any fault of yours. I shall then have to die, but afterwards please do one thing for Me: to observe My funeral ceremony, place My body with its arms embracing a tamal tree like creepers so that I may remain forever in Vrindavan undisturbed. That is My last request.”

Ramananda: Wonderful! What are the characteristics of bhava, ecstatic emotional love?

Rupa: This next verse expresses the nature of ecstatic emotional love for Krishna, as spoken by Purna-masi: “My dear beautiful friend, if one develops love for Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, all the bitter and sweet influences of this love

will manifest in one's heart. Such love of Godhead acts in two ways: First, the poisonous effects of love of Godhead defeat the severe and fresh poison of the serpent. Yet secondly there is simultaneously transcendental bliss, which pours down and defeats the poisonous effects of a snake, as well as the happiness derived from pouring nectar on one's head. It is thus perceived as doubly effective, simultaneously poisonous and nectarean."

Ramananda: Wonderful! What are the natural characteristics of awakening prema, love of Godhead?

Rupa: These are the natural characteristics of love of God, as spoken by Purnamasi: "When one hears praise from his beloved, he outwardly remains neutral but feels pain within his heart. When he hears his beloved making accusations about him, he takes them to be jokes and enjoys pleasure. When he finds faults in his beloved, they do not diminish his love, nor do the beloved's good qualities increase his spontaneous affection. Thus spontaneous love continues under all circumstances. That is how spontaneous love of Godhead acts within the heart."

Having once been very cruel to Srimati Radharani, Krishna repents in this way: "Upon hearing of My cruelty, moon-faced Radharani may establish some kind of tolerance in Her aggrieved heart. But then She might turn against Me. Or, indeed, being fearful of the lusty desires invoked by the bow of formidable Cupid, She might even give up Her life. Alas! I have foolishly uprooted the soft creeper of Her desire just when it was ready to bear fruit."

Srimati Radharani speaks this next verse to Her intimate friend Vishakha-sakhi: "My dear girlfriend, desiring the happiness of Krishna's association and embraces, I disregarded even My superiors and relaxed My shyness and gravity before them. Furthermore, although you are My best friend, more dear to Me than My own life, I have given you so much trouble. Indeed, I even put aside the vow of dedication to My husband, a vow kept by the most elevated women. Oh, alas! Although Krishna is now neglecting Me, I am so sinful that I am still living. Therefore I must condemn My so-called patience."

This next verse is spoken by Srimati Radharani to Krishna: "I was engaged in My own playful activities in My home, and because of My childish innocence I did not know right from wrong. Therefore, is it good for You to have forced us into being so much attracted to You and then to have neglected us? Now You are indifferent to us. Do You think that is right?"

Radharani once said to Lalita-sakhi, another confidential girlfriend: "Our hearts are so polluted by miserable conditions that we are certainly going to Pluto's kingdom. Nevertheless, Krishna does not give up His beautiful loving smiling, which is full of cheating tricks. O Radha, You are very intelligent. How could You have developed such great loving affection for this deceitful debauchee from the neighborhood of the cowherds?"

Purna-masi said to Lord Krishna: “O Lord Krishna, You are just like an ocean. The river of Srimati Radharani has reached You from a long distance—leaving far behind the tree of Her husband, breaking through the bridge of social convention, and forcibly crossing the hills of elder relatives. Coming here because of fresh feelings of love for You, that river has now received Your shelter, but now You are trying to turn Her back by the waves of unfavorable words. How is it that You are spreading this attitude?”

Ramananda: Wonderful! How have you described Vrindavan, the vibration of the transcendental flute, and the relationship between Krishna and Radhika? Please tell us about all these topics, for your poetic ability is magnificent.

Rupa: I offer my respectful obeisances to you, Ramananda Roy, for asking about so many transcendental topics. I will gradually try to answer all of your inquiries.

Regarding the divine forest of Vrindavan, this verse is spoken by Lord Krishna Himself: “The sweet, fragrant honey oozing from newly grown mango buds is again and again attracting groups of bumblebees, and this forest is trembling in the softly moving breezes from the Malaya Hills, which are full of sandalwood trees. Thus the forest of Vrindavan is increasing My transcendental pleasure.”

Lord Balarama told His boyfriend Sridama: “My dear friend, see how this forest of Vrindavan is full of transcendental creepers and trees. The tops of the creepers are full of flowers, and intoxicated bumblebees are buzzing around them, humming songs that please the ear and surpass even the Vedic hymns.”

Lord Krishna told His cowherd boyfriend Madhu-mangal: “My dear friend, this forest of Vrindavan is giving great pleasure to our senses in various ways. Somewhere bumblebees are singing in groups, and in some places mild breezes are cooling the entire atmosphere. Somewhere the creepers and tree twigs are dancing, the jasmine flowers are expanding their fragrance, and an overabundance of juice is constantly flowing in showers from pomegranate fruits.”

Ramananda: That is a wonderful description of Vrindavan! Now how have you described the vibration of Lord Krishna's transcendental flute?

Rupa: As told by Purna-masi to Lalita-sakhi: “The flute of Krishna's pastimes measures three fingers in length, and it is bedecked with sapphires. At the ends of the flute are rubies, glittering beautifully, and in between the flute is plated with gold, set ablaze by diamonds. This auspicious flute, pleasing to Krishna, is glittering in His hand with transcendental brilliance.”

Srimati Radharani Herself addressed Krishna's flute thus: “My dear friend the flute, it appears that you have been born of a very good family, for your residence is in the hands of Sri Krishna. By birth you are simple and are not at all crooked. Why then have you taken initiation into this dangerous mantra that enchants the assembled gopis?”

Krishna's flute was also addressed by Chandravali-sakhi, the gopi competitor of Srimati Radharani; "My dear friend the flute, you are actually full of many holes or faults. You are light, hard, juiceless and full of knots. By what kind of pious activities have you become engaged in the service of being kissed by the Lord and embraced by His hands?"

Madhu-mangal said: "The transcendental vibration of Krishna's flute blocked the movements of the rain clouds, struck the Gandharvas full of wonder, and agitated the meditation of great saintly persons like Sanaka and Sanandana. It created wonder in Lord Brahma, wrought intense curiosity that agitated the mind of Bali Maharaja, who was otherwise firmly fixed, made Maharaja Ananta, the carrier of the planets, whirl around, and finally it penetrated the strong coverings of the universe. Thus the sound of the flute in the hands of Krishna created a wonderful situation."

Ramananda: Wonderful! Now how have you described the transcendental beauty of Lord Sri Krishna?

Rupa: Purna-masi said: "The beauty of Krishna's eyes surpasses the beauty of white lotus flowers, His yellow garments surpass the brilliance of fresh decorations of kunkum powder, His ornaments of selected forest flowers surpass the hankering for the best of garments, and His bodily beauty possesses mind-attracting splendor greater than emeralds."

Lalita-sakhi said to Radharani: "O most beautiful girlfriend, please accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is standing before you full of transcendental bliss. The borders of His eyes roam from side to side, and His eyebrows move slowly like bumblebees on His lotus-like face. Standing with His right foot placed below the knee of His left leg, the middle of His body curved in three places, and His neck gracefully tilted to the side, He takes His flute to His pursed lips and moves His fingers upon it here and there."

Radharani replied to Lalita-sakhi: "O beautiful-faced one, who is this creative person standing before us? With the sharp chisels of His loving glances, He is splitting the hard stones of many women's devotion to their husbands. And with the luster of His body, surpassing the brilliance of countless emeralds, He is simultaneously constructing private meeting places for His pastimes."

Lalita-sakhi further told Radharani: "My dear girlfriend, this newly youthful Lord Sri Krishna, the moon in the family of Nanda Maharaja, is so beautiful that He defies the beauty of clusters of valuable jewels. All glories to the vibration of His flute, for it is cunningly breaking the patience of chaste ladies by loosening their belts and tight dresses."

Ramananda: Wonderful! Now how have you described the transcendental beauty of Sri Radhika?

Rupa: Purna-masi said: “The beauty of Srimati Radharani's eyes forcibly devours the beauty of newly grown blue lotus flowers, and the beauty of Her face surpasses that of an entire forest of fully blossomed lotuses. Her bodily luster seems to place even gold in a painful situation. Thus the wonderful, unprecedented beauty of Srimati Radharani is awakening in Vrindavan.”

Sri Krishna told Madhu-mangal: “O My friend, although the effulgence of the moon is brilliant at night, in the daytime it fades away. Similarly, although the lotus is beautiful during the daytime, at night it closes. But the face of My most dear Srimati Radharani is always bright and beautiful, both day and night. Therefore, to what can Her face be compared?”

This next verse is also spoken by Lord Krishna: “When Srimati Radharani smiles, waves of joy overtake Her cheeks, and Her arched eyebrows dance like the bow of Cupid. Her glance is so enchanting that it is like a dancing bumblebee, moving unsteadily due to intoxication. That bee has bitten the lotus-whorl of My heart.”

Ramananda: Wonderful! Your poetic expressions are like continuous showers of nectar! Kindly let us hear the introductory portion of the second drama, Lalita-Madhava.

Rupa: In your presence, which is just like brilliant sunshine, I am as insignificant as the light of a glow-worm. It is impudent for me to even open my mouth before you. Anyway, as you insist, here is the introductory verse of Lalita-Madhava:

“The beautiful moon-like glories of Mukunda give distress to the lotus-like faces of the wives of the demons and also to their raised breasts, which are like gleaming chakravaka birds. Those glories, however, are pleasing to all His devotees, who are like chakora birds. May those glories forever give pleasure to you all.”

Ramananda: Well? Well? What about the second introductory verse?

Rupa: I am hesitant to recite any more. I've already spoken way too much.

Ramananda: Oh, please go on reading! All of us are just bathing in these showers of pure nectar!

Rupa: “The moon-like Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known as the son of mother Shachi, has now appeared on earth to spread devotional love of Himself. He is the emperor of the brahmana community. He can drive away all the darkness of ignorance and control the mind of everyone in the world. May that rising moon bestow good fortune upon all of us.”

Chaitanya: (appears inwardly pleased when He hears this verse, but externally speaks as if angry) Your exalted poetic descriptions of the mellows of Lord Krishna's pastimes are like an ocean of nectar. But why have you put in a false prayer about Me? It is like a drop of detestable alkali!

Ramananda: (objects) It is not alkali at all. It is a particle of camphor that he has put into the nectar of his exalted poetic expression.

Chaitanya: My dear Ramananda Roy, you are jubilant at hearing these poetic expressions, but I am ashamed to hear them, for people in general will joke about the subject of this verse.

Ramananda: Instead of joking, people in general will feel great pleasure in hearing such poetry, for the initial remembrance of the worshipable Deity invokes good fortune. (then inquires from Rupa Goswami) By which subdivision of style do the players enter?

Rupa: You are so expert in dramatic expression that each of my statements before you is like a wave from an ocean of impudence! Nevertheless, since you inquired, here is your answer: "While dancing on the stage after having killed the ruler of uncivilized men (Kamsa), Lord Krishna, master of all arts, will at the proper time accept the hand of Srimati Radharani, who is qualified with all transcendental attributes."

Ramananda: Please speak further about various portions of the play.

Rupa: I will briefly quote a few verses from my Lalita-Madhava. Once Purna-masi spoke in a conversation with Gargi, the daughter of Garga Muni: "The dust from cows and calves on the road creates a kind of darkness indicating that Krishna is returning home from the pasture. Also, the darkness of evening provokes the gopis to meet Krishna. Thus the pastimes of Krishna and the gopis are covered by a kind of transcendental darkness and are therefore impossible for ordinary scholars of the Vedas to see."

Gargi replied: "May the sweet sound of Lord Krishna's flute, which is His authorized messenger, be glorified, for it expertly releases Srimati Radharani from Her shyness and attracts Her from Her home to the forest."

Srimati Radharani asked Lalita-sakhi: "My dear girlfriend, who is this fearless young man? He is as bright as a lightning cloud, and He wanders in His pastimes like a maddened elephant. From where has He come to Vrindavan? Alas, by His restless movements and attractive glances He is plundering from the vault of My heart the treasure of My patience."

This next verse expresses the thoughts of Lord Krishna in relation with Radharani: "Srimati Radharani is the Ganges river in which the elephant of My mind enjoys pastimes. She is the shining of the full autumn moon for the chakora birds of My eyes. She is the dazzling ornament, the bright and beautiful arrangement of stars on the border of the sky of My chest. Now today I have gained Srimati Radharani because of the highly elevated state of My mind."

Ramananda: Wonderful! O Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! After hearing this, I submit unto Your lotus feet the superexcellence of Çréla Rupa Goswami's poetic

expression! If only I had thousands of mouths, I may be able to praise it! This is not a poetic presentation; it is a continuous shower of nectar. Indeed, it is the essence of all ultimate realizations, appearing in the form of plays. The wonderful descriptions of Rupa Goswami are superb arrangements to express loving affairs. Hearing them will plunge the heart and ears of everyone into a whirlpool of transcendental bliss. Without Your mercy, such poetic expressions would be impossible for an ordinary living being to write. My guess is that You have given him the power.

Chaitanya: I met Çréla Rupa Goswami at Prayaga. He attracted and satisfied Me because of his qualities. To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. I bestowed My special favor upon Çréla Rupa Goswami because Rupa Goswami wanted to serve Me to the best of his ability. The metaphors and other literary ornaments of Çréla Rupa Goswami's transcendental poetry are absolutely sublime! Without such poetic attributes, there is no possibility of preaching transcendental mellows. (to devotees) All of you please bless Rupa Goswami so that he might continuously describe the pastimes of Vrindavan in his books, which are full of ecstatic emotional love of Godhead.

O Ramananda Roy! Çréla Rupa Goswami's elder brother named Sanatana Goswami is such a wise and learned scholar that no one is equal to him. Sanatana Goswami's renunciation of material connections is just like yours. Humility, renunciation and excellent learning exist in him simultaneously. I empowered both of these brothers to go to Vrindavan to expand the literature of bhakti.

Ramananda: My Lord, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If You like, You can cause even a wooden doll to dance. I see that the truths regarding transcendental mellow that You had previously expounded through my mouth are all explained in the writings of Çréla Rupa Goswami. Because of Your causeless mercy toward Your devotees, You want to describe the transcendental pastimes in Vrindavan. Anyone empowered to do this can bring the entire world under Your influence.

Narrator: Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then embraced Rupa Goswami and asked him to offer prayers at the lotus feet of all the devotees present. (they act it out) Advaita Acharya, Nityananda Prabhu and all the other devotees showed their causeless mercy to Rupa Goswami by embracing him in return. Seeing Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's special mercy toward Çréla Rupa Goswami and seeing his personal qualities, all the devotees were struck with wonder. Then, when Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu left with all of His devotees, Haridas Öhäkura also embraced Çréla Rupa Goswami.

Haridas: There is no limit to your good fortune! No one can understand the glories of what you have described.

Rupa: I do not know anything. The only transcendental words I can utter are those which Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu makes me speak. Although I am the lowest of

men and have no knowledge, the Lord has mercifully bestowed upon me the inspiration to write transcendental literature about devotional service. Therefore I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has given me the chance to write these books.

Narrator: The poet or writer dealing with transcendental subject matters is not an ordinary writer or translator. Because he is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whatever he writes becomes very effective. The principle of being empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead is essential. A materialistic poet who describes in his poetry the material activities of man and woman cannot describe the transcendental pastimes of the Lord or the transcendental conclusions of devotional service. Unless one is a fully unalloyed devotee of the Lord, one should not try to describe the pastimes of Krishna in poetry, for it will be only mundane.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then bade farewell to Rupa Goswami. The Lord empowered him and bestowed upon him all kinds of mercy.

Chaitanya: Now go to Vrindavan and stay there. You may send here your elder brother, Sanatana. When you go to Vrindavan, stay there, preach transcendental literature and excavate the lost holy places. Establish the service of Lord Krishna and preach the mellows of Lord Krishna's devotional service. I shall also go to Vrindavan once more.

Narrator: Having thus spoken, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu embraced Rupa Goswami, who then placed the lotus feet of the Lord upon his head. Çréla Rupa Goswami took leave of all the devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and returned to Vrindavan by the path to Bengal. (all exit) Thus I have described the second meeting of Rupa Goswami and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Anyone who hears of this incident will certainly attain the shelter of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Devotees acknowledge Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's special mercy upon Çréla Rupa Goswami in the following words:

sri-caitanya-mano 'bhistam-sthapitam yena bhu-tale

svayam rupah kada mahyam dadati sva-padantikam

“When will Çréla Rupa Goswami Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Chaitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?”

The special function of Çréla Rupa Goswami is to establish the feelings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. These feelings are His desires that His special mercy be spread throughout the world in this Kali-yuga.

prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama

sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama

His desire is that all over the world everyone, in every village and every town, know of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His sankirtan movement. These are the inner feelings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Rupa Goswami committed to writing all these feelings of the Lord. Now again, by the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the same feelings are being spread all over the world by the servants of the Goswamis, and devotees who are pure and simple will appreciate this attempt. Hare Krishna!

The End

The Beating Of Haridas Öhäkura

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila Chapter 16

The Beating Of Haridas Öhäkura

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila Chapter 16

* * * * *

CAST: Haridas Öhäkura, 2 Hindus, 2 Guards, Narrator, 2 Muslims, Kazi.

Narrator: About 500 years ago, during the time of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, lived a great saint and devotee named Haridas Öhäkura. Haridas is known as the Namacharya, which means the one who taught the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord by his personal example. He used to chant at least 300,000 Holy Names every day, in his ecstasy of devotional service. While chanting, he sometimes manifested extraordinary symptoms by laughing, crying, rolling on the ground or falling into trance. In this way, Haridas showed by his own pure example that the chanting of the name of Krishna is the highest pleasure of all. Sometimes it is seen that such a great devotee is put to a severe test by Krishna Himself, just to show the whole world that the pure devotee is forever situated in a transcendental position, beyond the miseries of the material world. This play tells about one such test, which established beyond any doubt the greatness of Haridas Öhäkura.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Haridas is sitting by the side of the road, chanting loudly with great pleasure. Then several Muslims approach)

Muslim 1: Just see this man here! I happen to know that he is Muslim by birth, but due to poor association he is trying to imitate the Hindus. He is a disgrace to his Muslim ancestry!

Muslim 2: Not only that, my dear brother, but he is trying to persuade other Muslims to adopt the same degraded Vaishnava practices!

Muslim 1: No!

Muslim 2: Yes, it's true. Why, just the other day in Navadvipa I saw him and one of those other fanatics, Nityananda, going door to door asking people to chant the names of their God!

Muslim 1: This is outrageous! Who knows what effect this could have on the entire Muslim community if this Haridas is allowed to carry on in this way?

Muslim 2: Why don't we approach our Muslim city official? I'm sure that when he hears about this situation, he will put a stop to this Haridas and his chanting.

Muslim 1: Excellent idea, friend. Come, let's go immediately! (they exit while Haridas continues chanting, Then two smarta brahmanas enter talking. They become disturbed when they see Haridas)

Hindu 1: O best of the smarta brahmanas, just see this heretic. Without any consideration for the complex rules and regulations of the Vedas, this shameless man is bent on bringing our noble religion down into the filthy streets. This makes a mockery of the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies! This will ruin Hinduism!

Hindu 2: Not only that, but this man is a mleccha, a meat-eating Muslim from birth. Unlike ourselves, being born of pure brahmana parents, this imitator of brahminical culture was born of parents who are fond of eating the flesh of the sacred cow!

Hindu 1: If this low-born man is allowed to go on like this, people may get the wrong idea. They may believe that religion in this age is a simple matter of chanting Hare Krishna! Thus they will do away with the complicated Vedic rituals, which only caste brahmanas like ourselves can really understand. Thus we will lose our social prestige!

Hindu 2: This is true, my fellow brahmana. Why, if we don't stop this character immediately... who knows? The whole world might follow his example and become Krishna conscious! Then they will no longer call on specialists like ourselves to perform the elaborate sacrifices and ceremonies mentioned in the Vedas. Ordinarily, the common men have very little knowledge of these religious performances. They are not trained in chanting the Vedic mantras with the proper pronunciation and meter as we are. Therefore, they call upon us to conduct such sacrifices, marriages and offerings to the ancestors. After we come and put on a nice colorful show of elaborate ritual—they pay us handsomely! If the chanting of simpler mantras becomes popular, people will give up those big sacrifices and pompous rituals, and simply hold sing-a-longs! If Haridas isn't stopped, he'll ruin the livelihood of all the professional brahmanas like us!

Hindu 1: (aghast) What a dreadful thought! What can we do?

Hindu 2: I think we should go immediately to the city magistrate and complain to him. Perhaps he'll put a stop to this before it's too late.

Hindu 1: Good idea! He is a Muslim, and ordinarily he wouldn't be so inclined to help us out since we are Hindus. But I think we can color our story in such a way that he too becomes alarmed about the activities of this Haridas. Listen, as I explain: what if we told the Kazi... (becomes inaudible as they move off stage. Haridas continues chanting throughout, and when they are gone, he leaps to his feet and cries out loudly:)

Haridas: Hare Krishna! In any circumstance of life, whether in happiness or distress, simply chant the Holy Name of the Lord, and take shelter of his Lotus Feet. Krishna promises to give His devotees all protection, so you need not fear! (he leaves stage chanting loudly)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(The Kazi, the Muslim ruler, is sitting on a throne. Guards are standing on both sides, holding long spears. Muslims and Hindus are standing nearby. They are concluding their conversation with the Kazi)

Hindu 1: So, your honor, in conclusion we feel that if this Haridas is allowed to go on unchecked, he will gradually gain enough followers, not only to disrupt the religious balance in your district, but eventually to organize a political party to oppose your rule! We are convinced that this is his secret motive. So, you would do well to take steps to stop him now before he becomes too strong! (turns and looks at the other Hindu, with conspiratorial smirk on his face. The Kazi, who looks as though he has been listening to many long complaints from both groups, perks up suddenly, when he hears of this "plot" against him. He looks about nervously)

Kazi: Thank you, gentlemen, and also you (to the Muslims) for bringing this serious situation to my attention! I assure you that I will act without delay! (they all exit, and Kazi sits in a reflective mood) It seems that there may be more to this Haridas business than I thought at first. When the Muslims and Hindus first complained, I thought it was just some petty jealousy. Their charges that this Haridas is ruining their religion are mostly nonsense, of course. They themselves are the real cause of their own ruination. Especially those caste brahmanas. They would do anything to maintain their false prestige, and especially their income! (chuckles in a bitter or derogatory way) And those Muslims can't be trusted very far, either! (sits up and becomes more serious)

But this suggestion—that the whole thing might be a false cover for a political uprising—can't be dismissed so lightly! It could just be that this person Haridas is simply pretending this religious fervor of chanting Hare Krishna, and that his real intent is to ultimately take over the government. Of course, it seems unlikely; his chanting is harmless in itself, and some people even claim that he is a saint. Nevertheless... (trails off, Kazi is lost in thought for a moment, then barks abruptly) Guards! (two guards enter) Go out and arrest this man they call Haridas Ohäkura, and bring him here at once! (as they exit hurriedly, Kazi settles back in a grim mood)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Kazi is seated as before, reading and signing some papers. Just then the guards enter, dragging Haridas. The Kazi stands up, and they throw Haridas as his feet. Haridas is chanting loudly)

Guard 1: This is the one they call Haridas, your excellency.

Kazi: Well, get up, man! (Haridas slowly gets to his feet, chanting softly, as Kazi walks around him slowly) So, you are the cause of all these complaints, eh? Your name is Haridas?

Haridas: That is correct, sir.

Kazi: Well, Haridas, I may inform you that you are causing quite a disturbance in my district with your religious antics.

Haridas: I'm afraid I don't understand, sir.

Kazi: I'm talking about this chanting of yours. I've been told that you're walking here and there in my district, shouting the names of the Hindu God, at the top of your lungs. Not only that, but people say that you sometimes make a spectacle of yourself by falling on the ground, crying, laughing, rolling in the dust and drooling. Is this true?

Haridas: If people say this about me, sir, it must be so.

Kazi: (raising his voice) Well, it's getting on peoples' nerves! (abruptly calms down) I know that you were born and raised in a nice Muslim family. Tell me—why have you abandoned your own true religion to take up this nonsense Hindu chanting?

Haridas: Actually, sir, there is no question of abandoning religion, for real religion is an eternal function of every living entity. We may call ourselves Muslims or Hindus as a matter of social convenience, but the fact is that we are all eternal servants of the Almighty God, who is the Father of everyone. He can be called by

so many names, like Allah, Krishna, Rama and Hari—but by whatever name He is known, He remains the same Supreme Person. And the best method of worshipping Him in this age is by the loud and incessant chanting of His Holy Names!

Kazi: Why does it have to be loud? Why can't you just say some quiet prayers or something?

Haridas: Whoever hears the Holy Name of Lord is benefited. Loud chanting of Hare Krishna, therefore, benefits not only the human beings, but also the trees, plants, insects and all other living beings. One should therefore not be disturbed by the loud chanting of Hare Krishna, for it is beneficial not only to the chanter but to everyone who gets an opportunity to hear.

Kazi: (irritated) All right, all right! Let me get to the point. Both the Hindus and the Muslims in my district are angry about this chanting of yours. Obviously they don't want it going on around here, and my duty as the magistrate is to satisfy these citizens. Therefore, I order you to stop this practice of chanting at once, and return peacefully to your own Muslim traditions.

Haridas: I'm very sorry, sir, but I cannot comply with your order.

Kazi: Why not? I have nothing against you, Haridas. You appear sincere and full of good intentions. I have no wish to punish you—but I cannot tolerate insubordination! Why won't you obey me?

Haridas: I have no desire to be disrespectful, sir. You are an authority, but you are not the highest authority. Ordinarily, your orders should be obeyed by everyone, for you are a government officer. But if you attempt to stop the devotional service of the Lord, your order should be rejected at once, just as one rejects the orders of a madman in the street who thinks that he has become the king!

Kazi: Very well, Haridas. I can now see that my suspicions were justified. Your plan is undoubtedly to teach the same rebellious attitude to others, and ultimately to create a situation of anarchy. You have become so crazed by this constant chanting that you can ignore the government and violate the law in any way you please, without fear of punishment. And if others are misled in a similar way, the people will all become lawless and our orderly society will be ruined. Well, this nonsense has gone on long enough. If you do not cease these actions at once, I will punish you in such a way that people will remember it for a long, long time. So now will you stop?

Haridas: It is not that I have become lawless, sir, but I am obeying a higher law than yours. That is the Law of the Supreme Lord, which is so great and stern that it makes your laws look petty and inconsequential by comparison. Everyone must obey the Supreme Law, willingly or unwillingly. And if I obey the order of the Supreme Lord, I have nothing to fear from your punishment. You may cut this body into pieces, or tear it limb from limb—but I will never stop chanting the Holy Name of Hari!

Kazi: (explodes) Fool! (slaps Haridas) Guards, take this man to the market place of the city and beat him with canes until he's dead! If he doesn't die in the first market place, drag him to another and another and another and beat him until the life leaves his body! (guards grab Haridas roughly and push him out the door, Kazi turns and falls down in seat)

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Guards drag Haridas through the market place. Several men beat him while the brahmanas and Muslims goad them on)

Hindus/Muslims: Beat him! Kill him! Break every bone in his body! (guards beat Haridas with violent enthusiasm, but his chanting continues, and he is seen smiling and unaffected)

Guard 1: Let's drag him to the next market!

Guard 2: Yeah! Drag him away! (they drag Haridas behind screen, and then out again. Then they beat him repeatedly. The Hindus and Muslims are shouting encouragements as before)

Guard 1: Let's drag him to the next market! (other guards agree as before, and they drag him out. Pause, then they come back in, clearly exhausted now, as though they had passed through many markets)

Guard 2: I can't go on beating him anymore. I'm going to pass out from exhaustion!

Guard 1: He should have died in the first market place. But this is the 22nd marketplace! I can't go on either. This is crazy!

Guard 2: Not only is he still alive, but he's never stopped chanting, and he's even been smiling the whole time! This guy's not human! (to Haridas) Haridas, if you don't die, the Kazi will cut off our heads!

Haridas: (to himself) Oh, no! Just see how inconsiderate I am! Here I am blissfully chanting Hare Krishna while these men are laboriously trying to kill me! Because Krishna is protecting me, they are unable to destroy me, and consequently they are in anxiety. Since we should not cause anxiety to any living being, I will assume a state of trance and thus free them from this labor. (Haridas becomes stiff in samadhi)

Guard 1: Look! It seems that Haridas has died after all. We're safe from the Kazi's wrath!

Guard 2: Let's carry him back to the Kazi to prove that we've done our work.

Guard 1: He looks stiff. Rigor mortis must have set in. (they try to lift him but cannot)

Guard 2: Allah! He feels as heavy as a mountain! I can't budge him!

Guard 1: What kind of spirit has possessed this body? This must be some sort of supernatural power. Now what are we going to do?

Guard 2: Wait! He's no longer heavy now. This is very strange! Grab his feet and let's go! (Haridas is stiff as a board. One lifts head and one lifts feet. They carry him out)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(The Kazi is sitting in a chair, staring out into space, when the guards come in carrying Haridas)

Kazi: (startled, almost jumps out of seat) What, what do you want?!

Guard 1: We've brought the body of Haridas to show you that he's dead. (they lay him down)

Kazi: Dead?! Haridas is dead? Oh, so he is! (slightly startled to see that he is) Very good, guards! Very good! Well done. Hmmm, it seems that his God couldn't save him after all.

Guard 2: What should we do with the body?

Kazi: What do you do with the beggar's body? Throw it in the river!

Guard 2: Yes, sir. (both guards pick Haridas up and carry him off. Kazi sits down nervously. Guards bring Haridas out to throw him in the river)

Guard 1: Good-bye, Haridas, nice knowing you!

Guard 2: He's heavy, he'll probably sink right to the bottom. (they pitch him into the river)

Guard 1: Hey, look! He's floating!

Guard 2: Let's get out of here, it's too weird! (Guards leave hurriedly and Haridas slowly returns to external consciousness)

Haridas: Now that they're gone, let me return to my chanting. (he swims to shore. Later, a guard calls out)

Guard 1: Make way for the Kazi!

Kazi: Well, it appears that everything is going on nicely in the village again since we got rid of that nuisance, Haridas.

Guard 1: Ahhh! (screams, then speaks in a frenzied voice) Look, look! A dead man walking! (he turns and runs out in terror)

Guard 2: Everyone get your clubs, drive this ghost away! (Haridas walks on, chanting in ecstasy)

Kazi: Wait! Hold your weapons. This is no evil spirit, but a divine personality, who is fully under the protect of God. (he offers dandavats at Haridas's lotus feet) Haridas, I am the greatest offender at your holy feet, please forgive my unlimited offenses!

Haridas: My dear sir! You have not made any offense. If there is any offense at all, it was on my part. If I were very pure, everyone would immediately take up this chanting and become happy. But, due to my sinful nature, people become insulted by my offensive chanting. Instead of being attracted, they become angry. I am so sinful that I deserve to suffer in hell for millions of years; but by the mercy of the Holy Name, I have been spared and given a little beating instead. (he looks compassionately at the Kazi, who is still at his feet) Anyway, I am glad to see that you are beginning to understand the power of this chanting. You were so afraid I might overthrow your position that you wanted to kill me. Actually, it is not me you should fear, but rather this material world, which imposes death upon everyone. This chanting of the Holy Name is the only means of deliverance in this age. So, give up your envy and fearfulness. All troubles will be gone when you chant the Holy Names of the Lord:

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA HARE RAMA

This is most easily done by singing them loudly in the streets, in the temple or at home. Let's all sing it right now! (kirtan)

The End

Haridas Öhäkura And The Harlot

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila Chapter 16

Haridas Öhäkura And The Harlot

from Sri Chaitanya-Bhagavata, Adi-lila Chapter 16

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CAST: Ramachandra Khan, 3 prostitutes— Champaka, Parijata and Padmini, Haridas Öhäkura.

SCENE ONE

(The sitting room of the local Muslim governor of Jagannath Puri, Ramachandra Khan. Three prostitutes are waiting)

SCENE ONE

(The sitting room of the local Muslim governor of Jagannath Puri, Ramachandra Khan. Three prostitutes are waiting)

Champaka: I wonder what Ramachandra Khan has brought us here for—the three most beautiful society girls in the village?

Parijata: Well, he is a Hindu chieftain, with a large following and vast sums of wealth to command. Whatever it is, I'm sure it will be to our advantage!

Padmini: Yes, it's all very exciting!

Champaka: Did he mention anything to either of you about a secret mission?

Parijata: Yes, but he wouldn't say any more than that. I wish he'd get here soon!

Padmini: Patience, dear sisters!

Champaka: I think I hear footsteps coming this way. (they quickly sit and assume poses)

Khan: Good evening, ladies! (they all acknowledge, he goes around and takes each one's hand) I am so glad you have come here tonight. As I told you briefly, I would have need of your services in a matter which is very important to me. I am very disturbed about the presence in our village of a character named... named... well, they call him Haridas, although he is actually a low-class Muslim by birth. He does not understand our sophisticated Hindu culture and religion. He is inducting low-class people to overstep their bounds and engage in brahminical activities. And all over people are neglecting their work and join in this annoying chanting of mantras. It is a disturbance to society. Anyway, he is posing as a sadhu, and many innocent people are being deceived. But, my friends and I have devised a plan to discredit him. That's why I called for all of you.

Parijata: And what exactly do you need, sir?

Khan: I would like all of you to spoil the character of this Haridas. He is young and sentimental, and I think he would be an easy victim to the temptations which you might put before him. His falldown will be a great help in stopping these religion-mongers once and for all.

Champaka: Sir, forgive me— this plan of yours is very interesting to me in all ways but one.

Khan: What is that?

Champaka: It is this person, Haridas. I do not know very much about spiritual advancement, but I have had occasion to see this man, and I do not think I could be part of this plan. I believe he is a genuine holy man.

Khan: I promise you that the reward will change your mind. (he brings out jewels)

Champaka: Sir, ask me this mission for anyone else and I will accept; but not Haridas Öhäkura. No, I could not do it. Thank you anyway. (she leaves)

Khan: Well, and what about you two?

Parijata: I am not sure, either. I have heard some very unusual stories about this Haridas. Many people believe he is glorious. He is a source of inspiration to countless villagers who come from near and far to see him.

Khan: They are mistaken. I tell you he is an imposter. Here, maybe this will change your mind. (he offers her some gold coins) Now what do you say?

Parijata: It is very tempting, but no. I am afraid I must also refuse your generous offer. My sins are great enough without causing the falldown of a sadhu, even if he is just pretending. I am sorry. Good evening. (she leaves, and Ramachandra Khan turns to Padmini)

Khan: Well?

Padmini: I don't know. Your plan is beginning to sound a little dangerous...

Khan: How would you like me to set you up in your own private house, with servants to care for you?

Padmini: That would be very nice!

Khan: So?

Padmini: All right, I'll do it.

Khan: Good!

Padmini: I can assure you that I will ruin the character of this Haridas within three days' time.

Khan: Oh happy day! I can't wait! I will supply you with everything you need for success!

Padmini: Good. Then it is settled.

Khan: When you go to see him, I think you should take an armed guard with you—to catch him in the act, you know.

Padmini: I don't think that is necessary yet. First let me go by myself and win his confidence, then the next time a guard may accompany me.

Khan: As you wish. My dear, if you are successful you will make me a very happy man!

Padmini: What do you mean, "If I am successful?" I am beginning to think that this will be the most successful venture of my life!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Inside Haridas's hut. Haridas is seated, chanting with deep concentration. Tulasi Devi is planted by his side. Padmini enters, offers obeisances, and stands for a while. Then she slowly sits down near him, sensuously. She lets her hair down and moves very close to him. When he does not respond, she finally speaks:)

Padmini: O holy sir! You are so young and handsome. How can you live alone, forsaking the customary pleasures of this world? Upon seeing you, what woman would not feel her passion rise? I do not think there is any such lady in the world! Please forgive me, but I have fallen a slave to lust by the sight of your charming appearance. I cannot help myself. If you do not accept me, it will be impossible for me to live!

Haridas: I shall certainly accept your proposal, but I have made a vow to chant a certain number of Holy Names, and as soon as I complete my fixed quota, I shall be able to fulfill your request. In the meantime, please be seated here and listen to the chanting of the Holy Name. (she waits patiently. Lights dim and then come up to show the passing of night. Disappointed, she rises and leaves)

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Ramachandra Khan's house)

Khan: Ah! My lovely one! Are you successful?

Padmini: Not exactly, sir.

Khan: What happened?

Padmini: I saw him, and I spoke with him. He is interested in me, but he has accepted a certain number of Holy Names to chant and did not quite complete his vow. However, I can assure you that by this evening he will be finished, and then our desire will be fulfilled.

Khan: (laughing) Oh, it is good news to hear this! When his reputation is ruined, the people will forget all about this spiritual nonsense and go back to the execution of their proper duties!

Padmini: Very soon you will have what you desire.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Later in Haridas Öhäkura's hut. Padmini enters, bows and approaches him)

Haridas: I am sorry that you were disappointed earlier. Please do not be upset with me. I will not fail to accept you, don't worry. Until I finish my quota of names, please stay and listen. As soon as the number is completed, you will have your heart's desire. (she sits and waits. Lights down and up. She becomes restless and impatient)

Padmini: How can you do this to me? I need to feel your tender regard!!!

Haridas: I have taken a vow of chanting 300,000 Names of Lord Krishna during this month. I am almost finished. I expected to be done this night, but I have not succeeded. By tomorrow I am sure my vow will be fulfilled and then I will be able to enjoy your company freely. (disappointed, she leaves)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Ramachandra Khan's house. Padmini enters)

Khan: Well, what is the good news?

Padmini: I don't understand him at all! He insists that he will satisfy me, and then he becomes completely absorbed in his chanting and seems to forget that I even exist! I don't know what to do. I have never had such a difficult time seducing someone!

Khan: Do you think he suspects our plan?

Padmini: I don't know... I don't think so. I am beginning to wonder if...

Khan: If what?

Padmini: If he might be a real sadhu.

Khan: I assure you he is not.

Padmini: Then I have lost all my charms!

Khan: I assure you that is not true, either. Do not be discouraged. He has simply made a show of this vow of artificial renunciation; but secretly he is thinking of you and is waiting anxiously to be joined with you. I am sure that tonight everything will go as planned, and soon we can reveal his false nature to the rest of the village.

Padmini: Perhaps you are right.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

(Haridas Öhäkura's hut. Padmini enters, bows and sits)

Haridas: I am glad you have returned. I will definitely complete the number of rounds tonight and fulfill your wish. In the meantime, why don't you join me in chanting the mantras? (he begins to chant and she joins in. Suddenly she bows at his feet and exclaims:)

Padmini: O Master! Please forgive my offenses at your lotus feet! I am the worst of sinners! Being a harlot by profession, there is hardly any sin that I have not committed! I can now understand that you are not an ordinary person. You are a jewel amongst the devotees of the Lord. Under the instructions of the villain, Ramachandra Khan, I have shamelessly tried to contaminate your devotional heart; but my evil inclinations are totally destroyed. Please have mercy on me and deliver me from this sinful condition!

Haridas: I am fully aware of the evil plots of Ramachandra Khan. He doesn't know what he is doing. I wish him well. It is only for your sake that I continued my stay in this village for these three days. If not, I would have left on the very first day.

Padmini: Please help me become free of the miseries of material existence!

Haridas: First give away all of your wealth, and then you may come here and take shelter in this hut. Chant the Holy Name constantly and worship the sacred Tulasi plant. In a short time, I am sure you will attain the lotus feet of Sri Krishna.

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

(In Haridas's hut. Padmini enters, reformed, with offerings of fruit and flowers. Champaka and Parijata approach hut while talking among themselves)

Champaka: Who would have thought that the scheme of that old rascal, Ramachandra Khan, would change our lives in such a drastic way?

Parijata: First of all, I couldn't believe our friend Padmini accepted his offer, and then I couldn't believe she became a devotee, and now I can't believe that she's convinced us to change, too!

Champaka: The power of the Holy Names of the Lord can really work miracles!

Parijata: And association with a pure devotee, too.

Champaka: Yes, it's really astonishing; she lives so simply now! She even gave away all her beautiful things and only eats uncooked foods.

Parijata: Sometimes she fasts for days!

Champaka: And people who once hated her now feel it's a great privilege to meet her!

Parijata: What a wonder! All glories to Çréla Haridas Öhäkura!!!

Champaka: And what about Ramachandra Khan?

Parijata: I know it appears that his offenses against the devotees has finally caught up with him. He got so puffed-up that he stopped paying taxes to the Muslims.

Champaka: But then the ruler was offended and forcibly took over his property and put him and his family in prison.

Parijata: He lost everything— his caste, his wealth, his relations. I guess he deserved it.

Champaka: Here she is!

Padmini: Welcome, dear friends. Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Haridas Öhäkura, the most merciful devotee of the Lord! His glory is so great that

even one who was once the cause of the downfall of many, and a repository of many foul deeds, can become a devotee of the Lord. I had no aptitude for philosophy, nor was I convinced by argument or mystic powers. Simply by hearing and chanting the Holy Name of the Lord under the guidance of a pure devotee, I was blessed with a taste of spiritual ecstasy and Divine Realization. And this can be true for anyone; no matter how sinful, lusty, greedy or envious they may be. So please take shelter of the Holy Name of the Lord and make your life sublime! (they have a kirtan)

The End

The Passing Of Haridas Öhäkura

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila Chapter 11

The Passing Of Haridas Öhäkura

from Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila Chapter 11

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Haridas Öhäkura, Govinda, Lord Chaitanya, Assembled Devotees.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: All glories to Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! All glories to Lord Nityananda! All glories to Advaita Prabhu and all glories to all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya! During the last part of Lord Chaitanya's life, He resided at Jagannath Puri along with His personal devotees and enjoyed the congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. In the daytime He chanted, danced and visited the temple of Lord Jagannath. One day, Govinda, the Lord's personal servant, went in great jubilation to deliver the remnants of Lord Jagannath's food to an elderly devotee, Çréla Haridas Öhäkura. Although born in a Muslim family, he was a pure devotee of Lord Krishna and always chanted the Holy Names—Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Govinda: Haridas, please rise and take your maha-prasada!

Haridas: Today I shall fast—I have not yet finished my rounds. How then can I eat? But, you have brought maha-prasada, so how can I neglect it? (Haridas offers prayers and eats a morsel of prasada. Enter Lord Chaitanya)

Lord Chaitanya: Haridas, are you well?

Haridas: My body is well, but my mind and intelligence are not.

Lord Chaitanya: Tell Me, what is your disease?

Haridas: My disease is that I cannot finished my rounds.

Lord Chaitanya: Now that you are old, you may reduce the number of rounds that you chant. You are already liberated, and therefore you need not follow the regulative principle so strictly.

Haridas: Dear Lord Gauranga, kindly hear my real plea. I was born into a most degraded family, indeed I am both unseeable and untouchable, but You have accepted me as Your servant. You have delivered me from a hellish condition and raised me to the Vaikuntha platform. My dear Lord, I have had one desire for a very long time. I think that quite soon You will bring to a close Your pastimes within this material world. I wish that You do not show me this closing chapter of Your pastimes. Before that time comes, kindly let my body fall down in Your presence. I wish to catch Your lotus-like feet and see Your moon-like face. With my tongue I shall chant Your holy name, "Sri Krishna Chaitanya!" O most merciful Lord, if, by Your mercy, it is possible—kindly let me give up my body in this way.

Lord Chaitanya: My dear Haridas, Krishna is so merciful that He must execute whatever you desire. But whatever happiness is Mine is due only to your association. It is not fitting for you to go away from this world and leave Me aside.

Haridas: My Lord! Do not create this illusion! Although I am so fallen, You must certainly show me this mercy. If an insignificant insect like myself dies, then what is the loss? My Lord, You are always affectionate towards Your devotees, and even though I am an imitation devotee, I pray that You will fulfill my desire.

Lord Chaitanya: It is now time for My noon duties. I will return tomorrow after seeing the Deity of Lord Jagannath in the temple. (Lord Chaitanya embraces Haridas and then leaves)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Enter Lord Chaitanya with His devotees chanting and dancing. The chanting devotees circumambulate Haridas, and after a short time the kirtan stops and Lord Chaitanya sits down, surrounded by the devotees and with Haridas at His feet)

Lord Chaitanya: Haridas, what is the news?

Haridas: My Lord, whatever mercy You can bestow upon me!

Lord Chaitanya: Just see the super-excellent devotional qualities of Haridas Öhäkura! Due to his great humility, he will not enter the temple of Lord Jagannath

for fear of creating a disturbance! Instead, he remains here in the flower garden, and from this humble abode he looks upon the chakra on top of Lord Jagannath's temple, and offers his obeisances from afar. In this way he lives—he worships Srimati Tulasi Devi, accepts a little of the Lord's maha-prasada and chants the Holy Name of the Lord 300,000 times every day without fail! Who can imitate such a thing? He is the Namacharya, the Teacher of the Holy Names, without doubt, and has been personally sent by the Supreme Lord to deliver the fallen souls of Kali-yuga. His chanting is pure and offenseless, and thus he is always relishing the nectar of pure love of Godhead.

Haridas is like a touchstone, for anyone who is fortunate enough to get his association will very quickly attain the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. Once, the envious Ramachandra Khan sent a prostitute to try and dishonor his character, but she could not affect him. Instead, she became affected by his pure chanting and was blessed with the Lord's favor to engage in devotional service! Why, even Mayadevi herself could not disturb the mind of Öhäkura Haridas, which is constantly absorbed in thoughts of Sri Govinda. Because the Holy Name is always on his lips, he remains always meek and humble—thus he has achieved the causeless mercy of the Lord. The waves of his good qualities are like those of the great mahajanas—indeed, he is none other than Prahlada Maharaja himself!

Haridas's quality of forbearance is truly remarkable. The Muslim king had him beaten with canes in 22 market places, but Haridas did not even blink an eyelid! And who can forget his ecstatic dancing at the Lord's Ratha-yatra festival, which went on for hours and hours and filled the hearts of all the devotees with great wonder? My dear Haridas, there is no end to your transcendental qualities. You are certainly the topmost devotee of the Lord, and you are very dear to Me, remaining always in My heart. Sri Haridas Öhäkura ki jai!!!

Narrator: Haridas Öhäkura made Sri Chaitanya sit down in front of him. He fixed his eyes like two bumble-bees on the lotus face of the Lord, and held the lotus feet of the Lord on his heart. Then, taking the dust of the feet of all the devotees present, and putting it on his head, he began to chant the Holy Name of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, again and again. As he drunk the sweetness of the face of the Lord, tears constantly glided down from his eyes. In this way he gave up his life-air and left his body.

Assembled devotees: Hari! Hari! Jai Sri Krishna! Haribol!

Lord Chaitanya: (holding the body of Haridas Öhäkura in his arms) Being merciful upon Me, Krishna gave Me the association of Haridas Öhäkura! Being independent in His desires, the Lord has now broken that association. When Haridas wanted to leave this material world, it was not in My power to detain him. Simply by his own will he gave up his life exactly like Bhishma. Haridas Öhäkura was the crown-jewel on the head of this world! Without him, this world is now bereft of its most valuable gem! Anyone who has seen the festival of Sri Haridas Öhäkura's passing away will achieve the favor of Krishna very soon. Such is the wonderful power in seeing Haridas Öhäkura. (kirtan) Namacharya Çréla Haridas Öhäkura Ki Jai!!!

The End

Mrigari The Hunter Meets Narada Muni

from Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-Lila Chapter 24

Mrigari The Hunter Meets Narada Muni

from Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-Lila Chapter 24

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CAST: Narrator, Mrigari, Mrigari's Wife, Narada Muni, Parvata Muni, 2 Villagers.

Narrator: The following drama is a true story, which was told by Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and it is about a hunter who became a devotee of the Lord by the mercy of the great sage, Narada Muni. Anyone who witnesses this pastime will understand the greatness of the association of a pure devotee; for by such association, even the lowest of men can become the best of devotees and become worthy of worship.

Once upon a time, the Narada Muni went to Prayag to bath at the confluence of three holy rivers—the Ganges, Yamuna and Sarasvaté. Narada Muni is so liberated that he can travel anywhere in the creation. He was just returning from Vaikuntha, the supreme spiritual abode, where Lord Narayana resides. On his way through the forest, Narada Muni played on his vina and sang the Holy Names of Krishna, absorbed as always, in transcendental bliss.

Meanwhile, however, in another part of the forest, an evil hunter by the name of Mrigari stalked through the trees, looking for victims...

SCENE ONE

Forest scene

SCENE ONE

Forest scene

(A deer runs onstage. After a few moments, Mrigari comes on behind him and shoots the animal with his bow. When the deer falls down and starts whimpering loudly in pain, Mrigari laughs)

Mrigari: Ha ha ha! Another pitiable creature falls to the bow of mighty Mrigari! The day is yet young. I shall torture and kill many more unsuspecting beasts before evening comes! (Mrigari exits, and then a bird enters, followed by the hunter, who shoots the creature with his bow) Flap your wings, little birdie! You cannot do so?

Ha ha! Lie here awhile, and when you exhaust your strength I will finish you off for my evening supper! Ha ha ha! (Mrigari exits, and a hog enters. Mrigari stalks on again and shoots the hog with his bow) Even the mighty wild boar stands no chance against the strength of Mrigari! Ha ha ha! (boar falls down in pain as Mrigari runs off, laughing)

(enter Narada Muni, singing Hare Krishna. He stops suddenly upon seeing the wounded animals)

Narada: Oh! These poor creatures—such pain and suffering! Who could have done such a thing? Only one with a sadistic mentality is capable of such horrible acts. Suffer no longer, my dear friends. I will set you free from your plight! (Narada moves his hand over the animals and they miraculously get up and run free. Enter Mrigari)

Mrigari: Hey you! How dare you do such a thing! Why, I would kill a man for less! However, your saintly countenance influences me, and I am reluctant to do so. Tell me, why have you come here while I am hunting? Who are you?

Narada: I am Narada, and while passing this way I saw this horrible scene. Who has committed these dreadful acts?

Mrigari: What you have seen is all right—it was done by me!

Narada: But why do you not kill the animals completely, instead of only half-killing them and leaving them to writhe in pain?

Mrigari: My dear saintly person, my name is Mrigari—the enemy of the animals. My father taught me to maim them like this. When I see half-killed animals suffer, I feel great pleasure!

Narada: Sir, I beg but one thing from you.

Mrigari: Oh yes, I shall give you whatever you like. Perhaps you would like some animal carcasses... or some nice skins! I have many at home—tiger skins, deer skins...

Narada: I do not want any such things. All I ask is this: from this day on, if you must hunt animals, then please kill them completely—do not leave them suffering in great pain, I beg you!

Mrigari: Why are you asking this of me? What is wrong with such an act? After all, they are only animals!

Narada: By giving pain to other living entities, you commit great sin. It is already very sinful when you kill an animal completely, but the offense is much greater when you half-kill it. Indeed, the pain which you give these creatures will have to be accepted by you in a future birth!

Mrigari: Bah!

Narada: You do not believe me? Then I will show you by my mystic powers... Behold! (Mrigari sees himself being attacked by the animals he had slain)

Mrigari: Oh my Lord, indeed I am a sinful wretch and deserve only punishment! But is there some way I can be freed from my unlimited sins?

Narada: If you throw away your bow and listen to my instruction, I shall tell you what is to be done.

Mrigari: What! Throw away my bow? If I do that, how shall I live? My wife...

Narada: Do not worry! Every living being in the universe is being maintained by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just depend on the Lord and rest assured, for I shall personally make sure that you have sufficient foods to eat every day. (Mrigari throws down bow and falls at Narada's feet) Just go to your home and distribute whatever you have to the devotees and the brahmanas. Then, both you and your wife should leave home, taking only one cloth to wear. Build a small cottage by the riverside, and sow a Tulasi plant by that cottage. Every day, you should circumambulate the Tulasi tree and serve her by giving her water, and above all you should constantly chant the Holy Names of Krishna: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. As far as your livelihood is concerned—I shall send you grains, vegetables, fruits and milk, so that you may live a simple, wholesome life. But you should only accept as much food as you require for yourself and your wife. (Mrigari pays obeisances and Narada Muni leaves)

Narrator: Mrigari's life was transformed from that day forward. After he returned home, he exactly followed the instructions of his spiritual master, Narada Muni. The news that the cruel hunter had become a peaceful devotee of Krishna spread all over the area. Indeed, all the local villagers brought alms and presented them to Mrigari and his wife...

SCENE TWO

Mrigari's thatched cottage

SCENE TWO

Mrigari's thatched cottage

(Mrigari and his wife are chanting in front of the Tulasi tree. Enter villagers, who pay their respects to Tulasi and to Mrigari)

Mrigari: Welcome, my friends!

Villager 1: Good morning, Mrigari. We are neighbors from a village nearby.

Villager 2: Until now, we have been afraid to come and visit you, but now we are overjoyed to see you living such a pure life of devotion to Lord Krishna.

Villager 1: Please accept our offerings of friendship.

Mrigari: I thank you for your kindness. Please be seated and take some refreshment.

Villager 2: That is most kind of you, but we must be getting back to our village before the daylight fades.

Mrigari: Please come again, you are always welcome!

Villagers 1 & 2: Yes, we will! Good-bye!

Mrigari: Hare Krishna! And there I was, doubting that the Lord would maintain us—but here we are with so much foodstuffs we don't know what to do with it all!

Wife: Lord Krishna is so kind to His devotees!

Mrigari: Yes, but it is only by the mercy of our Gurudeva, Çréla Narada Muni, that we are able to receive the benediction of Krishna! (Mrigari gets up and waters Tulasi. He begins to recite the following prayer)

“O Tulasi, beloved of Krishna, I bow before you again and again. My desire is to obtain the service of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. Please give me the privilege of devotional service, and make me your own maidservant. This very fallen and lowly servant of Krishna prays, `May I always swim in the love of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna!’”

(enter Narada Muni and Parvata Muni)

Narada: My dear Parvata Muni, this is the hunter I was telling you about. Oh, Mrigari!

Mrigari: Oh, Çréla Narada Muni! Jai Çréla Gurudeva! (jumps up and goes to pay his obeisances, but sees ants in the path) Oh dear! There are some ants in the path—I must be careful not to harm them! (brushes ants away with his cloth and then pays his obeisances)

Narada: Just see! Previously, Mrigari was hunting and maiming animals, but now he would not even harm an ant! Actually, such behavior is not at all astonishing, for simply by performing devotional service to the Lord, all good qualities are automatically developed.

Parvata: My dear Narada, certainly you are a touchstone. For by your wonderful association, even a low-born hunter has been transformed into a humble devotee of the Lord!

Narada: Come, let us have kirtan!

(kirtan)

The End

The Golden Avatar

The Golden Avatar

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CAST: Narrator, Advaita Acharya, Lord Krishna, Jagannath Mishra, Shachi Devi, Sita Devi, Nilambara Chakravarti, Servant, little Nimai, 2 thieves: Mahesh and Ashok, Teenage Nimai, 2 Brahmanas, 2 Students, Nityananda Prabhu, Haridas Öhäkura, Householder, Jagai, Madhai, sannyasi Lord Chaitanya, Swarupa Damodara, Govinda.

INVOCATION

INVOCATION

Narrator: My dear assembled devotees, before I begin to tell my amazing tale to you, in order that we may have an auspicious start I would like to ask the permission of Lord Nityananda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to let us begin to give you a glimpse, and only a glimpse, into the wonderful pastimes of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. We pray on this auspicious day that we can offer our respects to Sri Nityananda Prabhu, who can bless us, and by whose grace we can attain the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's lotus feet.

May we remind all the assembled devotees that there may be many flaws in our presentation, but we are simply neophyte devotees. Our efforts are like trying to offer candlelight to the effulgent sun. So we hope that everyone is sitting comfortably, eager to drink in the nectar of Lord Chaitanya's pastimes, so that we may begin to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

* * * * *

Narrator: Five hundred years ago, most of the world's population were only interested in the materialistic way of life. Lord Krishna appeared five thousand years ago to give us valuable instructions, which are contained in essence in the Bhagavad-Gétä. But for a long time throughout history no one could really follow them or even understand them. Seeing this pitiful situation, a great devotee of

the Lord named Advaita Acharya prayed to Lord Krishna to descend to the Earth planet to deliver everyone from the clutches of illusion.

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SCENE ONE

Advaita Acharya's Lamentation

SCENE ONE

Advaita Acharya's Lamentation

(Open curtains—a person walks onstage and gets beaten up)

Advaita: Oh, what a calamity! What is to be done? There are so many sinful activities going on, but no one wants to serve Krishna. No one knows how to serve Krishna. No one really has any understanding of the Bhagavad-Gétä. Kali-yuga is sweeping in fast, and soon everyone will be plunged into complete madness—a society devoid of God. I must pray for these people. I must pray to Krishna to descend and personally take up this task of saving all the conditioned souls. (he starts to worship his shalagram-shila aloud. Lord Krishna appears with Srimati Radharani)

My dear Lord Krishna, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You again and again. You are the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by Lord Brahma in his prayers to You—Govindam adi purusam tam aham bhajami. My Lord, You are the well-wisher of everyone. Therefore, I request You, I plead to You, I beg You, please descend and propagate Your glories so that even a common man can follow You. Please save them from the dense, dark age of Kali. My Lord, everyone here is under the deep illusion that their so-called lives will last forever. Apart from You, my Lord, no one really cares about these people. So please come and save them, for they do not know what is good for them.

Krishna: My dear Advaita Prabhu, I am very pleased with your prayers and concern about these living entities. Therefore, I will come down very soon as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This time I will make a very special appearance. I will come down as a devotee of Krishna and teach everyone by example how to serve Me. My appearance will be as a gupta-avatar (concealed incarnation), as few will come to know Me as the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. I will appear in a combined form along with My beloved consort, Srimati Radharani, so that I will be able to feel and actually experience the intense love She has for Me.

Advaita: Jai, Haribol! (the Lord leaves)

SCENE TWO

The Birth of Baby Vishvambhar

SCENE TWO

The Birth of Baby Vishvambhar

(The home of Jagannath Mishra)

Narrator: In the district of Nadiya, in a town called Navadvipa lived a poor brahmana, whose name was Jagannath Mishra. His devoted wife was called Shachi Devi. They lived very peacefully serving their Deity of Adhokshaja Krishna. They had eight daughters, all of whom unfortunately died after birth. The ninth child was a boy and was named Vishvarupa. But when the tenth child was to appear there was some cause of alarm.

Jagannath: I have seen wonderful things! Your body is effulgent, and it appears as if the Goddess of fortune was now personally present in my house. Everywhere I go, people offer me respects.

Shachi: Yes, I have seen wonderfully brilliant beings appearing in the sky as if offering respects and prayers.

Jagannath: In a dream, I saw the Lord entering my heart and then yours. I can therefore understand that a great personality will soon appear. But what worries me is that this is the tenth month of your pregnancy. I wonder why it is taking so long.

Shachi: Yes, this is very strange, indeed. Should we not consult an astrologer to find out the reason for this?

Jagannath: Yes, I have asked your father to come and make a chart for the child. Nilambara Chakravarti is a very respected astrologer. He will compose a horoscope.

Nilambara: (walks in) Ah, Jagannathji, how are you today?

Jagannath: Very well, thank you. By the grace of Lord Hari all is well. Now please be seated. Can I offer you some water or prasadam?

Nilambara: A little water will be fine.

Jagannath: Devi, bring some fresh, cool water.

Shachi: Yes.

Nilambara: Yes, indeed, what you were telling me yesterday is very strange.

Jagannath: Today my wife tells me she is again seeing celestial people coming to offer prayers.

Nilambara: Now, let me look through these books. Ah, where has that page gone? I'm sure it was here. Ah, here it is. Let me just read this. (reads) Hmm... very interesting, I must say. Jagannath, I find his signs to be quite extraordinary! Well, my son, there you have it. All the signs indicate a very auspicious time for your child's appearance, so I think there is nothing to worry about at all.

Jagannath: Thank you so much.

Nilambara: It is my pleasure. But I have to go now. If ever you need me in the future, please, you won't hesitate to come and see me, will you?

Jagannath: No, I won't.

Nilambara: Good.

Shachi: O Pitaji, you are leaving so soon? But I wanted to make prasadam for you here today.

Nilambara: Never mind, my child, maybe tomorrow. Take care now.

Shachi: Yes, Pitaji. (Nilambara leaves)

Narrator: In the year 1486, in the month of Phalguna on the evening of the full moon, the auspicious moment of Sri Chaitanya's birth took place. Everyone was chanting "Hari! Hari!" because of the lunar eclipse that was in progress. The atmosphere in all directions became extremely jubilant. At that time, Advaita Acharya Prabhu was dancing in a pleasing mood in his house at Shantipur. All the devotees and even the demigods became very ecstatic as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, in the wonderful form of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, advented Himself on this Earth. Advaita Acharya's wife, Sita Devi, went to the house of Jagannath Mishra to present some valuable gifts for the newborn child.

Shachi: Sita, please come in.

Sita: Let me hold Him.

Shachi: Here... oh, He's so beautiful.

Sita: Does He not look exceptionally good?

Shachi: My Pitaji was right about his calculations.

Sita: I have brought some nice gifts for your child.

Shachi: What? You shouldn't have!

Sita: Bring the gifts.

Servant: Yes, right away. (scene with gifts)

Sita: Ah, you are so fortunate!

Shachi: What can I say? The Lord is so kind to us.

Jagannath: Ah, Nilambara, please come in.

Nilambara: Congratulations, Jagannath Mishra. Your child is very beautiful!

Jagannath: It is exactly as you had predicted.

Nilambara: Yes, according to the calculations I made, your son will deliver the entire three worlds. He is the maintainer of the universe. So it is quite appropriate to call Him Vishvambhar.

Jagannath: Yes, that's a very nice name.

Shachi: I, too, like that name... Vishvambhar...

Nilambara: Because He was born under the neem tree we shall also call Him Nimai.

Jagannath: These are wonderful names you are giving Him. (carries on talking, lights fade out)

SCENE THREE

Nimai Kidnapped by the Two Thieves

SCENE THREE

Nimai Kidnapped by the Two Thieves

(Outside in the courtyard)

Narrator: The child grew up, giving much joy to His parents and neighbors. Everyone was filled with great delight at the sight of little Nimai. Sometimes He would cry, and all the ladies of the village would chant Hare Krishna—and only then would He stop crying. In this way, even in His childhood He had already started His worldwide sankirtan mission. (lights come on)

Sita: Shachidevi, He always stops crying when we chant.

Shachi: I know, Sita. Sometimes I think He's just trying to trick us into chanting! Anyway, He seems happy now. Let's go and finish making His lunch. (as they exit, they kiss baby Nimai and pat His head. Then the two thieves stealthily enter)

Mahesh: This must be the place.

Ashok: Yeah. Is that Him?

Mahesh: It must be—look at all them jewels!

Ashok: Yeah!

Mahesh: Have you got the candy?

Ashok: Yeah, it's here somewhere. Where did it go? Oh, here it is!

Mahesh: What happened to the rest of it? You... you ate it!

Ashok: Well, I... I was hungry...

Mahesh: You fool! Well, anyway, I hope there's enough left. Anyone coming?

Ashok: Nope.

Mahesh: Okay, let's go. (they approach Nimai)

Both: Coochee, coochee, coochee coo!

Ashok: Coochee, coochee, coochee!

Mahesh: Come here and have some candy, you sweet little boy!

Ashok: Coochee, coochee, coochee!

Mahesh: Stop! That's enough with that coochee coochee stuff!

Ashok: Well, He is pretty cute.

Mahesh: Don't get attached. Remember what we came for?

Ashok: Okay.

Mahesh: Come here, baby. Come to uncle Mahesh.

Ashok: You're not His uncle.

Mahesh: You idiot! I'm just saying that so He won't be scared. Come here and have some nice sweets... Ashok, it's not working—you do something.

Ashok: Like what?

Mahesh: Make a funny face. (Ashok makes a face, Nimai cries) I said funny! Come on—act like a clown! (Ashok does, Nimai laughs)

Mahesh: Okay, grab Him and let's go! (they carry Nimai off. Shachi calls and enters)

Shachi: Nimai! Nimai! Lunch is ready. Nimai? Sita, Sita! He's gone!

Sita: (entering) Oh, no! Where can He be? Where did He go?

Shachi: May Krishna protect us! You look around that side and I'll look over here. (they leave as thieves re-enter, exhausted)

Mahesh: Whew! I think we've gone far enough now.

Ashok: That's good, 'cuz this kid's pretty heavy... for a baby.

Mahesh: Maybe it's the jewels—which are now going to be all ours.

Ashok: What about the kid?

Mahesh: Who cares?

Ashok: Hey Mahesh, something's funny here.

Mahesh: What do you mean?

Ashok: This house looks awfully familiar.

Mahesh: What? You're right! How did we get back here? (Sita, Shachi and others enter)

Ashok: Watch out, here comes the family looking for Him!

Mahesh: It's all your fault, you numbskull! Let's get out of here. (they run out)

Shachi: Nimai! Where have You been?

Sita: We've been looking all over for You!

Jagannath: Thank Krishna, He's safely home again! (everyone chants and Nimai smiles)

SCENE FOUR

The Brahmana's Offering is Spoiled

SCENE FOUR

The Brahmana's Offering is Spoiled

(Jagannath Mishra's house)

Narrator: One day, a brahmana was touring all over the country. He reached Navadvipa, and Jagannath Mishra received him as his guest.

Jagannath: O great mahatma, please come in. What can I do for you? Would you like to stay at our house before you travel on? It would give us much joy if you could spend the night here. We can arrange for nice prasadam for you.

Brahmana: Thank you very much for your kind hospitality. I have heard about your generous nature. I would like to cook something for my Gopal Deity. Is it possible to make the necessary arrangements? I would be very grateful to you.

Jagannath: Please, be my guest. It will be my pleasure to serve you.

Brahmana: Not me, but my Gopal Deity.

Jagannath: Devi, please make all the necessary arrangements for our guest to cook for Gopalji. Bring the finest rice. Bring all the fresh grains and vegetables.

Shachi: Yes, Prabhu. (she brings foodstuffs. Brahmana begins to cook)

Jagannath: Please feel comfortable here. Consider this to be your home. If you need anything, just let me know. (Jagannath Mishra, Shachi and Nimai exit)

Brahmana: Thank you. Hmm, let's see... I will make an altar over here. Then, I will prepare some sweet-rice. (he mixes, etc., and sings "Govinda Jaya Jaya, Gopala Jaya Jaya, Radha Ramana Hari, Govinda Jaya Jaya.") Now, it is ready to offer. (he bows down and begins to offer "namo brahmana-devaya..." when Nimai approaches and eats the bhoga. Brahmana looks up) What are you doing? You are spoiling my offering! Jagannath Mishra! Jagannath Mishra!

Jagannath: Nimai! You shouldn't have done that. Come on, let's go.

Brahmana: Oh well, children are innocent. (the Brahmana prepares again, as before. When he begins to offer, Nimai again eats the bhoga. The Brahmana looks up, astonished) What are you doing? You've spoiled my offering again! Jagannath Mishra! Your son has spoiled my offering again!

Jagannath: Nimai, You naughty boy! This time I will put You to bed!

Brahmana: I'll prepare it again. (he repeats the same procedure. Nimai comes in and eats the bhoga) What has been done? What has been done? I guess Lord Vishnu does not want to eat!

Nimai: My dear Brahmana, formerly I was the son of Mother Yashoda. At that time, you were a guest in the house of Nanda Maharaja, and I disturbed you in exactly the same way. I am very much pleased with your devotion.

Brahmana: Thank you, Lord. You are very kind.

Nimai: Do not disclose this incident to anyone. Go on in your worship of Me in the form of Gopal.

Brahmana: Thank you, Lord. (they exit)

SCENE FIVE

Little Nimai Eats Dirt

SCENE FIVE

Little Nimai Eats Dirt

(Outside in the courtyard)

Narrator: One day, when the Lord was enjoying playful sports with the other children, Mother Shachi brought a dish filled with fused rice and sweetmeats, and asked Nimai to sit down and eat them.

Shachi: It's time for You to eat! I must go and do my household chores now, but I will be back soon. (she leaves. Nimai rejects the food, picks up dirt and eats it instead. Then she returns) Nimai! What is this? What is this? Why have you been eating dirt?

Nimai: Why are you so angry, Mother? You have already given me dirt to eat. This is dirt, and the sweetmeats are just a transformation of dirt. This is dirt. That is dirt. So, what is the difference, Mother?

Shachi: Who has taught you this philosophical nonsense that justifies eating dirt? If we eat dirt transformed into grains, our bodies become nourished and strong. But if we eat this plain dirt off the ground, our bodies become diseased and will be destroyed!

Nimai: Why didn't you teach Me this before, Mother? From now on, when I'm hungry, I will not eat dirt.

Shachi: Jai!

SCENE SIX

Youthful Nimai Challenged by His Students

SCENE SIX

Youthful Nimai Challenged by His Students

(In Nimai's Sanskrit grammar school)

Narrator: Nimai is in His teens now. Once the Lord had gone to Gaya to perform pinda for His departed father. There He took initiation from Ishvara Puri. When He returned home, He was a changed person. No longer was He Nimai Pandit, a big scholar, defeater of Keshava Kashmiri, but now He was a performer of sankirtan. One day, as He was conducting a class on Sanskrit grammar...

Nimai: Class, please take a break now while I speak with this learned astrologer, who has so kindly agreed to visit us. (students leave)

Nimai: Please come, my dear Brahmana, please be seated. Now, with your calculations, please ascertain what my previous birth was.

Brahmana: Yes, now let me see... This calculation is very strange. Are You sure about Your signs?

Nimai: Yes, positive. Tell Me—what do you see?

Brahmana: Just a minute, let me double-check.

Nimai: Well, then, who was I in My previous birth?

Brahmana: My dear sir, in Your previous birth You were the shelter of all creation, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Your identity is inconceivable by my calculations.

Nimai: My dear sir, I think you do not know very clearly who I was, for I know that in My previous birth I was a cowherd boy. I was born in the family of cowherd men, and I gave protection to cows and calves. And because of My pious activities, I have now become the son of a brahmana.

Brahmana: What I saw in my meditation was full of opulences, so I was very much confused. I am certain that Your form and the form I saw in the meditation are one and the same. Whoever You are, I offer my humble obeisances unto You!

Nimai: I am very happy with you. (Brahmana goes off. Students come back) Alright, boys, today we will practice our grammar by glorifying Krishna, then we will have more kirtan.

Student 1: My dear teacher, how is it that now Your teaching is very different?

Student 2: Yes, it is always about Krishna.

Student 1: We are always chanting, not studying like we used to.

Student 2: Maybe we can massage Your head with coconut oil, which will sooth Your head. (laughs)

Nimai: Gopi, gopi, gopi!

Student 1: Why are You chanting the name “gopi, gopi,” instead of the Holy Name of Krishna? I think You definitely need oil on Your head. What will You gain by chanting “gopi, gopi?”

Nimai: How dare you speak like that?! Today I shall beat you with My stick!

Student 1: What? Our teacher intends to beat us, the brahmanas! What an insult! I will tell my father to come here at once! (the students leave and come back with an angry father)

Brahmana: Do You have no shame? How dare You lift a stick to strike the body of a brahmana boy? You have no fear that You are going to break the religious principles. If You ever dare to raise Your voice or a stick to these boys again, we will all get together and strike You! (leaves)

Nimai: These smarta brahmanas are very proud of their so-called birth and knowledge. They have no respect for Me, even though I am a great scholar and a teacher. Because of these offenses, no one will be able to attain Krishna. I have to deliver these fallen souls. Only if they offer Me respects will their offense be nullified. Therefore, I will have to accept the sannyasa order of life. Thus the people will naturally offer Me respects. Then, by My grace, I will give them bhakti. Yes, this is the best solution; but I am sure this will be a shock for My mother. Nitai will have to break the news to her.

SCENE SEVEN

Nityananda and Haridas Go Preaching

SCENE SEVEN

Nityananda and Haridas Go Preaching

(On the streets of Navadvipa)

Narrator: The Lord's activities are unlimited. If Ananta Shesha with His unlimited hoods cannot describe the wonderful pastimes of Gaurahari, then what qualifications do I, a simple narrator, with one limited mouth, have to describe the

Lord's pastimes? If I omit some pastimes of Lord Gaurahari, then I apologize to you, my nectar-seekers. Forgive me, for we are limited here to only a short period of time.

Once, on the instruction of the Lord, both Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura went door-to-door on the streets of Navadvipa, giving the nectar of the Holy Name to whoever they met. (enter Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura)

Haridas: My dear Lord Nityananda, Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has personally ordered us: "Whoever you meet, simply speak to him about Krishna." Surely there is no more fortunate position than to be preaching on the order of Lord Chaitanya.

Nityananda: Yes, Haridas, you are right. We must give out Lord Chaitanya's mercy. The fallen people of this age are all so tightly bound up in materialistic life. If we do not give them an opportunity to hear and chant the Holy Name of Krishna, they are destined for a hellish existence in their next life.

Haridas: Come! There is not a moment to waste! We must press on and visit a few more doors before nightfall!

Nityananda: Here is a house. Let us try this one. (they knock on the door and a householder appears after some time. Lord Nityananda and Haridas both fall at his feet and begin to submit their plea to him)

Nityananda: My dear sir, please give up your sinful life, chant the Holy Names of Krishna and adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu!

Householder: My dear friends, what you say may be right, but what can I do? All my hours are spent in maintaining family members... I have no time for religion!

Nityananda: You say you have no time—but death may come at any moment, and you cannot say you have no time then! Listen, you do not have to neglect your family, but as a householder, it is your duty to free your family from the cycle of birth and death. Otherwise, what is the use of simply filling their bellies? Even the animals can do that!

Haridas: This valuable human life is meant only for reviving our eternal relationship with Krishna. If you do this, by chanting the Holy Names and living a pure life, do you think the Supreme Lord, who is maintaining all living entities in the universe, will let your family starve?

Householder: I never thought about it like that before! You are quite right... I must not waste any more time! But how can I change my ways?

Nityananda: The first and foremost thing to do is to always remember Krishna by chanting His Holy Names. Now repeat after Me: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. If you

always chant like this and live your life according to the principles of the Bhagavad-Gétä, then you will very quickly develop your Krishna Consciousness, and you along with your family will become very happy and free from all anxieties!

Householder: Thank You! Thank You very much! I will certainly follow Your instructions, believe me!

Haridas: Jai! We will visit you again when we come back this way.

Householder: Now please, You have been so kind to me. I must repay You in some way... (at that moment a horrible shouting and disturbing sound is heard offstage)

Haridas: What on earth was that?

Householder: Oh, no! It's those two rogues again—Jagai and Madhai!

Nityananda: Who are they?

Householder: They are the meanest pair of dacoits who ever walked the land of Bengal! Nothing and no one is safe when they are on the loose! I'm going inside and bolting the door... I wouldn't wait around here if I were You!

Haridas: Perhaps we should avoid these two fellows. We do not want to cause any trouble.

Nityananda: Haridas, surely we must be merciful to these two fallen souls. For if they are delivered from their sinful ways, then the good name of Lord Chaitanya will be still more glorified! (Jagai and Madhai appear, stumbling and falling around in a drunken condition. Shouting and swearing, they see an old man passing by)

Madhai: Here, Jagai! Look at this old man!

Jagai: Come on, Madhai, let's do him in!

Madhai: Yeah, I'll break his neck! (they move in and begin to harass the old man. At that time, Lord Nityananda and Haridas fall at their feet and loudly implore the two rogues)

Nityananda: My dear friends, please chant the Holy Name of Krishna and give up your sinful life! (Jagai and Madhai are taken aback and the old man uses this opportunity to limp off stage)

Jagai: What? Vaishnavas? Ugh! (spits)

Madhai: You're the scum of the earth!

Jagai: Come on, Madhai! Let's teach these fools a lesson!

Madhai: Yeah! Come here, you two! (they give chase to Lord Nityananda and Haridas, who run for their lives)

SCENE EIGHT

Lord Chaitanya Hears the Sankirtan Report

SCENE EIGHT

Lord Chaitanya Hears the Sankirtan Report

(In Srivasa Öhäkura's house, Lord Chaitanya is surrounded by His devotees)

Chaitanya: The essence of all Vedic knowledge is included in the eight syllables, Hare Krishna, Hare Rama. This is the reality of all Vedanta. The chanting of the Holy Names is the only way to cross the ocean of nescience, and is the chief means of attaining love of Godhead. By humility and meekness one attracts the attention of Krishna. Therefore, if one becomes very humble and meek, he can easily attain the lotus feet of Krishna in this age of Kali. In this way, whatever one does in executing devotional service must be accompanied with the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord. (enter Lord Nityananda and Haridas Öhäkura) Nityananda Prabhu! Haridas! What is the news of today's preaching work?

Nityananda: My dear Lord, by Your unlimited mercy, many fallen souls were delivered! (Lord Chaitanya and other devotees all shout: "Jai! Haribol!") But there were two sinful rogues who would not listen to us. Somehow or other they avoided Your mercy, My Lord.

Haridas: Yes, dear Lord. These men were two demonic brothers named Jagai and Madhai. When we asked them to chant, they simply attacked us with filthy language and then chased us for miles. By Krishna's grace we narrowly escaped, but they would have killed us had we been caught!

Nityananda: It is a great misfortune that they could not be given the mercy.

Chaitanya: My dear devotees! I am very pleased that you tried to deliver such a degraded pair of fellows. Actually, I know of these two brothers, Jagai and Madhai. Formerly they were good young boys, Jagannath and Madhava, born in a respectable brahmana family, but due to bad association they have become meat-eaters, woman-hunters and sinners of the worst kind. But do not be down-hearted! If at first you don't succeed, then try again... somehow or other, they may be delivered, for everything is possible by the grace of Krishna.

Nityananda: Yes! We will go to them tomorrow and preach to them again! By Your mercy, they will be delivered!

Devotees: Jai! Haribol! Gaura Haribol!

SCENE NINE

The Deliverance of Jagai and Madhai

SCENE NINE

The Deliverance of Jagai and Madhai

(On the streets of Navadvipa. Jagai and Madhai are on stage arguing. Enter Lord Nityananda and Haridas)

Jagai: Hey look! It's those nonsense God-mongers again!

Madhai: What? Come back for more, have you? Well, take this! (Madhai throws a piece of clay pot at Lord Nityananda, which appears to draw blood)

Nityananda: It does not matter that you have done this; I still request you to chant the Holy Name of Lord Krishna!

Jagai: How astonishing! I have never seen such tolerance, Madhai! He must be a saintly person! (to Lord Nityananda) My dear sir, I am very sorry! Please forgive me and please pardon my brother!

Madhai: Hey, what's wrong with you, Jagai? You lost your brain? Out of my way, you fool, I'm going to teach this Vaishnava not to mess with me!

Jagai: (trying to stop Madhai) No, Madhai, don't do it!

Haridas: Nrisimhadeva! Nrisimhadeva! (suddenly Lord Chaitanya appears in a fierce and angry mood)

Chaitanya: How dare you hurt Lord Nityananda! I will destroy you for this! (He raises His chakra weapon)

Nityananda: (stopping the Lord) Wait, My Lord! Your mission is not to kill, but to deliver such rascals as this! If You kill these two rogues, then You may as well kill all the people of this age, for they are all practically as fallen as these two! Please be merciful to them, I beg You!

Chaitanya: All right, I will spare you, but on one condition only: you must solemnly promise that from this moment onwards, you will give up all your sinful habits and take up the chanting of Krishna's Holy Names as your only shelter! (the two brothers are both on their knees by now and they begin to beg the Lord)

Jagai: Oh yes, my Lord, I'll do anything You ask! Anything!

Madhai: I'll turn over a new leaf, I promise!

Chaitanya: Come now, my dear friends, do not fear! Although you were most fallen, by the mercy of Lord Nityananda you have now become the most fortunate!

Jagai & Madhai: Oh thank You, My Lord! Thank You! (Lord Chaitanya raises them up and embraces them)

Nityananda: Dear Lord Gauranga, You are so kind to the unfortunate living entities in Kali-yuga, for although everyone is so sinful in this age, You are freely giving the highest benediction—pure loving service to Krishna—to anyone who simply takes shelter of Your lotus feet. Let's chant the Holy Names right now! (kirtan) Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ki jai!

SCENE TEN

The Lord Disappears from His Room

SCENE TEN

The Lord Disappears from His Room

(Later, in Jagannath Puri)

Narrator: After the conversion of Jagai and Madhai, the Lord performed many other pastimes in Navadvipa, and then He went on a tour of Jagannath Puri and South India. After the Lord completed His tour of South India, He returned to Jagannath Puri. (kirtan) Everyone in Jagannath Puri was filled with ecstasy to have the Lord back in town. The Lord spent six years instructing Ramananda Raya, and sharing wonderful pastimes with His devotees like Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami, Raghunath Das and many others. Every year the Lord would observe the festival of Ratha-yatra, and all the devotees from Kulina-grama would come to see the Lord. They would stay for four months and then go back, travelling to Vrindavan, Bengal, Prayag, Umasi and many other places, preaching about the Holy Names of Krishna. Then for the last eighteen years of His manifest lila, Lord Chaitanya spent His time in Jagannath Puri. In the daytime He would associate with His beloved devotees, taking prasada, having kirtan and discussing topics of Krishna. At night He would go practically insane, feeling intense separation from Krishna. Swarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya would spend these nights with the Lord, consoling Him. Who can describe the love Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was feeling for Krishna? I certainly am not qualified to do so.

Swarupa: So, Govinda, make sure everything is alright with the Lord. Stay outside His door. Do not leave here. If you need anything, call out and we shall come. The Lord is feeling much separation from Krishna; there is no telling what He will do next. He is already rubbing His lotus-like face against the wall, thus causing Himself to bleed.

Govinda: Yes, Prabhu, I will lock the door so He cannot leave. Haribol. (the devotees leave. The Lord is chanting but soon stops)

Swarupa: So, Govinda, everything is fine with the Lord?

Govinda: Yes, Prabhuji. The Lord is safely locked in His room. I am staying to see to His needs.

Swarupa: But I don't hear the usual groaning sound the Lord makes.

Govinda: That is strange. Why don't you check to see if everything is alright.

Swarupa: Yes, I will. (looks in room) Govinda! Govinda! The Lord has gone! He is not here!

Govinda: What? This cannot be! I just saw Him in there half an hour ago. I am personally guarding His door. There is no possibility of the Lord leaving His room without my knowledge. Besides, the room was locked.

Swarupa: But I tell you, the Lord has disappeared. Go and look for yourself.

Govinda: Alas, where is the Lord?

Swarupa: He has gone! Call all the devotees. We must go and look for Him. The Lord could be in some danger. Have the king send out a search party. Come on, let's go look by the seashore.

SCENE ELEVEN

Rescuing the Lord from the Sea

SCENE ELEVEN

Rescuing the Lord from the Sea

(the devotees all assemble on the beach)

Haridas: Mahaprabhu! Mahaprabhu! Where are You? My Lord, please hear our prayers! Please show us Your face and put us out of our misery! Oh, this is no use. There is no sign of the Lord anywhere!

Swarupa: Haridas, do not lament like this. The Lord will be found.

Haridas: It is nearly daybreak. We have been looking for the Lord all night, yet no one can find a trace of Him. I am sure the Lord has disappeared and left us here once and for all.

Swarupa: Do not talk like this. What you say makes no sense. (Fisherman enters, babbling madly)

Fisherman: Hari! Hari! Hari! Oh Nrisimhadeva, please protect me. Help me! Hari! Hari! Get this ghost out of me! Hari! Oh goodness me, what shall I do?

Swarupa: My dear fisherman, why are you behaving like this? Have you seen anyone here? What is the reason for your strange behavior?

Fisherman: I have not seen a single person, but while fishing I captured a dead body! Seeing the corpse, I was full of fear! When I tried to release Him from my net I accidentally touched Him. As soon as I touched Him, a ghost entered my body! Thus, I am behaving like this! Hari! Hari! Oh Nrisimhadeva, help me! I am going crazy! Oh my wife, my poor children, who will take care of them? I have gone crazy. Hari! Hari! You must protect me! Drive this ghost from me! I have seen that host, that ghost is now haunting me! Oh what will happen if I die? Oh my wife! Oh my children! I must go and see an exorcist! I forbid you to go near Him! If you do the ghost will haunt you, too!!!

Swarupa: I am a famous exorcist. I will get rid of the ghost! (places hand on the fisherman's head, chants mantra and slaps him) My dear fisherman, the person who you think to be a ghost is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of ecstatic love He must have fallen into the sea, and you then caught Him in your net.

Fisherman: I will show you where the Lord is. Come.

Swarupa: Help me revive Him, everyone! He's in a deep ecstatic trance! (they loudly chant a kirtan. The Lord gradually and reluctantly awakens)

Lord Chaitanya: Seeing the Yamuna river, I went to Vrindavan. There I saw the son of Maharaja Nanda enjoying pastimes in the water with the gopis. Then suddenly all of you made this tumultuous sound and brought Me back here. Where is Vrindavan? Where is Krishna? Why did you break My happy dream?

Swarupa: In Your dream, You mistook the sea to be the river Yamuna and You jumped into it. This fisherman caught You in his net. My Lord, come with us back to Your room.

Narrator: In this way, at night the Lord was feeling intense separation from Krishna and He would disappear from the company of the devotees, thus causing great anxiety to everyone. In the daytime, He would again regain external consciousness and instruct His devotees about Krishna.

SCENE TWELVE

The Lord Recites the Siksastakam Prayers

SCENE TWELVE

The Lord Recites the Siksastakam Prayers

(kirtan with devotees in Gambhira. The Lord sits with His devotees)

Lord Chaitanya: In this age of Kali-yuga, the process of worshiping Krishna is by chanting the Holy Names of Krishna: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. One who does this will soon attain Krishna. Here are some instructions on how one should chant the Holy Names: (Siksastakam Prayers are dramatically recited by Lord Chaitanya)

The End

The Age of Kali And The Appearance Of

Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan Movement

compiled by Radha-Damodara Das

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ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE * Maharaja Yudhishtira Sees The Ill Omens For The Age Of Kali

SCENE TWO * Yudhishtira Entrusts His Kingdom to Maharaja Pariksit

SCENE THREE * How Pariksit Received The Age Of Kali

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE * Kali and His Consort Sin

SCENE TWO * Kali and Sin And The Six Enemies

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE * Lord Chaitanya Bids Farewell To His Devotees

SCENE TWO * The Vision Of Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE * Çréla Prabhupäda Meets His Spiritual Master

SCENE TWO * Çréla Prabhupäda's Journey To America

SCENE THREE * Çréla Prabhupäda's Preaching In America

SCENE FOUR * Çréla Prabhupäda's Arrival

An Outline of the Play

An Outline of the Play

The play begins with a narration and slide show describing how the ages run in cycles, just like seasons, starting with the Age of Truth, Satya-yuga, and gradually declining to the Age of Quarrel, Kali-yuga. With the appearance of Lord Krishna, just before the beginning of Kali-yuga, the whole Earth becomes auspicious as if it were Satya-yuga. Having completed His mission on this earth, the Lord went to Dwaraka, and at that time Maharaja Yudhishtira sent Arjuna to see Him. Weeks go by and still Arjuna does not return, thus Maharaja Yudhishtira becomes anxious and, seeing many ill omens, his anxiety increases.

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Maharaja Yudhishtira enters and begins to describe many ill omens as he witnesses them. His ultimate conclusion is that the Lord has disappeared from the planet and the world has again become inauspicious.

SCENE TWO

Maharaja Yudhishtira turns over his throne to Maharaja Pariksit and sets off for the Himalayas to fix himself in meditation on the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna. (All as per S.B. 1st Canto).

SCENE THREE

Dialogue between Dharma (the bull) and Bhumi (the cow). The personified Kali enters and begins to beat them. Maharaja Pariksit comes in and, seeing this, prepares to kill Kali, but when Kali takes shelter of him, he gives Kali five places where he may reside.

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Kali and his consort Sin discuss the many ways in which they are going to bewilder the living entities in this age (“...this is my age, my Queen, now just begun / I'm allowed 400,000 years in which to have my fun...”).

SCENE TWO

Then Sin invites each of the six enemies—Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion, Madness and Envy—to describe their expert means for expanding Kali's empire. This contains excerpts from Girish Ghosh's play, *The Age of Kali*, which has been adapted by the devotees. As the last enemy is finishing his monologue, the sound of a harinama-sankirtan party is heard faintly in the distance, and the enemies all become fearful. Kali appears and tells Sin that it's all over, but Sin can't believe it and describes all her expert means of deception, but Kali shows how the devotees are using the six enemies in favor of devotional service; i.e., turning Lust into love for God, making Anger and Envy join hands to fight those who decry the Lord, Greed becomes eagerness to attain the Lord's favor, etc. At last Kali and Sin alone are left, then suddenly Lord Chaitanya and His associates explode upon the scene as Kali and his consort flee in terror.

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Lord Chaitanya and the devotees chant and dance for a while, and the kirtan reaches a crescendo and finishes. Lord Chaitanya sits surrounded by His followers and begins to glorify them all, beginning with Advaita Acharya and Çréla Nityananda Prabhu (as per the chapter in C.C., Lord Gauranga Bids Farewell to the Bengali Devotees). After praising the glories of Srivasa Öhäkura, Raghava Pandit and the inhabitants of Kulina-grama, Lord Chaitanya stresses the importance of chanting and serving the devotees, in answer to a question from Satyaraja Khan. Then He describes the specific qualities of a Vaishnava. At last, the Lord comes to Vasudeva Datta, who petitions the Lord to put all the sinful reactions of all fallen souls on his own head, so that they can be delivered from their suffering. The Lord is overwhelmed by Vasudeva Datta's compassion, and He assures him that all

living beings in the universe have already been saved simply by his desire. Lord Chaitanya then reveals that even though the devotees may appear to be leaving His association, He is always with them, for He is present wherever the Holy Name is chanted by the devotees. The kirtan begins again, very sweet this time.

SCENE TWO

As the chanting continues the attention comes to the front of the stage, where a spotlight is shining. Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura appears and begins to recite the English translation of Arunodaya-kirtan: “When the Eastern horizon became tinged with the redness that heralds the rising of the sun, the jewel among the brahmanas, Lord Gaurasundara, immediately awakened... etc.” Thus it appears that the Lord and His devotees, whose chanting is very quiet, appear to be the meditation of Çréla Bhaktivinoda. The monologue ends as follows, paraphrasing Lord Chaitanya: “I have brought the medicine for destroying the illusion of Maya. Now pray for this harinama maha-mantra and take it! Öhäkura Bhaktivinoda fell at the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga, and after begging for the Holy Name, he received that maha-mantra.” Then Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura begins: “Oh for that day when the fortunate English, French... and American people will... raise kirtan through their towns. When will that day come?” He predicts the coming of a great acharya who will fulfill the mission of Lord Chaitanya.

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

A narration describes how Çréla Bhaktivinoda's son, Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, establishes a powerful preaching mission throughout India. Then the appearance of Çréla Prabhupāda, his childhood and youth are described. This scene begins with Narendranath urging Abhay Charan to visit this “nice sadhu.” Abhay reluctantly agrees, and they come before Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta, who preaches strongly to Abhay and urges him to spread Lord Chaitanya's message in the English language. The scene ends with Abhay telling Narendranath that he is deeply impressed and has accepted in his heart this very nice, saintly person, as his spiritual master.

SCENE TWO

There is a short narration describing Çréla Prabhupāda's preaching in India up to 1965, and how he finally sets off aboard the steamship Jaladuta towards America. The scene begins on the Jaladuta: Çréla Prabhupāda is sitting behind his trunk, writing in his diary, and his voice is heard as he is writing: “Today the ship is plying smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation...” He goes on writing, describing his feeling of dependence on his guru-maharaja and Krishna. Then Captain and Mrs. Pandia enter, and they inquire from Çréla Prabhupāda about his health. Çréla Prabhupāda says: “If the Atlantic had shown its usual face,

perhaps I would have died. But Lord Krishna has taken charge of the ship.” There is a brief dialogue between them, then Çréla Prabhupāda sells them three volumes of Çrémad-Bhāgavatam and they exit. Çréla Prabhupāda then stands and walks to the front, as if to the rails of the ship, and peers out across the ocean to the grim skyline of Boston: “My dear Lord Krishna, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me...”

SCENE THREE

There is a detailed narration and slide show describing Çréla Prabhupāda's preaching in America, and his ultimate success in establishing Krishna Consciousness world-wide.

SCENE FOUR

The last scene is in Bhaktivedanta Manor in England, a few minutes before Çréla Prabhupāda arrival, with the devotees running panic-stricken to get everything ready for his arrival. Çréla Prabhupāda arrives!!! There is a Deity greeting and then Çréla Prabhupāda sits on his vyasasana and sings Jaya-Radha-Madhava. Then he begins to speak. This contains extracts from the very wonderful class he gave at the Manor on Vyasa-puja 1973, where Çréla Prabhupāda speaks very movingly about how actually, “I had wasted so much time before fulfilling the order of my spiritual master...” and he gives all credit to the devotees themselves. He mentions that a grihastha must be paramahansa. At the end, he says that even after he has passed away, he is very much hopeful that this movement will continue to spread. It is a beautiful class and at the end he says: “Thank you very much, Hare Krishna!” The devotees then start a kirtan and Çréla Prabhupāda leaves.

End of Outline; Play Follows

Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan Movement

compiled by Radha-Damodara Das

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* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Maharaja Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Pariksit, Guards, Bhumi (cow), Dharma (bull), Kali, Sin, Envy, Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion, Madness, Lord Chaitanya, Satyaraja Khan, Vasudeva Datta, Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura, Devotee, Abhay / Çréla Prabhupāda, Narendranath, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, Captain and Mrs. Pandia, Devotees.

(Note: a slide show may accompany this lengthy introductory narration)

Narrator: We offer our respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Prabhupāda. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Chaitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

We offer our respectful obeisances unto all the Vaishnava devotees of the Lord, who can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire-trees, and are full of compassion for all the fallen, conditioned souls.

Bhaja Sri-Krishna-Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda

Sri-Advaita Gadadhara Srivasadi-Gaura-bhakta-vrinda

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

As nature turns through the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, winter—so does the universe revolve through four cycles known as yugas or ages: Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. Four such ages make one kalpa, and two thousand of such kalpas make one day and night for Lord Brahma, the universal engineer. From creation to destruction, this universe exists for one hundred of Lord Brahma's years, and all that time—which spans in our earth's time more than three hundred trillion years—is but one breath of Lord Maha-Vishnu, who lies upon the causal ocean in His mystic slumber. Like bubbles in a cosmic ocean, countless universes rise and are destroyed, as each time the blessed Lord breaths in... and out...

The golden age of Satya-yuga is free from vice, but as spring turns to summer, the Treta-yuga begins as tiny spots of sin and strife appear... though mostly truth and purity reign. Then, like autumn, Dvapara begins, and thus virtue and religion decline still more, yet harmony and godly life is still the norm. Until, that is, the iron age of Kali spreads its dark and deadly shroud. Like a bleak and dreadful winter, this Kali is a dangerous age, for there is almost no virtue to be found in it—mercy, truth, austerity and cleanliness are all but gone. When quarrel and hypocrisy rule, when leaders are but swindlers and fools... the age of darkness, Kali, is begun.

But, just before this stormy era came, the Lord Himself, Sri Krishna, appeared out of His causeless mercy upon all the fallen souls who rot in forgetfulness of Him. Thus, five thousand years ago, just as a sunny day often appears amidst the months of cold and rain, the Lord graced this earth with His presence, and all the while it was again like Satya-yuga, the golden age. To annihilate demonic kings, but especially to bless those pious followers of His, the Lord stayed for 125 years

and also sang the divine scripture, Bhagavad-Gétä, that chalked the path of light for all mankind, forevermore.

His mission done, the Lord retired to Dwaraka's mighty citadel, and at that time the pious king and emperor of all the world, Yudhishtira Maharaja by name, a pure devotee of the Lord, sent Arjuna, his younger brother, there for news of Krishna's activities. Thus Arjuna, that warrior of mighty arms, that soul surrendered to his Lord, that companion of the friend of everyone, left Hastinapur at once for Dwaraka, to fulfill his elder brother Yudhishtira's desire. But, as the weeks went by, and still Arjuna did not return, the emperor's mind began to fill with troubled thoughts...

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Maharaja Yudhishtira Sees The Ill Omens For The Age Of Kali

(It is evening time. The weather is very cold and miserable. Maharaja Yudhishtira enters in great anxiety)

Yudhishtira: The direction of eternal time has changed... and the seasons no longer follow their proper course! What is this fearful time? It is most astonishing! Recently I have noticed such a change in the people. Men and women who were once pious and God-fearing have now become filled with greed, pride and anger. Many of the citizens are adopting foul means of livelihood, and their dealings, even between friends, have become polluted with cheating. In family relationships, there is no harmony but only misunderstanding, and even between husband and wife there is always strain and quarrel.

Some time ago, I sent Arjuna to Dwaraka to get news about the Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, and His divine plans. But, seven long months have passed since then, and still he has not returned; thus I am greatly perplexed to know how things are going on there...

The left side of my body, my thighs, arms and legs are all quivering again and again. I am having heart palpitations due to fear... all these omens indicate undesirable happenings. Just see! This pigeon is like a messenger of death! The shrieks of the owls and crows make my heart tremble... it seems they want to make a void of the whole universe! The earth and mountains are throbbing... Just hear the cloudless thunder and see the bolts from the blue!

The wind blows violently, blasting dust everywhere and creating darkness. Clouds rain blood! What is this extraordinary time? What is going to happen? The rays of the sun are declining, and the stars appear to be fighting amongst themselves... everything is in chaos! Confused living entities appear to be ablaze and weeping...

and even the Deities seem to be crying and ready to leave the temples. The whole earth is devoid of happiness and beauty... I do not know what sort of calamities are awaiting us... I can only think that all these disturbances indicate some greater loss to the good fortune of the world...

(Arjuna enters, his feet dragging heavily. He bows down to Maharaja Yudhishtira and sits at his feet, his head down and tears gliding from his lotus eyes)

Yudhishtira: Arjuna! My dear brother, are you all right? How is everything at Dwaraka? Are all the members of the Yadu dynasty in good health? How is Lord Balarama? What about Lord Krishna? O my brother, what is wrong? Why are you so grief-stricken?

Arjuna: (very slowly and emotionally) O king! The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, who treated me exactly like an intimate friend, has left me alone... I have just lost Him whose separation, for even a moment, renders all the universes void... like bodies without life! Great generals like Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Jayadratha all directed their weapons against me. But, by His grace, they could not even touch a hair on my head. Now all my strength and prowess, which astonished even the demigods, has left me. Due to my lack of esteem for the Lord, I dared to engage Him as my chariot-driver, although He is worshiped and served by the best of men! O emperor, now that I am separated from my dearest friend and well-wisher, my Lord Govinda, I can simply remember those Divine instructions sung to me by Him on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. This is the only relief for my burning heart...

Yudhishtira: Then there is no reason to remain even a moment longer in this earthly life... Arjuna!

Arjuna: Yes, my lord?

Yudhishtira: Inform your grandson, Pariksit, to make all preparations. Tomorrow I will crown him as emperor and master of all lands bordered by the sea!

Arjuna: Yes... at once!

Yudhishtira: And have my servant bring saffron cloth and a staff. That's all... (Arjuna exits) I will give up my kingdom at once and, following the path trodden by my forefathers, I will go to the Himalayas and devote myself completely to thoughts of the Lord. Thus I will prepare myself for death...

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

Yudhishtira Entrusts His Kingdom to Maharaja Pariksit

(Yudhishtira, Pariksit, and 2 guards enter)

Yudhishtira: The total land of the earth is under the control of my throne. As emperor, it is my duty to protect all the citizens, including the animals, from all harm and to train them according to the directions of the Supreme Lord. It is under His control and sanction that everything moves, and thus I am also His servant. Under his guidance, all of the citizens on the earth are happy in all respects, free from the disturbances of sinful life.

Pariksit, you are my grandson. You have been trained to assume leadership. This age is a difficult one. As emperor, it will be your duty to protect the citizens from degradation. Now I am growing old. The time has come for me to give up material activities and devote myself entirely to the Lord. I must prepare myself to return to Godhead. (he crowns Pariksit and gives him a sword. Pariksit bows, thinks for a while, then addresses audience:)

Pariksit: My dear citizens, my friends, as king it is my duty to give protection to the residents of the land, and therefore I am here to serve you all. We are entering difficult times. This Age of Kali is very dangerous for the human beings. Human life is meant for self realization and to understand we are all brothers. Not only the humans, but the animals, the birds, the trees, they are our brothers as well. Together we must acknowledge and glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead, our common father. Due to the influence of this Age of Kali, men will completely forget the aim of life. The sages foresee that in this age men will become mad after sense gratification. They will become short-lived, quarrelsome, misguided, and above all always disturbed. Finally, at the end of the age, the only philosophy will be, "I will kill you and eat you or you will kill me and eat me."

Yudhishtira: But, my dear friends, before these tragedies come about, in the midst of the turmoil of this age, there will be a renaissance of transcendental knowledge and religious principles. At that time, men everywhere—in every town and village all over the world—will be given the opportunity to revive their relationship with the Supreme Father and glorify His Holy Name by the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord!

Narrator: After placing Pariksit Maharaja upon the throne, Yudhishtira at once relinquished his royal garments, belt and ornaments, and thus he became fully freed from all designation of this world. Then he dressed in tattered cloth, gave up eating solid foods, became dumb voluntarily and let his hair hang loose. Appearing like a madman, Yudhishtira set off for the Himalayan mountains in the north, and gradually absorbed himself in meditation on the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna. Thus fixed in remembrance of the Lord, Yudhishtira Maharaja gave up his body and went back home to Godhead.

The other sons of Pandu—Bhishma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva—thereafter saw that Kali's age had already arrived throughout the world, and seeing irreligion rife

among the common people, they too left home and followed in the footsteps of their glorious brother, Yudhishtira Maharaja.

Meanwhile, the grandson of the Pandavas, that great and saintly king, Pariksit Maharaja, began to rule the people of the earth under the guidance of the best of the twice-born brahmanas. But while he was residing in the Kuru empire's capital, the symptoms of the iron age of Kali-yuga began to infiltrate within the jurisdiction of his state. Pariksit did not think this matter very good, but it did afford him a chance to fight for righteousness and justice. Thus he took up bow and arrows, left his palace, and set off to conquer all directions. At that same time, Dharma, religiosity personified, was wandering here and there in the form of a bull, and he met mother Bhumi, the earth personified, appearing as a cow.

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

How Pariksit Received The Age Of Kali

(Scene opens with Bhumi the cow crying and lamenting bitterly. Dharma the bull enters)

Dharma: O mother earth, are you not hale and hearty? A shadow of grief has covered your face... Are you not well, or are you sad, being parted from a loved-one who's in a far-distant place? My three legs—austerity, purity, and mercy—are broken; now, on truth alone do I stand. Are you lamenting to see me forsaken and so badly crippled by Kali's cruel hand? Or are you anxious, my dear mother, because you can see the merciless men who soon will appear to torture and butcher your sisters and brothers, to exploit your lands and fill your children with fear? Or are you feeling compassion for the unhappy women and their children, forlorn by unscrupulous cheats? Or for the plight of innocent citizens, bewildered and plundered by thieves dressed as government leaders and priests? Mother earth, you were blessed by Lord Krishna, who appeared to free you from all of your burdens and fears. But now that He has left you alone, are you crying for Him? Pray tell me the cause of your tears!

Bhumi: O Dharma! O emblem of perfect religion! By the Lord's mercy you made this world glad. Now that I have heard all of your questions, I'll tell you the reasons why I am so sad. For a while, I beheld the Lotus Feet of Lord Krishna, who enjoyed His pastimes while walking upon this earth. At that time, all my forests, seas, mountains and rivers were blessed with such uncommon beauty and worth. But at the end, while I was feeling such good fortune, the Lord, in whom all goodness and beauty rests, finished His pastimes and left me here alone, and in this dark age I am so much distressed. (Kali enters and begins to beat the bull and the cow with a stick)

Kali: All right, you stupid beasts... move! (to the bull) I see! You don't want to work anymore for me? And you, you old cow... you cannot give me any milk or calves now? Useless!!! There's only one thing left for you... the butchers knife! Yes! But first, I'll beat you to within an inch of your life! (Maharaja Pariksit enters as Kali begins to beat them severely)

Pariksit: Stop! You rogue—just when Lord Krishna and Arjuna are out of sight, you dare to beat an innocent bull and cow? Well, let me tell you, that one who causes offenseless creatures to suffer must fear me, anywhere and everywhere in this world, for I subdue all envious men! O culprit, now you'll pay for your sins, for you are truly a villain, though dressed as a king! Though strong, you dare harm those who are helpless! But now your time is nigh—by the sword you have lived, so now, by the sword... you must die!!!

Kali: O!!! My dear lord! (throwing himself at Maharaja Pariksit's feet) O merciful master, I surrender unto you! Please spare my life... please have pity on me!

Pariksit: Since you have surrendered completely, I will not kill you, so there is no need to fear for your life. But you cannot remain in my kingdom, for you are the friend of irreligion; and where you reside, greed, treachery, cheating and vanity will certainly abound. Get ye hence!

Kali: O Your Majesty, you are most kind to spare me! But if I must be exiled from your kingdom, where then can I go? For no place on this earth lies beyond your power of rule! O my dear king, you are the defender of truth and of all helpless beings. I beg you, please allow me some place where I may stay always and peacefully linger!

Pariksit: All right, you may live wherever you find these four pillars of sinful life—gambling, intoxication, animal slaughter and prostitution.

Kali: O thank you so much, O great saintly king!

But before I go, there is just one thing
for under your holy and powerful reign,
none of these pillars of sin can remain!

So, by your grace, is there just one more place?

Pariksit: For a beggar, your demands are very bold!

All right, you may stay whenever men hoard;
there lust, lies and envy prevail.

Now, begone! Before my patience fails.

Kali: (scuttling off) O master, thank you! Thank you!!! O gracious lord, thank you... you won't regret this... (Kali runs off, and his villainous laugh is heard offstage)

Pariksit: Fear not, O son of Surabhi, lament no longer! And, O mother cow, there is no cause for you to cry!

For as long as I live and rule this land,

I will not fail in my duty to stand

and protect all creatures from treacherous hands!

Dear mother earth, surely Lord Krishna again will appear.

Take heart! For by thinking of Him, He is already here!

Come now, Dharma, let me ease your pains.

We'll soon have you back on your feet again!

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Kali and His Consort Sin

Kali: This is my age, O queen, now just begun. I'm allowed 400,000 years in which to have my fun! Wars, plagues, suicides, drugs, money, liquor and lies, rapes, bombs, diseases... such a feast for my eyes! So rejoice, my queen, our time has come. With perverted desires will I flood their minds; they'll be vultures for pleasure... but only torment will they find!

Sin: Sordid perversions will be in vogue. O Kali, Kali, you're such a rogue!

Kali: Yes, ILLICIT SEX, such a delight! For a moment's pleasure, like dogs they'll fight!

Sin: They'll kill the baby in the womb, making the garbage can his tomb!

Kali: Woman-hunters will scavenge the night, and they'll slaughter the cows for their appetites!

Sin: Which brings us to MEAT-EATING! What would you like for dinner, dear? Some fresh killed pig, chicken or steer? Christmas killed turkey, rabbit or lamb?

Kali: No, love, tonight I'll eat my fellow man!!! (Kali lunges menacingly at nearest member of audience) I'll get you all, just wait and see, I'll have no compassion, not one drop of mercy!

Sin: INTOXICATION! Would you like a cigarette, sir? Some coffee or tea? Perhaps you want some burgundy?

Kali: What? Not enough? Here, try some hashish or LSD... Mystical visions do I guarantee... Whatever you want, just come to me!

Sin: What's that? You want more and more? Come, just see what I have in store!

Kali: GAMBLING! You'll make money your life! Your greed for wealth will cause such strife!

Sin: Worship of God? Ha! There will hardly be any. But even the pauper will worship his penny!

Kali: And the leaders of society, so filled with greed, they'll be blind to see that the only way to bring about peace is to rid this world of me... Kali!

Sin: O Kali, Kali, Kali!!!

Kali: The universe came out of a big explosion!

Sin: They'll have no idea how life began, but their lives will end with a nuclear bang!

Kali: Come on, enjoy your life! Do your own thing! It's all absurd! Be your own king!

Sin: Forget tomorrow, just have some fun! It doesn't matter, it's all one... blow your minds and let them run!

Kali: Cook that steak till it's nice and done! They'll try to be master of the world and enjoy a life of ease, but they'll create a hell of concrete skies and plastic trees!

Sin: Like rats they'll race at frightening speeds, encaged in cars of steel, and they'll work like slaves to feed their shiny coffins on four wheels!

Kali: Oh what a tangled web we'll weave, when first they practice to deceive! We'll anaesthetize their brains with senseless songs and television!

Sin: We'll cripple their bodies with chemicals, junk-food and pollution!

Kali: We'll twist their minds with political lies in books and in newspapers!

Sin: And we'll break their hearts in Godless schools, factories and skyscrapers!

Kali: And this is just the beginning... you wait till we really get going!!!

Sin: Corruption of religion is our game, watch austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truth go down the drain!

Kali: And the world will be ruled by the thoroughly insane! For I am Kali!

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Kali: When we're done, just see how heads will spin!

Sin: You will eat one another, even kith and kin!

Kali: At the end of the age you will be pygmies, short and thin!

Sin: You'll all be old men by the time you're ten!

Kali: For I am Kali!

Sin: And I'm his consort, Sin.

Kali & Sin: AND THIS IS THE AGE THAT WILL DO YOU ALL IN!!! (they run offstage, laughing madly)

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

Kali and Sin And The Six Enemies

(Sin enters along with her six devilish assistants—Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion, Madness and Envy. They all say “Bravo! Bravo!” and take their places before Sin's throne as she addresses them)

Sin: As seeds grow to become flower-bearing trees, my pets, so like a seed do I lie in the innermost chamber of the heart of all fallen souls. And, day by day, I develop till I do deliver to each and every individual the fruits and flowers of his own sinful life—misery, disease, confusion, pain and poverty. For the sins of his past, a man suffers, but he is uncontrollably impelled by my force to commit more and more sins. And from these, he suffers in the future and again commits more. My innumerable seeds are indestructible. They are deeply sown and, like irrepressible weeds, give misery to all.

By my design the poor soul who contemplates sense objects develops attachment for them. That attachment leads to lust, and from lust, anger arises... from anger, then delusion... and finally loss of intelligence. And when a man loses his intelligence, he comes more firmly under my grip. (all applaud)

Thank you, my expert foremen. How grateful I am that with your assistance my authority has been expanded throughout the universe. My pets, recite to me now what expert means you use to expand my kingdom, and I shall reward each of you as you deserve. (all speak simultaneously) Wait, wait, my pets. One at a time, please, one at a time. Now let me see... who shall it be? You begin, O Lust...

Envy: He always gets to start first!

Sin: (claps) Silence, Envy!

Lust: (rises) O Empress Sin, your influence is boundless. Who can escape the enchantment of your web? I am not one to brag, (others murmur) but I must admit that it is I who am the greatest enemy of all the living entities!

All: What, you?!

Sin: (claps) Silence! Let him continue.

Lust: Yes, I! It is I, dear Empress, who induces the pure soul to become entangled in your clutches. My work is simple, very simple. Listen, mother, how I do your work to the best of my ability...

The beautiful woman sits in her bedroom, and with her quickly-moving eyes she sees the redness of her own lips in the mirror. And as she brushes her hair, which is black like the wings of a crow, the desires in her mind easily flow. Seeing her own reflection, her mind becomes delighted, and at any time I whisper in her ear... slowly, slowly I say to that lusty woman: "Alas, O beautiful-eyed one, why are you sitting here alone, not being cared for? Why don't you attract some young man's mind and bind him up? Go, go! For what reason do you remain here idly? How can you tolerate the pride of these young men? Why not make them cry out in desire? Why not make them all roll at your feet?" With a steady mind she hears these words. Slightly smiling, she rises and, holding the mirror with her own reflection in front of her, the enchantress runs off to conquer in all directions!!!

When I see laziness in a man, I go to him and say: "O mystifier of the worlds, what are you doing? Just see—women are dying for you! You are just like a bumble-bee, now go and drink honey from many flowers!" Hearing my sweet words, the scandalous man begins to think himself the lord of love. And at that moment, the beautiful woman attacks him with the arrows of her glances. In this way, the young man and woman fall down by Lust's deception. In the end, they enjoy poisonous fruits, and the depths of their hearts burn day and night. Thus bound by ropes of attachment, they come under your control... their shouts of remorse never end! In this manner do I, Lust, ever cause the best of men to fall.

Sin: (happily clapping) Beautiful! Beautiful!

Envy: Now me! Let me!

Sin: Wait! All in good time! Speak to me, Anger—what is your business?

Anger: O Sin! All glories unto you! Without you, what would this world be like to live in? Please hear of my exploits on your behalf. Lust's work is simple, he says. I couldn't agree with him more. But my work is thorough. He may capture a man's senses, mind and intelligence, but it is my toxins that pollute his whole body. After Lust does what little he can, his victim gets passed on to me. (Lust responds with insults) Then I make the man's gentle voice harsh and loud, his muscles taut, his heart palpitate, his actions uncontrolled. Just see the pauper in my palm, his blood boiling and his face flushed red by my wrath! That soul will not listen, reason cannot find him, patience has deserted him. Only arrogance and pride provoke him, and he turns upon his own beloved wife, children and friends. Being unkind to them, he suffers all the more. O dearest Sin, devastation is my work! You can see the evidence of my work everywhere in the form of enmity: between husband and wife, between brothers, friends and families, between societies, religions and nations. I have men at each other's throats over mere trifles. Then after my brief visit is over, my black shadow, war, arrives! And that's when the real fun begins! (harsh laughter. The other enemies mimick his laughter sarcastically) Ah shut up! Shut up!

Sin: Next! Who shall speak next? (clamor) Quiet! (immediate silence) All right, Greed, go on.

Greed: Of all your foremen, sweet Sin, I truly am the foremost! (all respond negatively) Like a faithful gardener, I lavishly water the seeds you so carefully sow! Please hear, Your Majesty, of my qualifications—of which you certainly already know. Whatever there may be within the universe to satisfy one's senses can never satisfy me. Even though a man has everything, under my influence he wants more. With discontent by my side, I sap the very vitality of human life. Where I reside, rest assured, happiness never dares show her face. My pitiful prisoner, one foot through the gate of hell, thinks: “So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes.” Thus he works hard like an ass day in, day out, and even overtime...

Rushing to work at breakneck speed, full of anxiety, convinced that he is free. But in truth he's working for me!

No matter what he goes through and gets, it will never make amends...

thus he takes to stealing and cheating, even from his friends.

Then they steal from him and, thus oppressed,

they become enemies over a farthing or less.

Let but my sticky fingertips lightly touch the most esoteric philosopher, the most advanced scientist, the most renowned politician, the most brilliant poet, and they become morose, living a life of two extremes: hankering for future gain, and lamenting for past loss.

Ahhh! Just see how I make them all insane!

Illusion: Ho-hum!

Greed: My queen, these are the waters of my reign...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...and the flood has only just begun...

Illusion: Enough!

Greed: ...by my touch, they all become undone!

Illusion: I can't stand any more!

Greed: Too bad!

Sin: Illusion, Illusion, please.

Illusion: (jumping up and interrupting Greed) O Sin! With all due respect, I have heard enough! After all, why does a man endeavor to enjoy himself? And why is he angered when he fails? I ask you why... why is he dissatisfied with his wealth? It is because I, Illusion, have spread my veils. You should know that all beautiful, glorious and mighty sins spring from but a spark of my splendor. (Sin squirms nervously) With but a single fragment of myself, I pervade and support all these other petty seedlings. (other enemies protest vigorously) Why do I reign supreme?

All: Supreme?!

Illusion: For one reason only: because of my cheerful smile called ignorance. It is due to ignorance, Madame Sin, that men are overcome by your glance. Poor little Lust and Anger simply carry on my work. (negative response) And when I make a man want more than what he's due, then only is he susceptible to you, O noble Greed! And why are souls called fallen? Because I cast them down. And why do they stay down? Because I enshroud them. For every being is born in my grip, overcome by desire and hate.

I have decided for modern man

that life is a complex chemical combination,

that there is no God in control,
and within the body there is no soul.
He thinks that his body made merely
of earthly lifeless elements
is his complete identity.

Poor lost little living entity!

He's unaware that there's a joyful Lord in control,
that within the body, there's a blissful living soul.

You see, they only age in years, but not in knowledge,
for I hide reality behind my shawl,
for the detriment of one and all.

Good queen, you know this world to be
a place of death, happiness has no place here.

But for them, this truth is wholly unclear.

They are blind, for within their minds, I pit hope against hope. "Things will be better," they think, "and the future is so bright."

That's my master plan...

to keep them locked up in this sham.

Sin: Your master plan?

Illusion: Well, I didn't mean...

Sin: That is quite enough now, Illusion. Don't let yourself get carried away.

Illusion: But my Queen, I haven't...

Sin: Sit down, Illusion! Sit! Good. Now, Madness, you've been ominously quiet and reserved. Let's hear of your play.

Madness: I, reserved? How very droll.

Sin: Why not let us into the labyrinth of your mind?

Madness: Excuse me if I seem a bit reserved. A real hero shows prowess by his actions, not high sounding words. (negative response) Allow me to quietly reveal my seductive plot. Man is mortal; this statement seems quite sound, you must admit. (responses: "So what else is new? Ho-hum!")

Old folks have died, and he who is a child today,
will sooner or later pass away.

Yet although he knows his destiny to be dust,
he madly accumulate more and more and more,
and becomes a prime target for Illusion, Greed, Anger and Lust.

And why? Because he cannot help himself... he must!

All: He must?

Madness: He must! Do you hear? And this is the substance of my gift... This is what I, Madness, contribute. So, Mistress Sin, you can see that I'm the best, I trust.

Sin: (to Madness) Hmm. Perhaps. After all, there is method to your madness. Well now, Envy. Envy?

All: Hey Envy!!!

Envy: Huh? Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Sin: At last it is your turn to beat the drum. But I must caution you—don't be too malicious!

Envy: Who, me?

All: Yes, you!

Envy: (intensely eager) To begin with, O Queen, let me ask: From which tree do the seeds of sin come? (all respond in favor of themselves) Wrong! From me! (all freak out)

There—you see! Ha! The desire-tree of Envy!

Without me, men would live peacefully,
he'd not care if another was more opulent than he.
None would strive to accumulate more and more,
and then, Madness, where would you be?
Lust, Anger, Greed, Illusion and Madness all envy me! (wild response)
They know that only my call
lures the soul to want what is not his
and makes him fall—(faint kirtan is heard in distance)
and it all begins when he envies God!!!
That's why I will never let it end,
for my roots are stronger than an iron rod.
And nothing in this world can ever make them bend. (dissension increases)
(a kirtan is heard offstage in the distance, and this does not stop for the rest of
the play. The actors must shout over it)
Sin: Shhh, quiet. Listen! What's that?
All: What's what?
Sin: That sound!
All: What sound?
Sin: That! That horrible sound. It sounds like music...
All: Music?
Sin: Yes, happy music!
All: (they stand up) Yes, yes it is!
Sin: All right, who's responsible for this?
All: Honestly, Sin, we didn't...

Sin: I warn you—if this is someone's idea of a joke, I'm not amused! I want it stopped. I want it stopped immediately! (silence, no one moves) Well, someone do something. Someone go out there and tell them to stop it this instant! (Kali enters)

All: Kali! Kali!

Sin: O Kali! How wonderful to see you, my dear! (kirtan is more noticeable in background)

Kali: (sadly) O my Queen, my poor Queen...

Sin: What's the matter, Kali?

Kali: (distraught, pacing back and forth) I never thought it could happen... Brace yourself, my queen, I have bad news.

Sin: Bad news?!

Kali: Yes. It's all over! Our doom is in the making!

Sin: Our doom?

Kali: Yes! They are chanting and spreading those horrible names!

Sin: What names?

Kali: You know—those names!

Sin: What are you talking about?

Kali: Must I spell out everything for you? The Holy Names of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead! They are planting those names in the minds and hearts of everyone, everywhere!

Sin: Oh no! No!

Kali: Our entire empire is quaking!

Sin: But how can that be? We've sown

uncountable seeds of sin within their hearts. (All: "Yes! Yes!")

And those seeds will kill piety

like piercing, poisonous darts. (All: "They must! They must!")

Kali: (shakes his head dismally) Excuse me, don't you realize this chanting of the Lord's names nullifies all sinful seeds...

Sin: Nullifies?

All: Nullifies?

Kali: ...and all reactions to sinful deeds?

Sin: no, no, it can't be!

Kali: Yes, it can. It's useless! All our work gone for nought; it's useless, don't you see?

Sin: (in extreme anxiety) But I don't understand. It just can't be!

Kali: But it can, it can! The Supreme Lord has come to say: "Abandon all varieties of religion, just surrender unto Me and I'll protect you from all sin."

Sin: (more calmly) Oh, is that all? But that's not news! No one will listen to that when faced by Envy's might! (All: "Right!") And who will care for such words when Lust makes his strike? (All: "Right!") Our stalwart army will not fall! (All: "Never!")

Kali: (interrupts her, shouting) That's where you're wrong! Our stalwart soldiers are being used by these devotees!!!

Sin: What gall! (All: "What gall!") They must be deprogrammed at once... (All: "At once") ...once and for all!

Kali: Listen! They transform their lust into love for the Lord.

Sin: For the Lord?!

All: Disgusting!

Kali: They use their anger and envy to fight those who decry the Lord and His divine plans. Their greed becomes eagerness to attain the Lord's favor. And separation from the Lord will make even Madness stand mute with folded hands as they wait for their beloved Lord to benedict the devotees with His ecstatic flavor! These devotees seem to taste some mysterious sweet that gives them strength to control their minds!!! O my queen, what can it be that makes our treats tasteless? (Lust, Anger, Greed, Envy and Madness slink off; only Illusion remains)

Sin: Let them try to control us! Illusion will captivate them back to our view! Just wait and see!

Kali: (with sad voice) O my poor Queen, I'm afraid Illusion won't do!

Sin: (hopelessly) What do you mean, Illusion won't do?

Kali: Let me show you. Illusion, come here! Under whose control are you?

Illusion: Sin's of course. For the source of my power, it is Sin I woo.

Kali: That may be true. But beyond her milieu, in whose shadow do you stand?

Illusion: (great hesitancy) I? Well. I stand behind the Lord!

Kali: And who is your Lord?

Illusion: My Lord? Why, ultimately Krishna, of course. Who else?

Sin: Ah! Don't mention that name! (she tries to attack Illusion but Kali stops her)

Kali: Wait! And when your Lord commands you, can you afford to disobey?

Illusion: No, never. How could I disobey my Lord? (he runs off. Sin calls after the enemies)

Sin: Illusion! Envy! Greed! Those miserable clowns claimed to abound in the confines of my world. But I've found their boasts to be merely bad jokes. May they all to their deaths be hurled! (chanting continues. Kali and Sin look at each other for a moment, listening. They continue talking, but now more slowly than before)

Sin: What a cacophonous disruption! (pause) I demand to see who's doing this! (gets up to go)

Kali: (alarmed) O my consort Sin, if you wish to stay with me, I urge you not to go!!! (to kirtan party) Stop it! Stop it! My head is about to burst!!! (he sits down as if he has a great headache)

Sin: (to herself) Until this happened, our might was immeasurable! How could they deal such a blow? I must know! I must go... I must see how it could be so! (she turns, sees Kali is not watching and runs off)

Kali: (immediately looks up and sees she's gone) Wait! Wait! Sin! You'll be entrapped by our foe! (he runs after her)

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Lord Chaitanya Bids Farewell To His Devotees

(Lord Chaitanya and His devotees explode upon the stage and the personified Kali and Sin flee in fear. The kirtan builds up to an ecstatic climax and then ends. Lord Chaitanya sits surrounded by the devotees and speaks movingly)

Lord Chaitanya: My dear devotees, to see all of you before Me is the pleasure of My life, so how can My heart bear it now that all of you must return to Bengal? Please return here every year to see Me. Advaita Acharya, I consider you to be My Spiritual Master. Please give love of Krishna to all, even the lowest of men. And My dear Nityananda, you should spread devotional service throughout Bengal. Take with you Ramadas and Gadadhara, and sometimes I will also come to see your dancing, which purifies the three worlds.

O Srivasa, when you perform sankirtan in your house, know for certain that I am present there. Please take prasada from Lord Jagannath to my mother...

My dear Raghava Pandit. I am obliged to you, due to your pure love for Me. Everyone please hear of the pure devotion of Raghava Pandit. Every day, he prepares the finest fruits with great care and attention, and offers them to the Deity, along with cakes, sweet rice and all the finest foods and paraphernalia. Everyone is satisfied by his service...

All you inhabitants of Kulina-grama must come to Me every year and bring silken rope to carry Lord Jagannath.

Satyaraja Khan: O Lord, I am a materialistic man, entangled in household life. What is my duty?

Lord Chaitanya: Always chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and try to serve Him and His devotees, the Vaishnavas.

Satyaraja Khan: My Lord, how can one recognize a Vaishnava? What are his common symptoms?

Lord Chaitanya: Anyone who chants the Holy Name even once is considered to be worshipable, for by so doing all his previous sinful activities are nullified. There are no barriers in this chanting, and anyone can worship the Lord in this way and become purified, even the lowest of men. This chanting awakens one's dormant love for Krishna. Therefore anyone who is chanting the Holy Name of the Lord is understood to be a Vaishnava and worthy of one's worship.

Ah, Vasudeva Datta, what can I say about your pure love for Sri Govinda? Your love for Krishna is so strong that it can illuminate the darkness in the hearts of all the fallen souls. (Vasudeva Datta becomes embarrassed and touches the Lords Lotus Feet)

Vasudeva Datta: My dear Lord, You appear just to deliver all the conditioned souls. As you are the Supreme independent Lord, I have one petition to make before You. O Lord, my heart breaks to see the sufferings of the entangled living entities, therefore I request you to transfer the karma of their sinful lives upon my head. O Lord, let me always remain in a hellish condition, but please let their sufferings finish. (Sri Chaitanya is overwhelmed)

Lord Chaitanya: Such a statement is not astonishing, for you are actually Prahlada Maharaja and Krishna has bestowed all mercy upon you! Whatever you desire Krishna will give, there is no need for you to suffer! My dear Vasudeva Datta, the purity of your love is unmatched, and because of that love all living beings in the universe will certainly be liberated!

Now, My dear devotees, you must return to Bengal, but do not think that I will be separated from you, for wherever the Holy Name of Sri Hari is chanted by His devotees, certainly I am present. Come now... take heart! Let there be kirtan! (a very slow and ecstatic kirtan begins and all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya dance... after a short time the Lord and his devotees take their place in the background and a spotlight brings the attention to the front of stage, where Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura enters and stands)

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE TWO

The Vision Of Çréla Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura

Bhaktivinoda: When the eastern horizon became tinged with the redness that heralds the rising of the sun, the jewel among the brahmanas, Lord Gaura-sundara, immediately awakened. Taking His devotees with him, He journeyed through the towns and villages of Nadiya. The mridangas resounded “tathai tathai” and the karatals in that kirtan played in time. Lord Gauranga's golden form slightly trembled in ecstatic love of Godhead, and His anklebells jingled.

The Lord called out to the townsfolk: “Wake up, sleeping souls! Wake up! You have slept so long in the lap of the witch called Maya. You have achieved this rare human body. Don't you care for this gift? If you don't worship Krishna, the darling of mother Yashoda, then great sorrow awaits you at the time of your death. With every rising and setting of the sun, a day passes and is lost. Why then do you remain idle and not serve the Lord of the heart? I have descended just to save you. Other than Myself, who else is your friend? I have brought the medicine for destroying the illusion of Maya. Now pray for this Hari-nama Maha-mantra, and take it.” Thus, this Bhaktivinoda falls at the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga and begs to be blessed with the Holy Name... Sri-Sri-Nitai-Gaura-Premanandi Hari Haribol!!!

Sri-Harinama-Sankirtan-Yajna ki jaya!!! Yes, this principle of kirtan is the future church of the world; it invites all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan, to the highest cultivation of the spirit. This church, it appears, will extend all over the world, and take the place of all sectarian churches, mosques and temples. After all, Lord Chaitanya did not advent Himself for the benefit of a few men of India, but to liberate all living beings, of all countries, throughout the entire universe. The Lord has said: "In every town, country and village, My name will be sung." There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass... I am sure that, soon, there will appear a personality who will preach the Holy Name of Lord Hari all over the world! Oh for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German and American people will take up banners, mridangas and karatals, and raise kirtan through their streets and towns. Oh! When will that day come?

My dear Lord Gauranga, when You appeared, You revealed the highest knowledge of the Absolute Truth; but now, due to the ignorance of uncultured men, the Vaishnava faith appears to have become most degraded. Why, it is even considered a beggar's excuse for living at the expense of society.

My dear Lord, how will your super-excellent teachings again be brought forth shining? Alone, I do not have the power to restore them; therefore I am praying that you send me a soul who can achieve this task. My dear Lord Chaitanya! Please fulfill this long-cherished desire of mine. Please, send me a son, who will help me spread your teachings far across the land!

Devotee: (heard from outside the room) Kedaranath! Kedaranath Babu!

Bhaktivinoda: Yes, yes, I am here! What's the matter?

Devotee: (rushing in, breathless) Kedaranath! Your prayer... has been answered!

Bhaktivinoda: What? What are you saying? What has happened?

Devotee: Your wife has given birth...

Bhaktivinoda: Yes?

Devotee: To a son!

Bhaktivinoda: A son? Krishna's mercy! But my prayer was for more than just a son!

Devotee: Oh, I know! This one is very special! He is the one you've been praying for!

Bhaktivinoda: But... how do you know?

Devotee: You should see! His features are so auspicious!

Bhaktivinoda: Yes? But...

Devotee: His eyes... his face... so wonderful!

Bhaktivinoda: But how does that...

Devotee: Listen! Apart from all that, he was born wearing the sacred thread of a brahmana!

Bhaktivinoda: (astounded) What? Come now...

Devotee: It's true! He was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck and draped across his chest!

Bhaktivinoda: (in ecstasy) Nitai-Gaura-chandra! Haribol! Haribol! (runs off stage)

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

Çréla Prabhupāda Meets His Spiritual Master

(Scene opens with Çréla Bhaktisiddhanta and disciples in the background. Enter Narendranath, pulling Çréla Prabhupāda as a young man named Abhay Charan)

Abhay: Narendranath! I'm not going!

Narendranath: Oh please, Abhay, I'm sure you will like him... he is a wonderful sadhu!

Abhay: Oh yes, I know all these sadhus! Most of them are simply beggars and ganja smokers in the dress of mendicants!

Narendranath: But this one is different, Abhay. He is a pure and powerful Vaishnava.

Abhay: Narendranath! I wish you wouldn't behave like this! I told you I'm not going...

Narendranath: Look, Abhay, I tell you he is extraordinary. He is such a learned scholar, and a great devotee of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You must meet him! Please!

Abhay: Oh, I...

Narendranath: At least you should see him and judge for yourself.

Abhay: You're so persistent! All right!

Narendranath: You won't regret this Abhay, I promise you.

Abhay: Well, we shall see.

Bhaktisiddhanta: There has not been, there will not be, such benefactors of the highest merit as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His devotees have been. The offer of other benefits is only a deception; it is rather a great harm, whereas the benefit done by Him and His followers is the truest and greatest eternal benefit... It is not for the benefit of one particular country, causing mischief to another; but it benefits the whole universe... The kindness that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has shown to jivas absolves them eternally from all wants, from all inconveniences and from all distresses... (Abhay and Narendranath enter, they pay their obeisances and are still rising)

Bhaktisiddhanta: You are educated young men. Why don't you preach Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message throughout the whole world?

Abhay: (taken back) How can we spread Indian culture if we are under British rule? First India must become independent, otherwise who will hear your Chaitanya's message?

Bhaktisiddhanta: Krishna consciousness does not have to wait for a change in Indian politics, nor is it dependent on who rules. It is so important, so exclusively important, that it cannot wait!

Abhay: How can you dismiss the cause of independence, as if it were of no importance, when so many of our spiritually minded leaders and saints—even Gandhi himself—are stressing national pride?

Bhaktisiddhanta: Whether one power or another rules is a temporary situation; the eternal reality is Krishna or God consciousness, and the real self is the spiritual soul. Therefore no man-made political system can actually help humanity. This is the verdict of the Vedas. Everyone is an eternal servant of God, but if one takes himself to be the temporary body, and if one regards the nation of his birth as worshipable, then he is in the greatest illusion. The leaders and followers of the world's political movements, including the independence movement, are simply cultivating this illusion, and therefore they are no better than cows and asses. Real welfare work, whether individual, social or political, should help prepare a person for his next life and help him to re-establish his eternal relationship with Krishna.

Abhay: Yes, that is true, but oppression of the people is a reality... and the British slaughter of innocent citizens is a reality. Surely, at the present time, the people's

cause is the only relevant movement, and spiritual life is a luxury which can be afforded only after independence.

Bhaktisiddhanta: Lord Sri Krishna is the highest Vedic authority, and in the Bhagavad-Gétä he declares: *sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja, aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah*—that one should give up all so-called dharmas and religious duties and surrender unto Him, the Personality of Godhead. The Çrémad-Bhägavatam confirms this: *dharmah projjhita kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam*—all other forms of religion are impure and should be thrown out; only Bhagavata-dharma—performing one's duties to please the Supreme Lord—should remain. The problem is that the people have become faithless. They no longer believe that devotional service to God can remove all anomalies, even on the political scene. How can someone claim to be a leader of the people if he is ignorant of the soul and identifies with this dead body as the self? He is simply a fool, and yet they are all following... blind men led by another blind man into the ditch. There is no scarcity in this world... the only scarcity is of Krishna consciousness. But all these men—Subhash Chandra Bose, Bannerjee, Lajpat Rai, Gandhi—they have all failed to solve the real problem of society; rather, they simply added to the chaos and confusion.

This whole world is simply a society of cheaters and cheated. It is not a fit place for a gentleman. Therefore one should simply aspire to leave this material world and go back to home, back to Godhead. The urgent need is to render the highest good to humanity by educating people about the eternal soul and its intimate loving relationship with Krishna. This is Lord Chaitanya's instruction to everyone born in India: *bharata-bhumite haila manusya-janma yara, janma sarthaka kari kara para-upakara*. So, do not hesitate... take up this important preaching mission and become an instrument in fulfilling Lord Chaitanya's prediction. And what is that prediction? *Prthivite ache yata nagaradi grama, sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama*—that one day the Holy Name of the Lord will be known in every town and every village of the world. Hare Krishna! (Abhay pays his respectful obeisances, rises and leaves with Narendranath... they appear again, front stage)

Narendranath: So, Abhay, what was your impression? What do you think of him?

Abhay: He is wonderful! The message of Lord Chaitanya is in the hands of a very expert person!

Narendranath: I knew you would like him, Abhay.

Abhay: Yes, he is a very nice saintly person. Narendranath, I think, were it not for my wife and family commitments, I would immediately join him. (pause... then thoughtfully) Still, in my heart, I have accepted him. Yes, I have accepted him!

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE TWO

Çréla Prabhupāda's Journey To America

(Scene opens with Çréla Prabhupāda sitting behind a makeshift desk—his trunk—on board the steamship Jaladuta during the long journey from Calcutta to Boston, U.S.A... A few large volumes of Çrémad-Bhāgavatam are visible. He is sitting in the light of a lantern, wearing glasses, and he looks weak in health. As he is writing, he pauses occasionally to think. He seems to be very thoughtful and grave, and at same time there is an unmistakable mood of determination, victory, ultimate happiness and peace about him. As he writes, his thoughts are heard)

Prabhupāda: Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Sri Vrindavan and my Lords Sri Govinda, Gopinath, Radha-Damodara. I depend fully on Their mercy, so far away from Vrindavan. I have left Bharata-bhumi, just to execute the order of Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté, in pursuance of Lord Chaitanya's order. I have no qualification, but have taken up the risk, just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. By his strong desire, the Holy Name of the Lord Gauranga will spread throughout all the countries of the western world. In all the cities, town and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers and streams, everyone will chant the Holy Name of Krishna.

Although my Guru Maharaja ordered me to accomplish this mission, I am not worthy or fit to do it. Therefore, O Lord, now I am begging for your mercy so that I may become worthy, for you are the wisest and more experienced of all. Today that remembrance of You came to me in a very nice way. Because I have a great longing, I called to You. I am Your eternal servant and therefore I desire Your association so much. O Lord Krishna, except for You, there is no other means for success...

(there is a knock on the door. Captain and Mrs. Pandia enter)

Prabhupāda: Captain Pandia... Mrs. Pandia! Hare Krishna!

Cpt. Pandia: Maharaja, how do you feel now? Has your health improved?

Prabhupāda: Oh yes, yes. Do not worry! The chest pains have gone now, and but for a slight headache, I am feeling much better.

Mrs. Pandia: Oh, this is good news. We were really worried about you, you know, Swamiji!

Prabhupāda: If the Atlantic had shown its usual face, perhaps I would have died. But Lord Krishna has taken charge of the ship.

Cpt. Pandia: Yes, I believe you are right. I have sailed these waters a hundred times, but never in my entire career have I seen such a calm Atlantic crossing!

Prabhupāda: It is Krishna's mercy.

Cpt. Pandia: Yes!

Mrs. Pandia: Swamiji, perhaps you will come back with us, so that we may have another crossing such as this one! (they all laugh)

Prabhupāda: Yes, yes, surely I would return with you. But I have my mission to fulfill!

Cpt. Pandia: Yes. I would like to help you, Maharaja. Is there anything we can do before you go?

Prabhupāda: Mmmm? Yes... you take these copies of Çrémad-Bhāgavatam—this is the First Canto in three volumes—simply try to understand it, chant Hare Krishna, and you will be happy, that's all. This is the best thing you can do for me.

Cpt. Pandia: This is... most kind...

Mrs. Pandia: Oh Swamiji, we cannot possibly thank you enough...

Cpt. Pandia: Maharaja, here's twenty dollars. Please accept it as a donation for the books. It's not much, but it may help you.

Prabhupāda: (touching the money to his head) Thank you very much!

Mrs. Pandia: Your future looks very bright, Swamiji, I can tell these things. That you have passed beyond this crisis shows that you have the blessings of Lord Krishna.

Prabhupāda: Hare Krishna!

Cpt. & Mrs. Pandia: Hare Krishna! (they leave. Çréla Prabhupāda rises, and with the help of his stick he walks to the front. Leaning on the ship's rail, he peers out across the ocean to Boston's bleak and dirty skyline)

Prabhupāda: My dear Lord Krishna, You are so merciful upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me. But I guess You have some business here, otherwise why would You bring me to this terrible place? Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of passion and ignorance. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vasudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it. But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible, because You are the most expert mystic. Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like.

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE THREE

Çréla Prabhupāda's Preaching In America

(A slide show should accompany the Narrator's praise of Çréla Prabhupāda's accomplishments)

Narrator: Çréla Prabhupāda arrived in America, practically penniless and hardly knowing in which direction he should go. For a while he wandered here and there... to Butler, Pennsylvania, then to New York, where he stayed with Dr. Mishra (a Mayavadi yogi), and then to the Bowery—Skid Row, full of bums and drunkards. There he shared a loft with a drug-crazed hippie, till one day the boy finally went mad and Prabhupāda was on the street with nowhere else to go. In this way, alone, for one year he was preaching—through the bitter New York winter—impoverished and a stranger in a city so degraded...

Then, at last, on the Lower East Side, one by one, bedraggled refugees of Kali-yuga—hippies, fed up with materialism, and disillusioned with the so-called “flower power movement”—came to him for answers and for shelter from the rain of confusion. So he simply gave them kirtan and, out of curiosity or looking for some kind of mystical experience, they chanted Hare Krishna—although unknowingly, they began their path home to the spiritual sky. With great patience and compassion, Çréla Prabhupāda gave the message he had brought, and though the first students were so crazy, he spelled the truth out to them all, just like a kindly father: “You are not these bodies, you are spirit souls,” he said. “We are all God's servants, so just chant Hare Krishna and be happy!” Many were just too far gone to hear him, but a few were sincere seekers of the truth, and they stayed, listened, learned and followed.

Soon the Swamiji (as he was then affectionately known among his followers) had gathered around himself a faithful band of boys and girls, who gradually began to take to Krishna consciousness. Won over by kirtan, prasadam and Prabhupāda's devotion to Lord Krishna, they gave up illicit sex, drugs, meat and gambling, and he, in turn, accepted them as his own disciples. But as soon as a few of them were strong enough to carry on in New York, immediately he left and went on to San Francisco, where with chanting, dancing, prasadam and philosophy, so many hopeless souls were attracted and saved from the web of material life.

In just a few years, the seed had been planted in New York, San Francisco, Montreal, Los Angeles... and across the sea to England, France, Australia and Russia. And Çréla Prabhupāda went travelling on relentlessly—preaching and taking the world by storm. And wherever Çréla Prabhupāda went with his disciples, people were astonished, journalists were excited, religionists dumbfounded and scientists were smashed! But above all, the peoples' hearts were changed.

In just twelve short years—from Çréla Prabhupāda's arrival in the West until his triumphant return to Goloka Vrindavan, the Supreme abode—this world was benefitted with so many of his gifts: more than one hundred beautiful temples, farms, castles, restaurants and palaces, full of thousands of ecstatic Vaishnava sons, daughters, grand-disciples... Sri Mayapura-Chandrodaya Mandir, Vrindavan's Krishna-Balarama temple, West Virginia's New Vrindavan, and the Bhaktivedanta Manor in London, England, to name but a few. He gave us worship of Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna, Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai and Jagannath-Subhadra-Balarama. And festivals like Gaura-Purnima, Janmashtami and Ratha-yatra flooding this world with nectar. He gave us transcendental dramas, art, music, dioramas, schools to teach our children, farms for developing cow-protection—but above all else, he gave us his books! “They are the basis,” he would say, and he gave every single breath for writing them—seventy volumes, in fifty languages, printed in the hundreds of thousands and millions, distributed world-wide. He gave us the foundation for a golden age, a blue-print for the future; but more than that, he left his own example—a lifetime of surrender and devotional endeavor, for us to take our strength and inspiration from.

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR

SCENE FOUR

Çréla Prabhupāda's Arrival

Narrator: It is a few minutes before Çréla Prabhupāda's arrival. The occasion is the celebration of Vyasa-Puja held at the Bhaktivedanta Manor in England in 1973. Devotees are running around panic-stricken and ecstatic, trying to get everything ready. The Temple Commander appears in overalls, blurts out a few instructions to the devotees around him, who run off in different directions, and then proceeds to bang some nails in the wall. Just then, the telephone rings and the Temple Commander answers it. Çréla Prabhupāda is on his way and will be at the temple at any moment! The devotee's anxiety reaches a climax. Then suddenly the arrival kirtan is heard and Çréla Prabhupāda has arrived!

Çréla Prabhupāda's small but commanding figure walks regally into the temple amidst bowing disciples and uncontrolled chanting of “Jai Prabhupāda!” The Deity curtains are opened and Çréla Prabhupāda bows down before Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna and then rises, standing reverentially before Them, his first fingers tapping together lightly, in time with the “Govindam” prayers. After a few minutes, Çréla Prabhupāda turns and walks majestically to his vyasasana where he sits and begins to chant “Jaya Radha-Madhava.” With his karatals ringing sweetly, and the mridanga following, Çréla Prabhupāda takes the devotees out into a deep sea of chanting... After only a few minutes, the kirtan ends and his Divine Grace begins to speak...

Prabhupāda: Sons and daughters—I am so much obliged to you that you have become so enthusiastic for offering Vyasa-puja. When Krishna sees that a living entity is very anxious to understand Him or to revive his Krishna consciousness, then Krishna gives him all opportunity, especially by manifesting himself as the spiritual master... antar bahih... the spiritual master is therefore Krishna's manifestation, Krishna's mercy manifestation to help a person to develop his Krishna consciousness... Therefore, to advance in Krishna consciousness, we require two kinds of help—one from Krishna and another from spiritual master. It is stated in the Chaitanya-Charitamrita... You'll be glad to know that the 17-volume book, Chaitanya-Charitmrita, is now published!

Devotees: Jai!

Prabhupāda: Kiba vipra kiba nyasi sudra kene naya, yei Krishna tattva vettha sei guru haya. I am sometimes criticized by my godbrothers, that I have become a “marriage-maker,” but they do not know why I take this risk. I have got many disciples, they are married couples, but all of them, husband and wife, they are helping this movement. I am very much hopeful that my disciples who are now participating will continue to advance, so, even if I die, my movement will not stop. I am very much hopeful. All these nice boys and girls... Bhaktivinoda Öhäkura wanted that European and American people may understand the philosophy of Chaitanya cult, and take part in it. That was his desire...

My guru maharaja, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvaté Goswami Prabhupāda, he also attempted to send his disciples to preach Chaitanya cult in the western world. First meeting, perhaps you know, he asked me to preach. So at that time I was young man, only twenty-five years old, and I was also householder. So I should have joined and executed his desire immediately, but due to my ill luck, I could not immediately execute his order. But it was in my heart, that it is to be done. So it is better late than never, I executed his order at the age of seventy years, not at the age of twenty-five year. So actually I wasted so much time, I can understand that. From twenty-five... The message was there when I was twenty-five years old, but I begun at the age of seventy years. But I did not forget the message, otherwise how could I do? That is a fact. I was simply finding out the opportunity to do it. So anyway, although I began very late at the age of seventy years, so by the help of my disciples this movement is gaining ground and is spreading all over the world. So therefore I have to thank you. It is all due to you. It is not my credit, but it is your credit, that you are helping me in executing the order of my Guru Maharaja...

So this movement, Krishna consciousness movement—that you already know, that it is the most essential, most important movement in the human society—so this movement will go on... Nobody can stop... You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master. It is not difficult. It is difficult when you manufacture something. But if you simply present what you have heard from your spiritual master, it is very easy... One may be rascal number one from material estimation, but if he simply strictly follows whatever is said by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or representative spiritual master, then he becomes a guru.

So, it is not very difficult... Amara ajnaya guru haya... And what is the difficulty? Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says don't feel any difficulty, because as spiritual master, what you have to do? Yare dekha tare kaha Krishna upadesa... Whomever you meet, you simply speak to him the instruction which Krishna gives. What Krishna... The instruction He gives? That is also very easy. What is that? Krishna says: Man-mana bhava mad-bhaktah mad-yaji mam namaskuru. Krishna says, "Just become My devotee, always think of Me, offer Me obeisances and worship Me..." And at last Krishna says: Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja.

So if you simply preach this cult... "My dear friend, my dear brother, you surrender to Krishna," you'll become spiritual master. Become spiritual master! You go door to door. No other talks, simply say: "My dear friend, you are great sadhu!" Although he may be rascal number one, still you call him: "He sadhava." "Yes, I am sadhu, yes. What is your proposal?" Then you say to him, "Kindly forget all nonsense that you have learned! That's all. I am flattering you because I want that you forget everything... All this yogis and this and that, meditation... Please, kick out all this!" "Then what, after this?" "Chaitanya candra carane kurutanuraga... Just adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya!" Then you become spiritual master. That's all. So, if you want to become recognized by Krishna very quickly, you take up this process of becoming spiritual master and present the Bhagavad-Gétä As It Is, your life is perfect. Thank you very much!

Devotees: All glories to Çréla Prabhupäda!

Çréla Prabhupäda: Chant Hare Krishna!

(Devotees begin chanting and Çréla Prabhupäda stays for a few minutes before rising and leaving the temple room. Kirtan continues and becomes very ecstatic)

The End

The following is an outline for a drama about Lord Chaitanya's pastimes handwritten by Çréla Prabhupäda for a production in 1967. It was reprinted by the BBT in the Vyasa-Puja Book, 1983, and is presented herein as a reference for future dramatizations.

NOTE: Please refer also to Çréla Prabhupäda's extensive conversation with Hayagriva Prabhu about this play, recorded in San Francisco, April 5-6, 1967

* * * * *

Lord Chaitanya

Lord Chaitanya

A Five Act Drama in English

Direction

Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta

Playwright

Hayagriva Das Brahmachari

(Howard Wheeler)

Sponsored by the members of the International Society For Krishna
Consciousness, Inc.

New York, San Francisco, & Montreal

1967

1967

* * * * *

CHARACTERS:

CHARACTERS:

Lord Sri Krishna

Srimati Radharani

Damsels of Vrindavan

Lord Chaitanya

Lord Nityananda

Sri Advaita

Sri Gadadhar

Srinivas

Haridas

Mukunda

Murari Gupta

Jagannath Mishra

Shachi Devi

Sarvabhauma

Gopinathacharya

Ramananda

Rupa Goswami

Sanatan Goswami

Prakashananda

Bhaktisiddhanta

Bhaktivedanta

FIRST ACT

FIRST ACT

First Scene

Great procession of Sankirtan. All chanting Hare Krishna

Second Scene

Assembly of Kali and his consort Sin

Exhibition of Illicit Sex, Slaughter House, Intoxication & Gambling

Third Scene

Rasa-dance of Lord Krishna and His associates

Lord Krishna's determination

Fourth Scene

Lunar eclipse, everyone taking bath in the Ganges and chanting Hare Krishna

Fifth Scene

Lord Chaitanya's birth, visits and presentation

Chanting Hare Krishna

Sixth Scene

Lord Chaitanya, a naughty boy

SECOND ACT

SECOND ACT

First Scene

Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan organization

Second Scene

Brahmana's dissatisfaction, complaint to Magistrate

Third Scene

Lord Chaitanya's civil-disobedience by Sankirtan

Fourth Scene

Meeting Lord Chaitanya & Chand Kazi

Fifth Scene

His renunciation of household life

Sixth Scene

Separation of the mother and the Son

THIRD ACT

THIRD ACT

First Scene

Lord Chaitanya visits Khira-chora Gopinath Temple

Second Scene

Lord Chaitanya visits Sakshi Gopal Temple

Third Scene

Lord Chaitanya visits Jagannath Temple

Fourth Scene

Lord Chaitanya meets Sarvabhauma

FOURTH ACT

FOURTH ACT

First Scene

Lord Chaitanya meets Ramananda Ray

Second Scene

Lord Chaitanya meets Rupa Goswami

Third Scene

Lord meets Sanatan Goswami

Fourth Scene

Lord meets Prakashananda Saraswati

Fifth Scene

Lord meets Haridas at his death

FIFTH ACT

FIFTH ACT

First Scene

Lord Chaitanya in Ecstasy

Second Scene

Lord Chaitanya on the sea-shore

Third Scene

Lord Chaitanya enters the Jagannath Temple

The End

Krishna-lila Plays

The Appearance Of Lord Krishna

from Krishna Book, Chapter 1

The Appearance Of Lord Krishna

from Krishna Book, Chapter 1

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Bhumi, Lord Krishna, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Voice, Kamsa, Devaki, Vasudeva, Narada Muni, Guards, Durga, Villagers.

Narrator: Ladies and Gentlemen—welcome! The Bhaktivedanta Players present for the pleasure of Çréla Prabhupāda and Lord Sri Krishna, “The Appearance of Lord Krishna.”

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya! (recite three verses from Bhagavad-Gētā about the Lord's appearances—Chapter Four, verses 7, 8, 9)

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Bhumi: (crying) My dear Brahma, you are the predominating deity of this universe and the knower of the Vedas, having been instructed by the Supreme Lord Himself. Save me, protect me from the ravages of the demons who are now destroying all that is good and pious upon the Earth!!!

Brahma: Mother Earth, although I am known as the great Brahma, creator of the universal affairs, it is Lord Vishnu who is the source of all creation, including myself, and it is He alone who can save us from these calamities! Therefore, let us approach Him, who rests on the coils of Ananta Naga. (Purusha Shukta prayers being chanted. Demigods appear in front of Lord Vishnu)

Vishnu: My dear demigods, I am aware of the trouble being caused by Kamsa and his demonic friends. So, I shall appear on the earth planet very soon, along with My supremely powerful potencies. At that time, I shall annihilate the demons and protect the devotees. All the demigods should also assist Me by appearing in the family of the Yadu dynasty in which I shall also appear.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Narrator: Once upon a time, Vasudeva, the son of Surasena, had just married Devaki and was going home on his chariot with his newly wedded wife. At that time, Kamsa, the son of King Ugrasena, had voluntarily taken the reins of the horses of Vasudeva's chariot in order to please his own sister, Devaki.

Voice: Kamsa, you are such a fool! You are driving the chariot of your sister and your brother-in-law, but you do not know that the eighth child of Devaki will kill you!

Kamsa: Noooo! I shall kill her first!!! (Devaki screams as Kamsa grabs her by the hair)

Vasudeva: My dear Kamsa, you are the most famous king of the Bhoja Dynasty. How is it that you are so infuriated that you are prepared to kill a woman, who is your own sister, at this auspicious time of her marriage? Why should you be so much afraid of death? Death has already been born along with your birth. With every passing moment, you are already dying. Why then should you be so much afraid of death? Final death is inevitable. Therefore, I request you: do not be overwhelmed by the dictation of your mind and body. The position is overall so delicate that if you kill your sister, it will go against your high reputation. Besides, since you are awaiting some danger from the sons of your sister, then why kill her? Considering all this, you are safe for the present. If there are any sons born, I promise that I shall present them to you for necessary action.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: In due course of time, Vasudeva and Devaki gave birth to a son. Vasudeva kept his word of honor and brought the child before Kamsa.

Vasudeva: Here, Devaki, give me the boy now; it's time.

Devaki: No, no! My dear husband, please do not give Kamsa this child—you know he will kill the innocent baby!

Vasudeva: I have given my word of honor, which cannot be broken. Please give me the child.

Kamsa: Oh! What is this? Oh, it is Vasudeva with his first born child. Very good. Very good.

Vasudeva: Yes, I have brought the child in accordance to the promise I made to you. You may act as you will.

Kamsa: My dear Vasudeva, I am very pleased with you. Yes, indeed I am. But, you may keep this child, for I am not in danger from him; it is the eighth child of

Devaki that I await. Why should I harm this child unnecessarily? You may take him back.

Devaki: Oh, my child! He's alive! Oh, my Lord, thank you! (Narada Muni enters)

Narada Muni: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Kamsa: Great sage Narada, please come. Take a seat.

Narada: My dear Kamsa, I have heard of your compassionate dealing with Vasudeva and his son, which is very nice of you. But let me warn you that many great personalities and demigods are taking birth in the Yadu dynasty; they have come to assist the Lord in His pastimes. I must leave now. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Kamsa: These words of Narada must be true! Therefore, any one of these sons of Devaki could be Krishna! Guards! Guards! Arrest Vasudeva and Devaki, chain them with iron shackles and have them guarded 24 hours a day!

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

Guard: Kamsa, Kamsa! There is a child born in the jail.

Kamsa: What, another child?!

Devaki: My dear brother, will you not have a little mercy on me and let me keep this child?

Kamsa: Give me that child!!!

Devaki: (screams as Kamsa kills it)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

Narrator: In this way Kamsa killed six babies of Vasudeva and Devaki, one after another. When Devaki became pregnant for the seventh time, Krishna's expansion known as Ananta appeared in the womb of Devaki and was transferred to the womb of Rohini. When this was done, it appeared that Devaki's seventh pregnancy was a miscarriage. Thereafter the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full with six opulences, took shelter within the womb of Devaki. At that time, Kamsa could appreciate that her beauty had greatly increased.

Kamsa: My sister's beauty seems to have increased so much; never before has she looked so beautiful. I am sure Lord Vishnu has now appeared in her womb. Oh, what is to be done with Devaki? It is certain that Krishna has come to execute the mission of the demigods. Even if I kill Devaki, His mission will not be frustrated. To kill Devaki now would be a most abominable act. No one desires to destroy his own reputation, even in an awkward situation. Devaki is a woman and under my shelter. Moreover, she is pregnant, and if I kill her, my reputation will surely be finished!

Guards, bring some food to eat... Oh, no—it might be poisoned! I can't seem to think about anything except of Krishna! Let me rest.

Voice: Krishna! Krishna!

Kamsa: No! I hear His name even in my sleep! O Krishna! What am I saying?

Narrator: Kamsa was now thinking of Krishna 24 hours a day—while eating, sleeping, coming and going. He constantly saw the Lord before him, with the disc weapon in His hand.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

Demigods: (praying to the Lord in Devaki's womb) My dear Lord Krishna. You have appeared just to fulfill Your vow to your devotees. You have stated that in order to kill the demons and protect the devotees You will appear. Although we have been assigned so-called high posts to rule the universe, in actual fact You are the creator, the maintainer and the destroyer. The whole creation ultimately rests upon You, and we act just for Your pleasure. We cannot act independently of Your will.

Our dear Lord, You have appeared in Your original unalloyed form of eternal goodness for the welfare of all the living entities within this material world. Taking advantage of these pastimes, we can learn about Your wonderful activities. Therefore, in Your appearance as Lord Krishna, You will establish that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that no one is equal to or greater than You.

Dear Lord, whose feet are meditated upon by great mystic yogis and sages, You appear in different incarnations such Rama, Nrisimha and Kalki; but Your appearance as Shyama-sundara is the most attractive. O Supreme Lord, You are appearing as the best of the Yadu dynasty, and we offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet. (to Devaki) O most fortunate mother Devaki, within your womb is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the father of all created beings. You should not be fearful of your wicked brother Kamsa, for your Son has appeared to protect the godly and destroy the atheist, and will dispel all the darkness of the world. (demigods leave)

Narrator: Thereafter, at the auspicious time for the appearance of the Lord, the entire universe was surcharged with all the qualities of goodness, beauty and peace. All directions appeared extremely pleasing, and the beautiful stars twinkled in the cloudless sky. The rivers flowed with clear water, and the lakes and vast reservoirs, full of lilies and lotuses, were extraordinarily beautiful. In the trees and green plants, full of flowers, the birds and bees began chanting with sweet voices. A pure breeze began to blow, bearing the aroma of scented flowers. When the brahmanas ignited their fires according to Vedic principles, the fire burned steadily. Thus, when the unborn Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared, all the saints and brahmanas felt peace, and the kettledrums vibrated from the upper planetary system. (Lord Vishnu appears, Vasudeva and Devaki offer prayers)

Vasudeva: Look at this wonderful, amazing child! He appears to be fully decorated! Just see this beautiful curly hair, which decorates His all-attractive lotus-like face! No ordinary child can appear in this way. How wonderful it is that Krishna, the original Vishnu, has now appeared as our Son. How wonderful it is that although the Almighty Lord has no father, He has taken birth in our family just like an ordinary child. My only misfortune is that I cannot celebrate His appearance while kept in this prison by Kamsa.

O Almighty Lord, I can now understand who You are—You are the Supreme Absolute Truth, the cause of all causes, and You have advented Yourself to protect Your devotees and to kill Kamsa and his followers. But as soon as he hears that You have been born, he will try to kill You.

Devaki: My dear Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. You are the original form of all incarnations, full of bliss, knowledge and eternity. My Lord, I request You to save me from the cruel hands of Kamsa. I am also very much afraid that he will try to harm You as soon as he hears You have appeared.

Lord Vishnu: My dear Devaki and Vasudeva, previous to this birth you had a strong desire to have me as your Son. So I have now appeared just to fulfil that desire. I am very pleased by your devotion to Me. I know that you are both concerned about My safety, therefore I order you to take Me immediately to Gokula and replace me with the daughter who has been born to Yashoda. (Lord Vishnu disappears, baby Krishna remains)

Vasudeva: Look, my chains have fallen off! The doors have opened and the guards are sleeping! Quick Devaki, give me the child. I must take Him across to Gokula, as it is the desire of the Lord.

Devaki: My Lord, please be careful! (rain and thunder noise, Vasudeva carries the baby off)

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

Guard: Maharaja! Maharaja! The eight child of Devaki is born. Come quickly!

Kamsa: What! Oh, no! Now the cruel death of my life is born. Come, let us go!

Devaki: My dear brother, please do not kill this female child! You are not to be killed by any female child; that was the omen! My dear brother, you have killed so many of my children! But I beg you to excuse this girl. Let her live!

Kamsa: Give me that child now!

Devaki: (screams, but Goddess Durga appears when Kamsa tries to kill the baby)

Durga: You rascal, Kamsa, how can you kill me? The child who will kill you is already born before me somewhere else in the world! Don't be so cruel to your poor sister!

Kamsa: My dear Vasudeva and Devaki, I have acted just like a demon by killing my own nephews. I do not know what bad results I will incur. Because I believed in the prophecy, I killed all your children. My dear sister Devaki, you are a gentle soul—please do not grieve in this way. I am so poor-hearted, please excuse me and show your compassion towards me.

Vasudeva: My dear Kamsa, such is ordained by the will of the Lord. So what has happened, has happened. Do not be sorry.

Kamsa: Come, go back to your house and forget what has happened.

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

Villager: Please hear! Please hear! Wonderful tidings do I bring! O residents of Gokula! A Son has been born to Nanda Maharaja and his Queen Yashoda! Please, everyone come and join in the great festival of Sri Krishna Janmashtami! Look, here they come now! (Nanda Maharaja, Yashoda and baby Krishna come on stage, surrounded by brahmanas. Nice kirtan) SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI KI JAI!

The End

Krishna Stealing Butter

from Krishna Book, Chapter 9 & 10

Krishna Stealing Butter

from Krishna Book, Chapter 9 & 10

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Yashoda, Krishna, Balarama, 2 Demigods.

Narrator: One day, seeing that her maidservants were engaged in other household duties, Mother Yashoda personally took charge of churning the butter. And while she churned, she sang the childhood pastimes of Krishna and enjoyed thinking of her Son.

Yashoda: (song) “Oh Happiness...”

Narrator: While she was churning, little Krishna appeared. (Krishna enters) Because He was hungry, He wanted His mother to stop churning and feed Him her breast milk.

Krishna: Feed Me Mata, feed Me Mata, feed Me Mata!

Narrator: Mother Yashoda gently took her Son on her lap, and was about to feed Him her breast milk when suddenly the milk on the stove began to boil over! (sound) Mother Yashoda at once put Krishna aside to go stop the milk from boiling over! (she leaves) Left in this state, Krishna became very angry! He pressed His teeth together, and taking a piece of stone He immediately broke a butter pot. (sound) He took butter out of it and went to a secluded place to eat. There Krishna invited Balarama to join Him along with the monkeys.

Krishna: Balarama! Look what I've got—some nice, fresh butter!

Narrator: Krishna also called the monkeys to come and share the butter.

Krishna: Monkeys, come!

Narrator: They climbed atop a grinding mortar to steal more butter and yogurt, and then ate it. Balarama and the monkeys followed Krishna and enjoyed more butter with Him. (pause while they eat) Krishna, Balarama and the monkeys were deriving great pleasure from eating the butter that They had stolen from Mother Yashoda. They remarked how good the butter tasted...

All: Yummy, yummy butter!

Narrator: In the meantime, Mother Yashoda returned to the churning place and noticed the broken pot. She began to smile as she thought, “This child is very clever. After breaking the pot, He has left this place, fearing punishment.” She then began looking everywhere for Him.

Yashoda: Krishna! Krishna! (she looks around)

Narrator: After looking everywhere for Him, she finally found Him standing on the grinding mortar, feeding butter to the monkeys. Balarama looked up to see her coming and said:

Balarama: Quick! Mother Yashoda is coming! Let's hide! (all leave except Krishna)

Narrator: She silently approached her Son from behind, carrying a stick in her hand. Then Krishna also saw her coming, so He jumped up and ran away in fear. Mother Yashoda chased Him to all corners, trying to capture the Supreme Personality of Godhead. She could not easily catch the fast-running child, and as she ran her hair loosened as the flowers in her hair fell to the ground. When He was caught, Krishna was almost crying, and He rubbed His eyes with His little lotus hands, smearing black eye cosmetics on His face.

Seeing Him so frightened, Mother Yashoda threw her stick away and instead began to bind Him with rope. But as she endeavored to tie Him up, she found that the rope was short by two inches! She gathered more rope to add to it, but still they were too short. In this way, she connected all the ropes, but found they were still too short. Smiling and astonished, she thought, "How is this happening?" Lord Krishna, seeing His mother laboring so hard, became compassionate upon Her and agreed to be tied to the grinding mortar. After binding Her son securely with the rope, Mother Yashoda returned to her household duties. (she exits) Little baby Krishna, being bound to the grinding mortar could see a pair of Arjuna trees in the yard. He thought to Himself:

Krishna: First Mother Yashoda didn't feed me enough milk, so I broke the butter pot and fed butter to the monkeys. Now, she has tied me to a grinding mortar. So, I'll have to do something even more rascalish!

Narrator: Baby Krishna then crawled between the twin Arjuna trees. The grinding mortar lodged horizontally between them. As Krishna pulled on the rope, the trees fell to the ground with a great crash. (sound) Out of the broken trees came two demigods, Manigriva and Nalakuvara. They came before Lord Krishna and, bowing down before Him, they offered the following prayers:

Demigods: My dear Lord Krishna, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You. Please engage us in Your devotional service.

Narrator: Lord Krishna spoke to the demigods as follows:

Krishna: My dear demigods, this is your last birth in the material world. Now you can go back to your father's kingdom in the heavenly planets. You will soon be liberated.

Narrator: The two demigods circumambulated the Lord and, again bowing down before Him, they left. (they exit) The Lord, Sri Krishna, thus remained bound by the love of His devotees.

The End

The Lifting Of Govardhana Hill (#1)

from Krishna Book, Chapters 24 - 27

The Lifting Of Govardhana Hill (#1)

from Krishna Book, Chapters 24 - 27

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CAST: Krishna, Nanda Maharaja, Mother Yashoda, Indra, Brihaspati, 2 Doormen, Servant, Apsara, Cowherd Men, Cowherd Boys.

SCENE ONE

(Preparations for a fire sacrifice in Vrindavan; everyone is very busy)

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Krishna: Baba, what sacrifice are you getting ready for? Who is getting all these offerings? Are you expecting some special reward from doing it? Please tell Me what this sacrifice is for.

Nanda: O Krishna, You're only seven years old. Just a little boy. This business of demigod worship is too complicated. I don't think You'd understand.

Krishna: Please don't keep secrets from Me, Baba. I'm not an outsider. I'm your son. Tell Me what you and the other cowherd men are doing.

Nanda: Well, we're getting ready to do puja. We are going to make a sacrifice to Indradeva, the demigod who sends us the rain. When the sacrifice begins, You can come and sit by me to watch how it's done.

Krishna: Father, can you tell me more about it? Everyone is working hard to gain something, but if they understand their work, and why they are working, they achieve success. People who work in ignorance are ultimately failures. Therefore, I should know all about this puja so everything will be successful. Tell Me, is it a Vedic sacrifice or just a popular ceremony?

Nanda: All right, all right. I'm not sure You will understand everything, but there is no harm in telling You. We are not the only ones who worship Lord Indra. Because he is the lord and master of the rain-giving clouds, it is traditional to worship him in order to thank him for sending rainfall. Without rainfall, we cannot farm or

produce grains. We would not have any fruits or vegetables, and the cows would not have fresh grass to eat. They would not be able to produce any milk. We couldn't live if there was no rain. Anyone who does not perform this Indra Puja out of lust, enmity, fear or greed will never have any good fortune.

Krishna: (to Himself) Hmmm. This is not good. One of the reasons that I descended to this world is to make sure that human beings are living under religious principles. It is clear to Me now that there is danger that people will become confused, thinking that there are many different gods. I send these demigods forth at the beginning of creation, and they manage the material world for Me, but now I see how people are mistaking them to be all-in-all. What is worse, the demigods may take themselves to be all-in-all. That Indradeva, although only an officer under my command, is getting a little puffed-up. He is forgetting his Master. It seems that the time has come to teach him a lesson!

SCENE TWO

(Fade out Vrindavan music, now celestial party noises, music, voices, etc. in Indra's palace)

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(Fade out Vrindavan music, now celestial party noises, music, voices, etc. in Indra's palace)

Doorman 1: Chief of the demigods, Indradeva ki (everyone, "Jai!")

Doorman 2: Lord of the celestial kingdom, Indradeva ki (everyone, "Jai!")

Brihaspati: Greetings, Indra. Quite a gathering!

Indra: Ah, my Lord Brihaspati, please accept my respects. Yes, half the heavens must be here today. Well, there's occasion to celebrate. My kingdom is secure and I am happy. And who wouldn't be, in my position, eh? I occupy a throne of power...

Brihaspati: (cuts him off) Which you must always fight to keep and are forever in anxiety about losing!

Indra: Ah, don't be concerned. I have conquered all my enemies, the demons are beaten and running. Running! I tell you, Brihaspati, when I go forth into battle on the back of my elephant, Airavata, my thunderbolt in my hand...

Brihaspati: (cuts him off again) Yes, yes, you feel supreme. Well, you're not! Although you're sitting on a high seat, Indra, beneath a canopy as brilliant as the moon, served by heavenly maidens and demigods and praised by the sweetest singers in the cosmos—your opulence is only a hint of Sri Krishna's. You may be God's right-hand man, Indra, but you're not God!

Indra: (thoughtful but undaunted) I know it's your duty as my spiritual master to take my ego down a bit from time to time. Must be a difficult task keeping the king of heaven's feet on the ground, eh?

Apsara: More soma, my lords?

Indra: Yes, yes. Ah, soma! My guests came from all over the three planetary systems to taste this wonderful drink. They perform sacrifices, they perform austerities, just to come and drink the soma-rasa with us in our celestial city of gold!

Brihaspati: Indra, I don't think you're listening to a word I say today! I'm trying to help you out. You can't see it, but you're heading for a fall!

Indra: I'm sorry, Gurudeva. I... I'm a little intoxicated.

Brihaspati: You're very intoxicated—with pride! Well, I'll tell you this, my son: one day soon you'll bow down before Lord Krishna, and that magnificent crown on your head will touch His lotus feet. That will be your supreme moment—not this!

SCENE THREE

Sacrificial arena in Vrindavan

SCENE THREE

Sacrificial arena in Vrindavan

Krishna: Father I don't think that we should perform a sacrifice for Lord Indra.

Several Men: What? What are You saying?

Krishna: It's so temporary. We perform the sacrifice now, Indra is pleased and sends rain. Then we'll just have to start all over. Next year, at the beginning of the growing season, we will have to go to so much trouble all over again, making another puja for more rain! Since there is so much business that has to be done in this life, an intelligent person isn't interested in blessings that simply come and go. Actually it is by the force of karma that a living entity takes birth and dies. It is karma that gives him happiness, distress, fear and fearlessness. Since Lord Indra cannot in any way change our destiny, why should we worship him? It is actually karma which controls everyone. Therefore, one should seriously worship work itself. Actually that by which we may live nicely is really our worshipable Deity.

Gopa 1: But Nanda-nandana, one has to fulfill his responsibilities.

Krishna: That is true; but all of these gods are just order-carriers of the Supreme God. He is the Supersoul in the heart of men and demigods. Man may forget that everything belongs to God, but the demigods should not. Before they send

anybody anything, they have to have the Lord's permission. If they do not have it, they cannot benedict anyone.

Nanda: Well, I can see what You're saying, son, and I'm sure You're quite right, but, well, I just don't know what to say. We've always done this Indra Puja. We do the sacrifice, Indra sends the rain. It's a good system.

Krishna: Yes, but human life has to have a higher aim. Indra is pouring water on the ocean as well as the land. Rain does not depend on worshiping him. And just see—if you do not worship him, he is powerless to benedict you. He is waiting for his puja, only then can he send rain. If you just do your duties nicely, you will get the results of sacrifice anyway. If one thing is actually sustaining our life, but we take shelter of something else, how can we achieve any real benefit? We would be like an unfaithful woman, who can never achieve any actual benefit by consorting with her paramour.

Gopa 2: It seems logical...

Gopa 1: The boy has a point, Nandaraja...

Nanda: Hmmm, yes, I suppose it's true.

Krishna: Baba, we are vaishyas. Our duties are in four divisions: farming, commerce, cow protection and money lending. Out of these, we as a community are always engaged in cow protection. Our home is not in the cities or towns or villages. Being forest dwellers, we always live in the forest and on the hills. Therefore, we should make a sacrifice to satisfy the local brahmanas of Vrindavan, the pasturing ground of Govardhana Hill and our wonderful cows.

Gopa 2: That is a very good idea, Krishna, and since You feel so strongly about it, we'll make a separate sacrifice as You say, but later, after the Indra sacrifice.

Krishna: No, father! Don't wait for anything. The sacrifice for the brahmanas and Govardhana Hill will take too long to prepare. Better take all the things you have already gotten together for the Indra Puja and use them for the Govardhana Puja.

Nanda: (laughing) Krishna, I think You could wheedle the mangos off the trees. You seem so enthusiastic about this idea, and since Your pleasure is my pleasure, we will perform the sacrifice just as You say.

Gopa 1: Just tell us how You want the ceremony done.

Gopa 2: What do we need?

Krishna: Let's prepare many different kinds of food from sweet rice to vegetable soups. Many kinds of fancy cakes, both baked and fried, should be prepared. And all the available milk products should be taken for this sacrifice. Invite the learned brahmanas who can chant the Vedic hymns and offer oblations to the fire. The

brahmanas should be given all kinds of grains. Then the cows should be decorated and given nice grasses. The lower animals, such as the dogs, and the lower grades of people, who are considered untouchable, like the chandalas, should also be given sumptuous prasada. Then the sacrifice to Govardhana may immediately begin. This sacrifice will greatly please Me.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(end Vrindavan music; begin demonic music in Indra's palace)

Indra: They what?! I don't believe it! How dare they?! Just see the impudence of these cowherds of Vrindavan! They are nothing but inhabitants of the forest, but being infatuated with their prosperity they have surrendered to an ordinary human being, Krishna, and thus they have offended the gods! These cowherd men of Vraja have to suffer the consequences! Send the Samvartaka Cloud to me!

Servant: My Lord? This cloud is most powerful! It will flood the entire cosmos! There are many less destructive clouds that can certainly terrorize the residents of Vrindavan! Wouldn't that be sufficient? We don't really need to destroy everything, do we?

Indra: I said send the Samvartaka Cloud! The people of Vrindavan have become too puffed-up over their comfort and riches, and are too confident in the presence of their tiny friend, Krishna. He is simply talkative, childish, and ignorant of the complete situation, although He is thinking Himself very advanced in knowledge. Samvartaka! (cloud responds with loud thunder and lightning) I am ordering you and your companions to go and inundate Vrindavan. Everyone there should be destroyed, along with their cows. (clouds show fear) Do you mean you are afraid to carry out these orders? You shall go, and I will go also, riding on my elephant with great storms before, behind and on either side of me. And I shall use all my strength to punish these Vraja-vasis!

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(loud sounds of rain and lightning in Vrindavan)

Woman's voice: (shouting over the storm) Children, come here—take my hands, hurry!

Man's voice: (shouting) Help! Bring the cows over here, everyone!

Man and woman together: (shouting over wind) Dear Krishna, You are the all-powerful one, and You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Now, please protect us from the wrath of Indra!

Krishna: (to Himself) This demigod who thinks himself supreme has shown his great power, but now I shall answer him according to My position! He is maddened with false prestige, but now I will break his pride. I will protect My pure devotees of Vrindavan, who are completely under My protection. (Krishna picks up the hill) My dear mother and father, dear residents of Vrindavan, if you wish, you may now come under this hill with your cows. You do not have to fear that this mountain will fall from My hand. Don't be afraid of the wind and rain, for your deliverance from these afflictions has already been arranged.

Mother Yashoda: Son, you are in such a dangerous position. How can I help you? Each time I try to call to you with some instruction, my voice becomes choked with anxiety. O Krishna, my Krishna. (turning to cowherd men) Please, please! Try to help Him! He is too small to hold this huge hill all by Himself! (Nanda and Upananda raise their canes to help hold up the hill)

Cowherd boy: (walking up and kneeling near Krishna) My dear friend, You have been standing there for the last seven days and nights without any rest. All of us think that You are trying to do something that is just too hard for You to do. We don't think You should have to stand alone holding up this heavy mountain any more. You should transfer it into Sudama's hand. If you are afraid that Sudama can't support the hill, then at least change hands. Transfer the hill to Your right hand and we will give Your left hand a massage.

(song "We're not hungry, we're not thirsty...")

Indra: I was foolish to challenge the power of Krishna. What have I done? Clouds! Clouds! Stop! Let's leave immediately. We have caused enough trouble already.

Krishna: My dear cowherd men, now you can now go back to your homes with your wives, children, cows and valuables. The inundation has ended and the swollen rivers have returned to normal.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

(Lord Indra enters with his elephant and humbly approaches Krishna, who is standing with a cow)

Indra: My dear Lord. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I offer my respectful obeisance's unto You because You are the Supreme Soul of all living beings. Please accept my prostrate obeisances. My dear Lord, I committed a great offense unto Your lotus feet, being falsely proud of my material opulence and

unaware of Your unlimited power. Therefore, my Lord, kindly excuse me, because I am fool number one.

Krishna: My dear Indra, I have stopped your sacrifice just to show My causeless mercy and to revive your memory that I am your eternal master. I am not only your eternal master, but I am the master of all the other demigods as well. You should always remember that all your material opulences are due to My mercy. Everyone should always remember that I am the Supreme Lord. I can show anyone My favor, and I can chastise anyone, because no one is superior to Me. If I find someone overpowered by false pride, in order to show Him my causeless mercy, I withdraw all his opulences.

(song "Indra tried to show his power...")

The End

The Killing Of Kamsa

from Krishna Book, Chapters 41-44

The Killing Of Kamsa

from Krishna Book, Chapters 41-44

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CAST: Narrator, King Ugrasena, 3 Ministers, 3 Citizens, Kamsa, Akbar, Devaki, Vasudeva, Voice, Narada Muni, Guard, Durga, Servant, Mushtika, Chanura, Krishna, Balarama.

SCENE ONE

Ugrasena's Palace

SCENE ONE

Ugrasena's Palace

(trumpet fanfare)

Citizen 1: My dear Maharaja Ugrasena, we have just received word from the commander-in-chief of your military phalanx in the province of Kekaya that the opposing army has decided to make an alliance with Your Eminence!

Ugrasena: Excellent! Excellent! Please send word that I command him to treat them with due respect.

Minister 1: My dear Maharaja, just see your greatness! Why, under your jurisdiction the Bhoja dynasty is completely satisfied with your governmental management.

Minister 2: Only yesterday the council of ministers was commenting that your kingdom has never been in such a healthy state!

Citizen 2: Maharaja Ugrasena! Maharaja Ugrasena! Help me! Help me!

Ugrasena: Why have you disturbed this assembly?

Citizen 2: Your son! Your son, Kamsa!

Ugrasena: My son? What heinous deeds has he perpetrated now?

Citizen 2: Maharaja, messengers report that his army is marching on Mathura, and our spies confirm that he is attempting to dethrone you!

Ugrasena: How is this possible? He has no power over me.

Citizen 2: But you don't realize he has formed alliances with the powerful demons Jarasandha, Banasura, Bhaumasura, Pralambhasura, Dhenakasu... (Kamsa enters and stabs Citizen 2)

Ugrasena: Kamsa, how dare you burst into this assembly and slaughter this unarmed messenger!

Kamsa: Hold your tongue, father, or I'll have it pulled out!

Ugrasena: Where have you found the audacity to speak to me, your father and your King, just as Yamaraja chastises a sinner? I'll have you thrown into jail for your uncontrolled tongue!

Kamsa: (cynical laugh, then silence) Father, you have no jurisdiction over me. Today, in the presence of all your ministers, I, Kamsa, shall dethrone you. Let me see your bodyguard protect you now. (to his own men) Take him away!

Ugrasena: Providence favors you at present, but I tell you for certain that you have not heard the last of this!

Kamsa: Enough talk, old man. Be gone with you! Take him away! (addresses all present in a very commanding tone) Listen to me, all of you! You should all understand that I am allied with many very powerful kings, and thus my influence and power knows no bounds! With Ugrasena firmly under my control, I am now the emperor of the Bhoja dynasty, and everyone must obey my commands! You must all pay me due respect. Failure to do so will result in your immediate death. (to Ministers) I want you to travel amongst all the kings within this vast tract of

land and obtain for myself their undivided loyalty. If they refuse, then they will meet with the jaws of death.

Minister 1: Kamsa! Kamsa! This is outrageous!

Kamsa: You wish to speak?

Minister 1: Do you not fear the reaction for these terrible deeds? Do you think that the Yadu and Andhaka dynasties will do nothing when they hear of this outrage?

Kamsa: Enough foolish talk! (gestures to soldier, who kills Minister 1) Let this be a lesson to each and every one of you—that anyone who dares to stand in my way will meet the same fate as this miserable fool!

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Narrator: Feeling the heavy burden of the demonic forces, mother Bhumi became aggrieved and approached Lord Brahma for solace. Being unable to mitigate the pitiful condition of the Earth, Lord Brahma and all the demigods approached the Supreme Lord Vishnu and offered many wonderful prayers. The Lord is always the greatest well-wisher of His devotees, and thus He informed the demigods of His immanent appearance to relieve the burden of the Earth planet. Meanwhile, Kamsa, intoxicated with the power of his dominion over all the peoples of the Earth, was enjoying his newly-acquired position in lavish style.

SCENE TWO

Kamsa's Palace

SCENE TWO

Kamsa's Palace

Kamsa: Ha ha ha ha haaaa! Such power, such fame and such glory can never be imagined by anyone in the three worlds! My position is unchallenged, even by the demigods themselves. At last I, Kamsa, am the most powerful emperor in the history of mankind! Ha ha ha ha haaaa! No one dares to challenge me, unless he wishes to become food for scavenging vultures. (clears a table at which he has been eating with a single sweep of his arm) Reset my table! (servants rush in to reset the table. Jester enters unannounced. Kamsa notices him) Ah, Akbar, my favorite wit. Tell me—are you feeling sharp today?

Akbar: Yes, Your Eminence, quite sharp.

Kamsa: Then tell me—would you like to answer a hundred easy questions or a single difficult one?

Akbar: Please ask me a single difficult one, O greatest among men.

Kamsa: Very well. Which came first: the chicken or the egg?

Akbar: (without hesitating) The chicken, of course!

Kamsa: (slightly amazed) How can you be so sure?

Akbar: That, I'm afraid, is your second question, O lion among men, and we agreed that I would answer only one—did we not?

Kamsa: Ha ha ha haaa! Tell me, Akbar, can anyone get the better of you? (Akbar says nothing, but simply bows. Kamsa thinks for a moment) Akbar, I believe I have something that will beat even you.

Akbar: Indeed, Maharaja?

Kamsa: If a member of the court asked that all the crows in my kingdom be counted, the task would be impossible, wouldn't it?

Akbar: (thinks for a moment) No, Your Majesty, I can give you an answer.

Kamsa: (greatly surprised) You can?!

Akbar: Yes. There are... (thinks) Now, let me see... 348,567.

Kamsa: But what if your answer is not correct?

Akbar: Well, Your Highness, if the actual number is greater, then it is obvious that the relatives of some of our crows are visiting them from neighboring districts.

Kamsa: (practically speechless) And if there are less?

Akbar: Then some of our crows are away visiting relatives in a neighboring district.

Kamsa: Ha ha ha haaa! Akbar, one day I will get the better of you!

Akbar: Yes, Maharaja. (Kamsa tosses a bag of coins to the jester, who then exits. Next, Devaki enters)

Devaki: My dear Kamsa, I am very touched by the wonderful endeavors you have made to make my wedding as opulent as those of the demigods.

Kamsa: It is my pleasure, O jewel amongst women, for you are my very dear sister. I have advised my ministers that no expense should be spared in order that people will speak of your wedding for many generations to come. Tell me, my dear sister, what do you desire as a wedding gift? Perhaps a palatial building fashioned according to your desire, or a golden chariot with horses as swift as the mind to

transport you from place to place, or a thousand maidservants to serve you hand and foot. (Devaki is overcome by his generosity and begins to weep) Or perhaps a... (Kamsa notices she is weeping) My dear sister, tell me—have I said something to disturb you? Are you not well?

Devaki: My dear brother, your devotion to me knows no bounds. I am truly amazed by your affection towards me!

Kamsa: Do you not know that you are very dear to me? Therefore, do not be surprised by these arrangements. (Vasudeva enters)

Vasudeva: My dear Kamsa, I must tell you that I am very impressed by the expert arrangements for tomorrow's wedding procession and festivities!

Kamsa: O noble Vasudeva, please hear from me the arrangements we have made for my sister's dowry. There will be 400 elephants nicely decorated with golden garlands, 10,000 horses, 1,800 chariots and 200 very beautiful young maidservants fully decorated with ornaments.

Vasudeva: I am speechless!

Kamsa: Furthermore, I have decided that I shall control the reins of the horses while you drive along the way in the wedding procession.

Vasudeva: But, surely it is not befitting a great emperor such as yourself to perform such a lowly service!

Kamsa: I have already decided out of my own sweet will. My mind is as fixed as the northern star on the horizon.

Vasudeva: Very well, so be it.

Kamsa: Now you should go to your respective chambers and take ease, for tomorrow will be a very long and exciting day for you both.

Vasudeva: (folds hands) Namaste.

SCENE THREE

Fire Sacrifice

SCENE THREE

Fire Sacrifice

(Fire pit, brahmanas chanting mantras, citizens, Kamsa and entourage are present)

Kamsa: What a wonderful ceremony! The priests very expertly chanted the prescribed mantras, producing a very pleasing atmosphere. Come, let us greet the assembled crowds of citizens that have eagerly gathered outside, waiting to see you. Then afterwards we can ascend the chariot, and I shall personally guide you to your new residence. (they walk to stage front to greet the crowds, pause to wave, etc., then move on)

Voice: Kamsa, you are such a fool! You are driving the chariot of your sister and brother-in-law, but you don't know that the eighth child of this sister will kill you.

Kamsa: What! (Kamsa grabs Devaki's hair and raises his sword to kill her)

Devaki: My beloved husband, please save me!

Vasudeva: Kamsa! Kamsa! You are the most renowned monarch of the Bhoja dynasty. People praise you as the greatest warrior and valiant emperor. How is it that you are so overcome by fear and anger that you are about to kill a woman, your own sister, at this auspicious time of her marriage? Why should a powerful personality such as yourself be afraid of death? You are very intelligent, therefore you should know that death is already born along with your birth. From the very day we took our birth, we all began to die. So, why are you so suddenly disturbed? Do you not care for your high reputation? Are you not fearful of what people will say if you kill her? Please consider the overall position, which is so delicate that if you kill Devaki it will go completely against you. Besides, the danger is from her sons, not Devaki; so why kill her unnecessarily? Therefore, you are safe for the present.

Kamsa: (long pause as he calms down) But what of her sons?

Vasudeva: Who knows—there may or may not be any children in the future. But, I promise, if there are any children born of her, then I shall present them to you for any necessary action.

Kamsa: You have pacified my mind for the time being, but do not think that I will forget this incident in the course of time, Vasudeva. (Kamsa watches while they leave the stage, then Kamsa goes off in the opposite direction.)

SCENE FOUR

Kamsa's Palace

SCENE FOUR

Kamsa's Palace

Narrator: In due course of time, true to his word, Vasudeva approached Kamsa with his first-born child.

Devaki: My dear husband, how can you ask me to part with my first-born child, knowing full well that Kamsa will kill him?

Vasudeva: But my dearest, we both know that I have given my word of honor to him, and I cannot break it under any circumstances, even if it means parting with my beloved child.

Devaki: No, no! Do we really have to do this just for the sake of honor? Are you more attached to your honor than your child?

Vasudeva: Devaki, it is beyond my control—I am bound by the ill will of Providence. Now, please give me the child. (walks across stage to Kamsa)

Kamsa: Vasudeva! I am surprised to see you. It seems your word is as good as gold.

Vasudeva: I have brought the child to you as I promised. You may act according to your desire.

Kamsa: (thinks for a moment) I am very pleased with you for bringing your son to me, Vasudeva. I have considered the situation very carefully, and I have decided that you may keep this child.

Vasudeva: I can keep the child?

Kamsa: Yes. I am not in danger from this child. It is the eighth child of yours that I await, which is destined to kill me. But I shall kill him before the prophecy can be fulfilled. You may return to your palace. (Vasudeva meets Devaki nearby)

Vasudeva: Devaki! Devaki! He has spared the child!

Devaki: I cannot believe our good fortune! My dear Lord Krishna, thank You for favoring us!

Vasudeva: Yes, I am also struck with wonder by his behavior. (pause—he thinks) But I feel in my heart that he may change his mind at any moment.

SCENE FIVE

Kamsa's Palace

SCENE FIVE

Kamsa's Palace

Minister 2: Your Majesty, following your subjugation of all the kings of the Earth, no one dares to even think of raising a finger against you. Your position is the

most solid within the entire Bharata-varsha. You are now the unchallenged emperor of the whole world!

Kamsa: Now, at last, everyone bows before me! I am the supreme, the most powerful emperor the world has ever known! This is what my reign will mean: it shall be a curse to be a brahmana, for all sacrifice to Vishnu will immediately be destroyed! I shall demand more and more taxes from the people until I have sucked the very blood from their bodies! My very name, Kamsa, shall bring terror into the hearts of all men! (sound of vina and Maha-mantra)

Kamsa: (listens for a moment) What is that celestial sound? (Narada Muni enters) Sri Narada Muni, what brings you to my kingdom?

Narada: My dear Kamsa. Am I correct in saying that you have spared the life of the first-born of Vasudeva and Devaki?

Kamsa: What you have heard is correct.

Narada: I am very astonished by your compassion. But I must inform you that I have just returned from the heavenly planets, and there is great jubilation about the advent of the Supreme Lord Vishnu, who will come to kill you. My dear Kamsa, in your last birth you were named Kalanemi, and Lord Vishnu killed you. Now He will incarnate again for that same purpose. Although the prophecy was that the eighth child will kill you, Lord Vishnu could disguise Himself as any of Vasudeva's sons. Many, many demigods are taking birth in the Yadu dynasty to assist the Lord in fulfilling the prophecy. Do not take any chances!

Kamsa: I am very grateful for this information. I shall reward you well. (Narada exits) So the demigods think they can get the better of me, do they? Ha ha ha haaa! Well, I shall certainly finish their foolish plans. Now I shall take no more chances—I will kill every child of Vasudeva and Devaki. In this way, I shall destroy Vishnu, and as for the Yadu dynasty, I have already brought them under my control! What chance do they have of usurping my throne? Guards! Bring Vasudeva and Devaki here at once! (turns to Minister 2) You, bring shackles and chains.

SCENE SIX

Vasudeva's Palace

SCENE SIX

Vasudeva's Palace

Vasudeva: Kamsa! What is the purpose of this intrusion?

Kamsa: Quiet! No one questions my actions—I do as I please! Arrest this man and shackle him in chains. (to Devaki) Devaki, give me the child!

Devaki: My brother! No! no!

Kamsa: You are holding my death in your arms—now give me that child! (they struggle) Very well, have it your way! (Kamsa stabs the child)

Vasudeva: Kamsa!!!

Kamsa: Keep him quiet! I want them locked in prison, watched at every moment. I must be notified whenever a child is born of them. Do you understand! Take them away!

Narrator: While Vasudeva and Devaki were in the prison house of Kamsa, he anxiously awaited the birth of their children. With the coming of each child, he ruthlessly exterminated them. When Devaki became pregnant for the seventh time, Krishna's expansion known as Ananta appeared within her womb. To ensure safety for that child, Yoga-maya transferred Him to the womb of Rohini, in the town of Gokula, under the direction of the Lord. As a result of this, it appeared that Devaki's seventh pregnancy was a miscarriage. Thereafter, the Supreme Lord Vishnu, full in six opulences, appeared in the womb of Devaki. When this had occurred, Kamsa could appreciate that her beauty had greatly increased. (Kamsa and Minister 2 enter)

Kamsa: (to Minister 2) Have you noticed, have you noticed?! My sister has never looked so wonderfully beautiful—I suspect that Vishnu has now appeared within her womb!

Minister 2: Yes! For what other reason would she look so radiant and effulgent?

Kamsa: Now, it seems that Lord Vishnu has come to kill me. Oh, what is my fate? So, it is certain, then, that Vishnu has come to execute the mission of the demigods! Ah, what is to be done with Devaki?

Minister 2: Kill her! Kill her at once! Do not hesitate while you have the opportunity. He who hesitates is lost.

Kamsa: Kill her? But, even if I kill her immediately, the mission of Vishnu will not become frustrated.

Minister 2: Do not be so despondent; act quickly while the chance of destroying Vishnu is at hand!

Kamsa: But, if I kill Devaki at the present moment, Vishnu will only enforce His supreme will more vehemently! To kill Devaki now would be a most abominable act and would ruin my reputation completely. Besides, she is a woman... she is under my shelter... and she is pregnant...

Minister 2: Your considerations are trivial and completely beside the point! You should act immediately with strength and determine...

Kamsa: Enough! Leave me! I wish to be alone! (Minister exits) Arrgh!!! What is to be done? My mind is so disturbed I cannot think clearly! Wherever I look, I see only the form of Vishnu with His disc weapon in His hand... But why should I be disturbed by these things? If Vishnu does come, I will simply crush Him by dint of my power. (Servant enters with meal)

Servant: Your Majesty. I have brought your supper!

Kamsa: What!? Oh... Yes... (moves to sit, then stops) Wait! Wait! This food can be poisoned! (turns and knocks tray from Servant's hand. Servant retrieves tray and exits) Perhaps I need to rest for a while... Yes, some rest... (moves to throne and rests) No! I cannot even rest in peace...

SCENE SEVEN

The Prison Cell

SCENE SEVEN

The Prison Cell

Guard: (runs on stage as the sound of a baby crying is heard offstage) King Kamsa, King Kamsa! A child is born!

Kamsa: The eighth child has been born, at last! Now the cruel death of my life is born. (he goes into the prison, sword drawn, and approaches Devaki, who is sitting frightened, holding a baby)

Devaki: O dear brother, please do not kill my daughter! I promise this child will be your future son's wife! You are to be killed by a male child—that was the omen. So please do not kill her. My dear brother, you have killed so many of my children! Please let this one live! (Kamsa, very angry, grabs the baby out of Devaki's hands and throws it to the ground. Immediately out comes Goddess Durga)

Durga: You rascal, how can you kill me? The child who will kill you is already born before me somewhere else within this world. Do not be so cruel to your poor sister.

Kamsa: (very frightened) My dear sister and brother-in-law, I have acted just like a demon by killing my own nephews. I do not know what will be the result of these acts of mine; probably I shall be sent to the hell where the killers of brahmanas go! My dear sister Devaki, you are so gentle and kind, please excuse me—do not be aggrieved by the death of your children, which I have caused, as these things are all predestined. My dear sister and brother-in-law, kindly excuse the atrocities I have committed against you. I am very poor-hearted and you are so great-

hearted; have compassion upon me and excuse me. Please take your wife Devaki and return home. (he lets them go)

Vasudeva: My dear Kamsa, we accept the apology for your misbehavior, which is due only to identifying with the material body. Being engaged in such activities, we forget our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord.

Narrator: Kamsa's softness astonished his ministers. They advised him to have all newborn children killed. The eighth child of Devaki, Krishna, grew up happily in Gokula. However, during Krishna's childhood, Kamsa sent many powerful demons such as Trinavarta, Aghasura and Pralambhasura, to kill Him, but Krishna very easily defeated them all. This caused Kamsa to increasingly worry about his own impending doom.

SCENE EIGHT

Kamsa's Palace

SCENE EIGHT

Kamsa's Palace

Minister 3: How is it humanly possible that Krishna, a mere boy, could smash the great demon Keshi, who appeared in his form of a giant horse?

Minister 2: I tried to tell you that he wouldn't be any match for Krishna—we are not dealing with an ordinary person here! Can't you understand that? (Kamsa enters, he overhears their discussion)

Minister 3: Now you tell me!

Kamsa: Am I to understand that your plans have failed again, after you gave me so many assurances? You will pay for this with your life, you foolish wretch! (draws sword and kills Minister 3) Do I have to do everything myself?! Come here and listen carefully. I have a plan: I want you to arrange a wrestling match. People from different parts of the country will come to see the festival. I will arrange to bring Krishna and Balarama here; it is your personal responsibility to see that they are killed in the wrestling arena or even before—is that quite clear? I also want you to again arrest Vasudeva and Devaki and throw them into prison. (Minister 2 acknowledges) Good! Then go immediately to make the arrangements!

(Kamsa paces back and forth across the stage very nervously, suddenly he notices his shadow. Astonished, he slowly bends down and looks at it) What? My shadow has holes in it! I'd better go home and take rest. (he starts walking, looking over his shoulder occasionally, then he notices his footprints) How is this possible? I am walking on muddy ground, but I cannot see my own footprints! What's more, all the trees look as if they are made of gold! (a buzzing sound

starts offstage and gradually gets louder and louder) I'm seeing all the luminaries in the sky as double! What are these evil omens? (high-pitched sound gets very loud; he holds his ears) What is this buzzing sound in my ears? What is happening to me?

(Kamsa returns to stage upright and more composed. Now he is getting ready for bed. Lays out a mat and a sheet) Well, everything seems better now; I must have just been ill for a moment. (he catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror) AHHHH! My reflection has no head! (jumps in bed and pulls the sheet over his head, Slowly he sits up and removes the sheet from his head) These are all signs of certain death! My only hope is that Krishna will be killed in the wrestling arena! (lays down to rest)

SCENE NINE

The Wrestling Arena

SCENE NINE

The Wrestling Arena

Citizen 1: Do you know that Krishna and Balarama have been invited to Mathura?

Citizen 3: Yes, but I heard that Kamsa expects Them to be killed by his expert wrestlers in the arena.

Citizen 1: I've just come from the city gate. Krishna and Balarama were there, and Kamsa had arranged for a very fierce elephant to trample Them to death. But instead, Krishna dispatched the elephant to Yamaraja, just as a lion easily kills a deer!

Citizen 3: Shhh! It's the minister! It's the minister!

Minister 2: Quiet! Quiet! That's better. Your Eminence, Krishna and Balarama are making their way to the wrestling arena.

Kamsa: Excellent! Make sure that They do not escape with their lives!

Citizen 1: Look! Krishna and Balarama are approaching the arena.

Citizen 3: At last—to see Them in person! They are even more beautiful than I expected!

Citizen 1: Let us go and offer these garlands that we made.

Citizen 3: Krishna! Balarama! Please, for Your safety, turn back! Kamsa plans to have You killed in the arena. The arrangement isn't even fair. We will fight on Your behalf! (Krishna and Balarama confidently stride on)

SCENE TEN

The Wrestling Match

SCENE TEN

The Wrestling Match

(Kamsa is seated on a raised platform. There is a loud kirtan and everyone is shouting: "Jai Krishna and Balarama!")

Kamsa: What is all that commotion over there?

Servant: Your nephews, Krishna and Balarama, are entering the arena. Aren't they beautiful?

Kamsa: How did they get away from my fierce killer elephant?

Servant: It was most amazing how He killed the elephant. The elephant came before Krishna like death personified, being provoked by its caretaker. The elephant suddenly rushed at Krishna and tried to catch him with its trunk, but Krishna moved behind the elephant, pulled its tail and dragged it for 25 yards. Krishna gave the elephant a strong slap and tripped it, making the elephant very angry. The elephant ran madly toward Krishna, but Krishna grabbed its trunk and pulled it down, jumped up and broke its back! Krishna killed the caretaker also.

Kamsa: Oh, this is terrible news! (Krishna and Balarama enter)

Krishna: O Kamsa, We have come to participate in your festivities.

Kamsa: Yes, I have wanted so long to meet with You. I would like to introduce You to the finest wrestlers in the land.

Mushtika: Ahhh! Notice my biceps and triceps, and my great overall size, enormous strength, physique and intelligence. (he growls) I am the famous Mushtika!!! And here is the great and powerful Chanura!!!

Chanura: (growls) We will fight with Krishna and Balarama and kill them!

Mushtika: Hmmm... These boys appear to be like thunderbolts.

Chanura: Yes, Krishna and Balarama, we have heard about You two; You are great heroes and your arms are very strong.

Mushtika: King Kamsa especially wants to see Your great skills in wrestling.

Chanura: We have heard that while tending the cows in the forest, You enjoy wrestling with your friends.

Krishna: We feel very pleased that Kamsa wants us to wrestle with you, but usually we wrestle with boys of our own age.

Balarama: Do you think that the audience would like to witness an unequal match between huge wrestlers like you, and young boys like us?

Mushtika: Ha! Krishna, we can understand that You are neither a child nor a young boy.

Chanura: You and Your elder brother, Balarama, are “transcendental”!

Mushtika: You have killed the giant elephant, Kuvalaya-pida. He was able to kill many other elephants, and You have killed him in a wonderful way. Because You are so strong, You must wrestle with the strongest of us all, Therefore, I, Mushtika, will wrestle with You.

Chanura: Yes, and I, Chanura, will wrestle with You, Balarama! (the fight begins, and Krishna and Balarama are eventually victorious. Everyone cheers)

Kamsa: Stop this drumming! Stop this cheering! I order you to stop! Furthermore, I order that these two sons of Vasudeva be immediately driven out of Mathura! The cowherd boys who have come with them should be plundered and all their riches taken away! Nanda Maharaja should be arrested and killed for his cunning behavior, and the rascal Vasudeva should also be killed without delay! Also, my father, Ugrasena, who has always supported my enemies against my will, should be killed! Seize them all, seize them and kill them! Arrest them! Arrest them and kill them!

(Krishna jumps on the elevated seat, Kamsa draws his sword, but Krishna knocks his crown off. Then Krishna drags Kamsa off the elevated seat and down to the ground, and straddles him. Krishna strikes Kamsa over and over and over again, then He drags the dead body about)

Balarama: Now my grandfather, Ugrasena, will assume his rightful position as the King of the Bhoja dynasty. All the citizens should be pleased to serve him. Protected by Krishna, he will be honored even by the demigods from the heavenly planets. Out of fear of Kamsa, the kings of the world were anxious and disturbed. Now they can live peacefully in Krishna Consciousness.

Krishna: My dear Vasudeva and Devaki, because I was your son, Kamsa was always causing so much trouble for you. But now you may know for certain that his tyrannical reign has been brought to an end.

Citizen 1: My dear Krishna, we want You to know that we are very happy that You have killed Kamsa, and we beseech You to take the throne.

Citizen 3: Yes, yes! Please! All of the citizens would be very happy if You became our new king!

Krishna: Thank you for your kind words, but since Kamsa had forcibly taken the kingdom from his father, Ugrasena, I therefore think it appropriate that he be restored to his throne. Please make arrangements to bring him here at once. (Ugrasena is escorted in) My dear Maharaja Ugrasena, we all desire that you again accept the throne of the Bhoja dynasty. It will be our pleasure to act as your servants. We will give our full cooperation to make your position more exalted and secure than that of any other king.

Ugrasena: I accept Your kind offer. With Your help, the whole kingdom will become very peaceful.

Krishna: Then let the ceremony begin! (kirtan)

The End

The Story Of Sudama Brahmana

from Krishna Book, Chapters 80-81

The Story Of Sudama Brahmana

from Krishna Book, Chapters 80-81

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Sudama, Sudama's wife, Lord Krishna, Rukmini, 2 Servants.

SCENE ONE

In Sudama's thatched hut

SCENE ONE

In Sudama's thatched hut

Narrator: Sudama was a very nice brahmana friend of Lord Krishna. As a perfect brahmana, he was elevated in transcendental knowledge. Because of his advanced knowledge, he was not at all attached to material enjoyment. His wife was not very anxious for her personal comfort, but felt concern for her husband. Thus she spoke as follows:

Wife: My dear lord, I know that Sri Krishna is your personal friend. Even though you are thinking that you do not render any devotional service to Him, still you are surrendered, and Krishna is the protector of the surrendered soul. He is always

ready to help His devotee. He is your only shelter. Please, go to Him. He will understand your impoverished condition. I'm sure He will not hesitate to award you some material benefit.

Sudama: I don't want any material benefit from Krishna.

Wife: He knows perfectly well how much you are fixed in devotional service...

Sudama: But Krishna is only interested in pure devotional service. Besides, I am perfectly satisfied with what Krishna has provided for us. Are we not living peacefully? Do we not have shelter? Are we not eating...

Wife: Not sufficiently, my lord. Sometimes you are even too weak to stand.

Sudama: I am not this body.

Wife: But He would want you to have the bare necessities of life... My dear lord, please go to Him. I beg you. I cannot bear to see you in this condition any longer!

Sudama: Alright, alright—I'll go! Besides, if I do go, I shall be able to see Krishna face to face.

Wife: Yes, it would be wonderful for you.

Sudama: But I can't ask Him for anything. Rather, I'll bring Him a gift. What can we offer Him?

Wife: We have nothing.

Sudama: Well, then...?

Wife: I'll find something. (exits and returns with small bundle) Here, this is all I could find.

Sudama: This is all we have—some dry, chipped rice?

Wife: I'm afraid so. Please be careful on your journey. Jai Sri Krishna!

Sudama: Jai Sri Krishna! (exits)

SCENE TWO

In Dwaraka, residential palace of Krishna and Rukmini

SCENE TWO

In Dwaraka, residential palace of Krishna and Rukmini

Krishna: Sudama, My dear friend!

Sudama: Krishna, my Lord!

Krishna: It's so nice to see you! Please sit here and relieve your fatigue. (Krishna proceeds to worship His brahmana friend by bringing fruits and drinks, washing his feet and offering incense and lamps. Srimati Rukmini fans Sudama) It is my great fortune that you have come to Dwaraka!

Servant 1: I can't understand why Krishna is worshipping this poor brahmana.

Servant 2: He's poorly dressed and is not very clean. Obviously this brahmana is not an ordinary person. He must have performed great pious activities; otherwise why would Lord Krishna take so much care for him?

Servant 1: But he's sitting on Rukmini's bedstead!

Servant 2: Yes, and Krishna, whose embraces are reserved only for Rukmini, has embraced this brahmana to His own chest!

Krishna: My dear Sudama, remember those school days when you and I were living together at the Gurukula? Do you remember the time we lost our way when we went out to collect wood from the forest?

Sudama: Yes. And while collecting the dried wood, we entered deeper and deeper into the forest until it became dark.

Krishna: There was an unexpected dust storm, dark clouds, lightning in the sky, and the explosive sound of thunder. Then, there was a severe rainfall!

Sudama: The whole ground was flooded, and we could not find our way back to our guru's ashram. We felt greatly pained, and in whichever direction we turned, we became bewildered.

Krishna: In that distressed condition, we took each other's hand and tried to find our way out. We passed the whole night in that way.

Sudama: Early the next morning, when our absence was noticed, our Gurudeva along with some of his disciples came to search us out and found us in this distressed condition.

Krishna: Our Gurudeva, with great compassion said, "My dear boys, everyone likes to take care of his body as his first consideration, but you are so faithful that without caring for bodily comforts you have taken so much trouble for me. This is the way for a bonafide disciple to become free from his debt to the spiritual master. It is the duty of the disciple to dedicate his life to the service of his spiritual master."

Sudama: And then he blessed us by saying, "May all your desires and ambitions be fulfilled. May your understanding of the Vedas always remain within your memory so you can always quote their instructions without difficulty. Therefore you will never be disappointed in this life or the next."

Krishna: Sudama, we can both realize that without the blessings of the spiritual master, no one can be happy. Only by the mercy of the spiritual master can one achieve peace and prosperity and be able to fulfill the mission of human life.

Sudama: My dear Krishna, You are the Supreme Lord and the Supreme Spiritual Master of everyone. All the different processes of life are ultimately meant for the understanding of Your Supreme Personality. And yet You played the role of a student and lived with us like an ordinary boy. But, I can understand that You adopted all of these pastimes for Your pleasure only; otherwise there is no need for Your playing the role of a human being.

Krishna: Oh, what have you brought for Me? Has your wife sent some nice eatables for Me? Sudama, you must have brought some offering for Me! Certainly I am not in need of anything, but if My devotee gives Me something as an offering of love, even though it may be very insignificant, I accept it with great satisfaction. On the other hand, if a person is not a devotee, although he may offer Me the most valuable thing, I do not like to accept it. I only accept those things which are offered to Me in devotion and love. I not only accept them, but I take them with great pleasure. (Sudama is very hesitant to give Lord Krishna the humble gift, but Lord Krishna snatches it and opens it) Chipped rice! My favorite! I consider that this quantity of chipped rice will not only satisfy Me but will satisfy the whole creation. (Lord Krishna eats one palmfull of chipped rice. Rukmini stops Him from eating more)

Rukmini: My dear Lord, You are so kind to Your devotee that even this one morsel of chipped rice pleases You greatly; and Your pleasure assures the devotee great opulence eternally.

Krishna: Sudama, it is late. Let Me show you to your quarters. Tell Me, how was your journey... (both exit)

Narrator: Sudama Brahmana passed the night in the palace of Lord Krishna. The next morning he started for his home, thinking continuously about his grand reception by Krishna. Thus he became merged in transcendental bliss. He was feeling very happy to have seen the Lord.

SCENE THREE

Sudama on his way back home

SCENE THREE

Sudama on his way back home

Sudama: Seeing Krishna is so wonderful! It is like drinking nectar through the eyes! How great a lover He is of brahminical culture. He is the Supreme Brahman Himself, yet He embraced me to His own chest with heartfelt pleasure. He was so kind to me that He allowed me to sit on same bedstead where the Goddess of Fortune lies down. Krishna considered me His real brother. How can I appreciate my obligation to Him? Seeing me tired, Srimati Rukmini Devi began to fan me with her own hand. She never considered her exalted position. Krishna was so merciful that He did not give me a farthing, knowing very well that I am a poverty-stricken man who, if I did get some money, might become proud and mad after material opulence and thereby forget Him.

Narrator: Thinking in this way, the learned brahmana, Sudama, gradually reached his own home. Upon reaching there, he saw that everything was wonderfully changed. An opulent palace stood where his rustic hut had once been.

Sudama: What are all these changes? Does this place belong to me or someone else? If this is the same place I used to live, how has it changed so wonderfully? (Wife enters) My dear wife, how have these incredible changes come about?

Wife: I do not know, my lord!

Sudama: I have always been a poor man. I do not find any cause for this, other than the all-merciful glance of my friend, Lord Krishna. When Krishna receives a little thing in love and affection from His devotee, He considers it a great and valuable gift. I simply offered Him a morsel of chipped rice, and in exchange He has given me opulences greater than those of the king of heaven, Lord Indra. I pray that I never forget the devotional service to His lotus feet, the unborn Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.

Wife: Shall we enter, my lord?

Sudama: Yes, it is Krishna's mercy upon us.

Narrator: Sudama realized that although Lord Krishna is unconquerable, He nevertheless agrees to be conquered by His devotees. Sudama did not change in his devotional practices; he continued to study and preach the glories of Lord Krishna. By constant meditation on Lord Krishna, whatever darkness of material contamination that still remained within his heart was completely cleared away, and very shortly Sudama was transferred to the spiritual kingdom, which is the goal of all saintly persons.

Shukadeva Goswami has stated that anyone who hears this history of Sudama Brahmana and Lord Krishna will know how affectionate Lord Krishna is to the devotees like Sudama; and the listener will gradually become as qualified as Sudama and will thus be transferred to the spiritual kingdom of Lord Krishna.

The End

from Krishna Book, Chapter 56

The Syamantaka Jewel

from Krishna Book, Chapter 56

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Lord Krishna, 2 Citizens, 2 Ladies, Satrajit, Prasena, Brahmana, Nurse, Jambavan, Jambavan's Son, Jambavati, King Ugrasena.

May that Lord of love transcendent
 shower upon us His causeless grace
 like moonbeams cool and pleasing
 from His blissful lotus face
 The glorious deeds of His, no doubt
 when listened to with relish
 do cleanse the heart of all dust,
 and cause all sorrows to be vanquished
 The empiricist can never know
 His beauteous form and character
 yet easily to His pure devotees
 He grants eternal nectar
 Let not the doubts and suspicions
 born in unripe years of youth
 stand forth to block the path of progress
 and deprive us to the truth
 May that Lord of love transcendent

to whom we earnestly entreat
 remove the obstacles of false desire
 and show us His lotus feet
 Sri Krishna Chandra with His chosen ones
 some fifty centuries ago or so
 His beautiful pastimes did reveal
 to the inmates of this world
 Let us welcome all who've come
 to see this drama of devotion
 may your hearts enshrine the love divine
 as your deepest meditation
 Herein is not to be found at all
 any worldly sentiment expressed
 that would lead to the rack and ruin
 of the divine temperament suppressed
 We hope that ye all are seated well
 content with peaceful heart
 for now before your eyes and ears
 we shall this drama start

* * * * *

Narrator: In the later chapters of the Tenth Canto of the Bhagavata Purana, there are many stories of Krishna's pastimes as the ruler of Dwaraka. One of the most wondrous of these narratives is the story of the Syamantaka jewel. There are many ordinary subject matters in which the mind can become absorbed, but these will only increase our entanglement in the material world. But, by becoming absorbed in the nectar of the pastimes of Sri Krishna, one will become more and more attracted to the Lord, and thus eventually reach the ultimate goal of life—love of God.

It was in the citadel of Dwaraka Puri, the divine abode of Lord Sri Krishna, that there lived a king named Satrajit. King Satrajit's devotion to the sun god was firm and deep, and thus the sun god himself gifted Satrajit with a most valuable crystal jewel called the Syamantaka jewel. While this jewel was present in Dwaraka, there was never any suffering due to natural disturbances. Satrajit also became extremely opulent by possessing this jewel, for every day it would produce 170 pounds of gold.

At times Satrajit was fond of adorning himself with the amazingly brilliant jewel, hanging it from his neck. On such occasions it would seem that a second sun god had come into being. In this manner, sporting the mystic crystal, he would enter the divine citadel of Dwaraka. The residents would then surmise that it was the sun god himself who had come there to see Lord Krishna. As fate would have it, it seems that Satrajit has come again today, and some of the prominent citizens of Dwaraka have gone to inform Lord Krishna that the sun god has come to offer his respects to Lord Krishna.

Now let us observe the events that will ensue, when the tidings of all this reach Lord Krishna's ears. Look! Here is Lord Krishna, ruler of all the worlds, playing the role of an ordinary prince—that must be extraordinary, no doubt. I wonder how this will be received by Him...

SCENE ONE

Krishna's Throne Room in Dwaraka

SCENE ONE

Krishna's Throne Room in Dwaraka

(Lord Krishna is sitting with Citizen 1, then Citizen 2 enters)

Citizen 2: Ah, my dearest Lord Krishna, You are the Supreme Reality, the Absolute Truth. O Master, You are the proprietor of all things that exist, both spiritual and material. You make Your appearance on this earthly plane by acting as if You were an ordinary mortal. Such are Your pastimes, O Lord.

Citizen 1: We are indeed overjoyed to be Your subjects, for every day we are bathed in the sweet vision of Your lotus face. Even great mystic yogis steeped in meditation can rarely achieve such grace.

Citizen 2: Those who may see You as an ordinary human then have to wonder why celestial beings descend from the heavenly planets just to bow before You.

Krishna: Your kind words touch My heart. For what reason are you here?

Citizen 2: I have just come from the city gates. There is great excitement amongst the citizens, for the sun god himself, Suryadeva, has arrived in Dwaraka!

Krishna: The sun god! He's not the sun god. You are speaking of king Satrajit, who has come to visit Dwaraka to show off his great opulence in the form of the Syamantaka jewel. This mystic crystal was given to Satrajit by the real sun god as a token of affection; but now, being very proud of the jewel, which is nothing but a material object, Satrajit is feeling some fleeting happiness.

Citizen 1: Then can we not warn him of the danger of becoming entangled in this maya?

Citizen 2: At this moment, Satrajit is on his way to establish the worship of the jewel in a temple, so this may be a good opportunity to approach him.

SCENE TWO

Satrajit's temple

SCENE TWO

Satrajit's temple

(On stage: Satrajit and a brahmana)

Brahmana: Om Namō, Om Namō... Swaha! Swaha! Swaha!... (chanting mantras)

Satrajit: My dear brahmana, just feast your eyes on the exquisite beauty to be seen in this Syamantaka jewel, which was given me by the sun-god himself! Surely, there is nothing like it to be found anywhere on this earth! Just see how the colors play so delicately within—moving and dancing like fire! Look into its heart—all the colors and designs of the creation can be seen like a firmament of translucent beauty. I pass hour upon hour just gazing into it, marvelling that such a wonderful crystal is actually mine!

Brahmana: O king, it is indeed a most rare gift that you have been given by the sun god.

Satrajit: Rare? It is matchless! This gem is producing 170 pounds of gold every single day! I want to install it here in this temple, and I want you to worship it with full pomp and ceremony, as is befitting. (to the jewel) O my most beloved jewel, before I possessed you, what value was there to my life? But now that you're mine, all my desires are fulfilled and my happiness is complete. (to brahmana) O brahmana, please take it as your life and soul to see that this most charming gem is properly worshipped.

Brahmana: O noble Satrajit, you need not fear—I can assure you that everything will be done completely in accordance with the Vedic injunctions. (indicates that Prasena has entered)

Satrajit: Prasena, my dear brother, behold my Syamantaka jewel!

Prasena: Ummm, it is more wondrous than I could have ever conceived! May I... touch it? (Satrajit doesn't allow him, puts jewel on altar. Enter Lord Krishna and His minister)

Brahmana: My Lord...

Satrajit: Greetings, my dear Krishna! It is very pleasing to see You here. I presume that You must have come to observe the worship of the Syamantaka crystal. As You can see, it is now installed here in the temple.

Krishna: Greetings to you, Satrajit and Prasena! Yes, I have come to see the jewel, but I find it somewhat strange that you should want to worship it in a temple. A jewel is, after all, nothing more than a product of the material energy, and the worship of matter is for those of meager intelligence who have ulterior motives. To adore that which is temporary can produce only fleeting benefits.

Satrajit: But this is no ordinary gem! It was given to me by the sun god himself, and is therefore as worshipable as he. Whenever this jewel is worshipped there can be no famine, drought or pestilence. Would it be wise, then, to abandon such a priceless crystal?

Krishna: If you really believe that this jewel is the source of all the wealth and prosperity of this beautiful citadel of Dwaraka, then surely it would be better if it were cared for by the ruling chief of this land, my grandfather, Ugrasena. After all, the best of everything should be offered to the emperor.

Satrajit: Well... I... I would do that... but in this circumstance I do not think it necessary. It might be better to keep the jewel here in my temple. Moving the gem to the king's palace, as You suggest, may put the safety of the gem at risk. And I am sure You appreciate that it would be a tragic loss to all the citizens of Dwaraka if anything were to happen to it. Tragic... tragic.

Krishna: As you wish, but be careful—for once greed has entered a man's heart it becomes like a malignant disease which is very difficult to remove.

Satrajit: I am simply concerned for the safety of the jewel!

Krishna: Of course... (exits with a knowing smile)

Satrajit: What a preposterous suggestion! This Krishna has become a little too proud since he established His own grandfather, Ugrasena, as ruler of the Yadus. Still, I will not allow myself to become disturbed by this trivial incident. (to the

brahmana) My dear brahmana, please ensure that this Syamantaka-puja goes on uninterrupted. Every day this gem provides me with 170 pounds of gold, so who would not be willing to worship such a marvelous object?

Brahmana: Maharaja... the gold?

Satrajit: Ah, yes of course, the gold—I'll come myself and attend to that. (he leaves, Brahmana continues worship)

SCENE THREE

Satrajit's temple

SCENE THREE

Satrajit's temple

(Evening. The Brahmana is worshipping the jewel. Enter Prasena)

Prasena: O good brahmana, my brother, king Satrajit, has requested your presence to discuss arrangements for increasing the worship of the jewel.

Brahmana: But I cannot leave the jewel unguarded!

Prasena: That is why I am here to guard it. Do not worry—hurry along! (the brahmana leaves) Ah, this Syamantaka jewel would look very fine hanging around my neck! I think I will take it and go for a ride in the forest so that everyone can see my opulence. (Prasena steals the jewel, puts it around his neck and prances off)

Narrator: Thus, driven by insatiable desire and a passion for fame and wealth, Prasena abducted the Syamantaka crystal and adorned himself with it, placing it around his neck. He rode out on horseback into the jungle. Being so elated with delight by the influence of the mystic jewel, Prasena lost all sense of sobriety and became enamored, totally forgetful of the temporary nature of worldly life.

Prasena: This jewel has the most wonderful effect! Simply by wearing it for a short while here in the forest, I feel twice the man that I was before! It's marvelous, marvelous—the sensations, the vibrations flowing through my inner-self, making me rise to newer heights of awareness! Hello birds! Hello trees, what a lovely green you are today! Life is full of wonders, beauty and unexpected happiness! I feel so fine now that I could live forever and never feel the pangs of old age and disease. Those who say that this world is a place of misery are simply frustrated old men who have never tasted life's true happiness! Oh, this jewel is so bright that I can see everything, and I'm sure everyone can see me! (the roar of a lion is heard offstage) Oh, what was that? (draws sword) There is danger here! (he screams and falls down as the lion leaps upon him from behind and kills him. The lion takes the jewel away and then Jambavan runs onstage)

Jambavan: So this is the beast that has been causing such terror in the forest—for I see it is carrying a jewel that it has just taken from one of its victims. Come on, you killer, let's see how well your jaws avail you against the might of Jambavan, king of the lordly bears! (Jambavan easily kills the lion with only his hands, then picks up the Syamantaka jewel) This is indeed a pretty trinket, and I have no doubt that worldly men would go to great lengths to obtain such a jewel. But, I still remember the radiant beauty of Sri Rama as He stood at the gates of Lanka... and compared to that sight, this gem appears to be nothing more than a dull pebble! Still, it will be a pretty gift for my young son, so I will take it with me to my cave in the mountains.

SCENE FOUR

The market place in Dwaraka

SCENE FOUR

The market place in Dwaraka

Citizen 1: Well, you know, if I was Satrajit I would have handed over the jewel to Krishna!

Citizen 2: You may say that, but just put yourself in the position of Satrajit, because since he is in possession of the mystic Syamantaka jewel he receives two heaps of gold every day.

Citizen 1: But the proprietor of all wealth is our Lord Krishna, who is the husband of the Goddess of fortune, Lakshmi... Lord Krishna has no motive to fulfill by asking for the jewel.

Citizen 2: Um, well I'm not so sure. As you know, the attraction for gold and wealth is very strong. Who could resist the temptation?

Citizen 1: Ha ha ha! (laughs)

Lady 1: I myself was not surprised that Krishna asked Satrajit for the Syamantaka jewel. He rightly felt that it should be offered to king Ugrasena.

Lady 2: (dreamily) Well, I think He is surrounded by jewels. Why, I remember thinking at His marriage to princess Rukmini that I had never seen such beauty and opulence!

Citizen 2: Friends listen, have you heard the news that is spreading throughout all corners of the city?

Citizen 1: Well, what is it? Speak up, my friend!

Citizen 2: I am not one for rumors, but this is something very astonishing!

Citizen 1: Well, out with it!

Citizen 2: The Syamantaka jewel has been taken from the temple!

Citizen 1: Huh?!

Lady 1: What's that? Did you hear? Let's go closer.

Citizen 1: Where is it, then? What happened?

Citizen 2: It appears that king Satrajit's brother, Prasena, went out into the jungle two days ago wearing the jewel.

Lady 2: And since that time, nothing has been heard of him.

Lady 1: But that's terrible! What could have happened to the poor boy?

Citizen 2: This is indeed terrible news! Why, it is only due to the auspicious presence of the Syamantaka jewel that Dwaraka is free from famine, drought and pestilence... now who knows what hard times will befall us?!

Citizen 1: No, this is a gross misconception on your part. Whatever opulence or good fortune we may enjoy here is only due to the presence of our Lord Sri Krishna and nothing else.

Citizen 2: Well, whatever the cause may be, the jewel is gone and so is Krishna!

Lady 2: And we know that Satrajit is of the strong opinion that it is Krishna who has abducted the jewel.

Citizen 1: How can you say that? On what grounds does he make such a hasty accusation?

Citizen 2: You may recall Krishna did ask for the jewel, and upon being refused, He became insulted. Now, out of revenge, He has killed Prasena and stolen the gem!

Lady 2: Indeed, this is what Satrajit believes and he is telling everybody the same.

Citizen 1: I cannot accept this! Such a heinous deed is not possible for Krishna, and Satrajit disgraces himself by spreading such rumors. This matter should be taken before the king.

Lady 2: Poor princess Rukmini, that her dear Lord should be so maligned!

Lady 1: And be accused of murder...

Citizen 2: But the Syamantaka jewel was the most wondrous object in the three worlds, so who knows? Anything is possible!

Citizen 1: Nonsense! What nonsense! I cannot believe that I am hearing such nonsense! (Citizen 1 exits)

Citizen 2: You know, I think Satrajit could be right.

Lady 2: One never knows. (they all exit)

Krishna: Although this rumor which is spreading around the city is completely false, still it is not good if the people are suspicious of Me. A ruler must be a man of spotless character, who is completely above suspicion, for whatever standards he sets, surely the common people will follow. Therefore I will take some of the leading citizens of Dwaraka to find out exactly what has happened to Prasena and, if possible, recover the jewel.

SCENE FIVE

Search party out in the forest

SCENE FIVE

Search party out in the forest

Krishna: Let us search this area of the forest for some sign of Prasena. Look! Here is his sword and the evidence that a great struggle had taken place.

Citizen 1: Ah, my Lord—look here! It is the mutilated body of Prasena!

Krishna: It seems that he has been killed by a ferocious animal, but there is no sign of the jewel. We must proceed with caution, for it is quite possible that the creature is still close by... (He sees the dead lion) Look—here is the evidence of another great struggle. Surely this is the same beast that killed Prasena, but it has also been killed. However, it appears that whoever has killed this lion has done so without using any weapon.

Citizen 2: All the signs tend to indicate that there is a creature of immeasurable strength lurking here in this jungle. Under the circumstances, do You not think it would be wise to call off the search now, return to Dwaraka, and then resume the quest for the jewel under the protection of the army of the Yadu dynasty?

Krishna: My dear citizens, although it is certain that the slayer of this creature possesses great strength, I do not think that there is any cause for alarm. Look! Here are footprints leading into a cave; I am sure that the object of our pursuit is to be found therein. However, I think it is better that I go alone, for I do not want to endanger any of you. Please stay here and await My return.

Citizen 2: O my Lord, we beg You—do not enter this dark and fearsome cave alone! Let us fetch the mighty army of the Yadus, and then with all confidence we may proceed within the mountain's depths.

Krishna: Fear not. Do you not recall the many mighty warriors that I have slain with ease, like an elephant breaking lotus stems? Do not be concerned for My welfare; wait here and I will return as soon as I have recovered the jewel.

Citizen 2: I fear greatly that we may never see the smiling face of our Lord Sri Krishna again!

Citizen 1: The signs may be foreboding, yet I am sure that Krishna is fully in control. Have you ever known Lord Krishna to perform any act imperfectly? We should just have faith in Him.

SCENE SIX

Jambavan's abode inside the cave

SCENE SIX

Jambavan's abode inside the cave

Nurse: (to Jambavan's small son) Do you like the new shiny jewel that your father has brought for you? Now I want you to be a good boy while I prepare your meal. (enter Krishna, who snatches away the gem) Jambavan, Jambavan, come quickly! A thief has stolen your child's toy jewel!

Jambavan: Do thieves now dare to trespass in the home of Jambavan, king of the bears? Come, let us see what You are worth! (he attacks Krishna—first with weapons, then stones, then trees and then fists. Jambavan then falls to his knees and prays:) My dear Lord, I can now understand who You are. Although You are beyond the range of my limited sense perception, You have mercifully revealed Yourself to me, being satisfied with my service. You are indeed the Lord of Lords, the immeasurable, infinite, all-pervading, all-knowing, Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are indeed the source of everybody's strength, wealth, wisdom, beauty, fame and renunciation. I can understand by Your grace that You are the same Supreme Personality who previously made Your advent as Sri Ramachandra, with whom I crossed the ocean to Lanka to chastise Ravana, the wicked rakshasa king! Now you have fought with Me just to enjoy Your own pastimes, for no one else has such immeasurable strength; no one else could defeat me in this way.

Krishna: O Jambavan, king of the bears, I am very satisfied with your enlightened prayers and service. Now let your anxiety and fatigue be finished. People say that the lion is the king of the jungle, yet you have now proven that there is none to compete with you among the jungle animals. You are My eternal servant, and simply to enjoy the sport of fighting, I made you forget this. But now, by My benediction, your memory is regained. Please give Me the Syamantaka crystal, for

in Dwaraka My character has been questioned; it is rumored that I have stolen it and murdered the brother of Satrajit, who was actually killed by the lion.

Jambavan: Please take the jewel, for everything that I possess is Yours. And here also is my daughter, Jambavati, who is now of a suitable age for marriage. My Lord, I would consider it a great honor if you would accept her as Your wife.

Krishna: How can I refuse such an offer? O Jambavan, I am indebted to you for the pure devotion you have shown to Me.

SCENE SEVEN

In Ugrasena's throne room in Dwaraka

SCENE SEVEN

In Ugrasena's throne room in Dwaraka

Ugrasena: It is now one full month since you returned from the jungle, and still there is no news of Lord Krishna!

Citizen 2: It may be that the Lord has concluded His pastimes on the Earth and returned to the transcendental abode of Vaikuntha.

Citizen 1: This Satrajit is a worthless fellow. Because of his rumor-spreading, this great misfortune has fallen upon us.

Ugrasena: Indeed, ever since he brought the jewel to the city he has been a source of anxiety and tribulation. For this great crime he should be punished.

(Krishna and Jambavati enter)

Citizen 1: Krishna has returned! Lord Krishna is again in our midst!

Citizen 2: Here is Lord Krishna, and He has brought back the Syamantaka crystal as well as a beautiful new wife!

Ugrasena: Krishna! O Krishna! You have returned to us when we were all certain that You were slain! O my dear grandson, You are indeed the delight of Your devotees!

Krishna: When Prasena took the jewel into the jungle he was attacked and killed by a lion. Then My devotee Jambavan in turn killed the lion and kept the jewel. After entering his cave and finding out all this, Jambavan and I engaged in a mock fight for an entire month. At first, Jambavan did not recognize Me and so I engaged with him in this sportive fighting. When he understood that I was actually his Lord, he immediately returned the jewel to Me and also gave Me his own

daughter, Jambavati, in charity. Now please send for Satrajit, so that I may return the Syamantaka jewel to him.

Citizen 1: O Lord, having heard of Your return, king Satrajit is coming to see you! (Satrajit and his daughter Satyabhama enter and offer obeisances)

Krishna: Ah, Satrajit—here is your treasured jewel, which you thought was lost. Know for certain that your brother was killed by a jungle lion and that I was in no way connected with his death.

Satrajit: Please forgive and overlook the many offenses that I have committed against You! I am indeed the most foolish of men, for although the most precious wealth of Your devotional service was freely available, I chose to exalt a worldly jewel instead. By the adoration of a material object in the form of this Syamantaka jewel, a man rejects a priceless treasure in favor of pieces of broken glass. In becoming attracted to such a temporary object, I see that I have degraded myself to the lowest position! I therefore think it better to give You this jewel, so that I will not again fall into the deadly trap of worldly opulence. You are, after all, the real proprietor of all riches. In addition, please also accept the hand of my lovely daughter, Satyabhama. Although many noble princes have sought her hand, I consider that You alone are fit to be her husband.

Krishna: Dear Satrajit, I am very glad to receive all your heartfelt gifts, and certainly I would be most happy to accept your charming daughter. But as far as the Syamantaka jewel is concerned, I think it should remain in the temple you constructed for it, for then everyone in the city can derive benefit from its presence. But everyone should realize from this incident that if we became greedy for material wealth, then certainly that greed will drag our consciousness down to the lowest level. You should keep the jewel, but with a mood of detachment, and you will not fall victim to the clutches of My illusory energy of maya.

The End

The Rajasuya Sacrifice

And The Liberation Of Jarasanda

from Krishna Book, Chapters 71 & 72

The Rajasuya Sacrifice

And The Liberation Of Jarasanda

from Krishna Book, Chapters 71 & 72

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CAST: Narrator, Lord Krishna, Servant, Messenger, Narada Muni, 2 Aides, Uddhava, Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Bhimasena, Nakula, Sahadeva, Jarasanda, Jarasanda's Aide.

Narrator: This material world is a place of darkness, full of ignorance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. Even five thousand years ago, when Lord Sri Krishna was personally present on this planet, there was need for broadcasting His glories and promulgating the philosophy of Krishna consciousness. Just as today that most auspicious task has been taken up by International Society for Krishna consciousness, so five thousand years ago, Maharaja Yudhishtira, the emperor of all the world, made this glorious endeavor—by performing the great Rajasuya sacrifice. This sacrifice requires much gold and ghee. Its purpose, besides praising the Supreme Lord, was to test the purity and learning of the brahmana priests. Hearing about Maharaja Yudhishtira's intention to perform such a great sacrifice, Narada Muni travelled to Dwaraka and visited the opulent assembly house known as Sudharma, where Lord Krishna and his associates of the Yadu dynasty were, at that time, being entertained...

SCENE ONE

The Sudharma Assembly House

SCENE ONE

The Sudharma Assembly House

(Lord Sri Krishna and His associates are being entertained by jokers and dancers. A servant enters)

Servant: My Lord, kindly forgive this intrusion, but there is a messenger to see You... he says it is a matter of life and death!

Krishna: All right, send him in. Thank you, Jester.

Messenger: (offers obeisances and rises) My dear Lord, Your mercy and power are beyond estimation! Although I am most fallen and degraded, I have come to take shelter of Your lotus feet. Please hear the message I have been instructed to give You. As You know, the evil king Jarasandha has conquered many kingdoms. Those kings who would not bow before him—numbering twenty thousand—have been arrested and imprisoned within the cave of a mountain, and every day one of the kings is offered as a human sacrifice to Lord Shiva. My dear Lord, all these kings are very anxious to see You so that they can personally surrender at Your lotus feet. Please be merciful to them and act for their good fortune.

Krishna: Let us consider how to attack the kingdom of Jarasandha. (Narada Muni suddenly enters) My dear Narada, please be seated. We are very much honored by your presence. Indeed, I think that now everything is well within the three worlds. Surely nothing in the universe is concealed from your knowledge. Kindly

let Me know how the Pandavas are doing. What is the present plan of King Yudhishtira?

Narada: My dear Lord, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of the all created worlds, and the knower of everything. Still you enact your pastimes, exactly like an actor who performs upon the stage. In this way, in the role of well-wisher to the Pandavas, You have inquired about their activities, and thus by Your grace I shall let you know about them. First of all, Maharaja Yudhishtira, who possesses all material opulence, intends to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice, only in order to get Your association and to please You. He wishes to worship You to achieve Your causeless mercy, and therefore I beg to request You to go to Hastinapura and fulfill his desire.

Aide 1: But, my Lord, if You go to Hastinapura, who will liberate the twenty thousand kings imprisoned by Jarasandha?

Aide 2: Yes, my Lord. With all due respects to the great sage Narada Muni, we feel that this rascal Jarasandha should be dethroned immediately.

Krishna: My dear Uddhava, you are always my well-wishing confidential friend, and therefore I wish to see everything according to your vision. What should I do?

Uddhava: Unless we are victorious over all the kings, no one can perform this Rajasuya sacrifice. In other words, King Yudhishtira cannot perform this great sacrifice without first gaining victory over the belligerent king Jarasandha. Therefore, to execute both purposes, we must first kill Jarasandha.

Aide 1: But Jarasandha is not an ordinary man.

Aide 2: Yes, his bodily strength is equal to the strength of ten thousand elephants.

Uddhava: If there is anyone who can conquer this king, he is none other than Bhimasena, because he also possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants. The best thing would be for Bhimasena to fight alone with him, then there would be no unnecessary killing of many soldiers. Hmmm. Yes! I have a plan how we could arrange such a fight: We all know that Jarasandha is very much devoted to the brahmanas... Well my idea is this... (music fades in to drown out conversation)

SCENE TWO

Hastinapura

SCENE TWO

Hastinapura

(Lord Krishna is being addressed by Maharaja Yudhishtira, who is surrounded by his brothers)

Narrator: After hearing the advice of Uddhava, which was appreciated by everyone present, including Narada Muni and the elderly members of the Yadu dynasty, Lord Sri Krishna prepared to execute the first part of His plan, which was to go immediately to Hastinapura where Yudhishtira Maharaja was residing. Having assured the messenger that He would very soon rescue the imprisoned kings held by king Jarasandha, Lord Krishna set off in His chariot, accompanied by many other chariots, along with elephants, cavalry, infantry and similar royal paraphernalia. In this way, the procession of Lord Krishna's party gradually passed through Gujarat, Sauret, the great desert of Rajasthan, then Kurukshetra, and at last the Lord arrived in Hastinapura, which is also known as Indraprastha city. When king Yudhishtira heard that Lord Krishna had already arrived in his capital city, he became so joyful that all his hairs stood on end in great ecstasy and he immediately came out of the city to properly receive Him. Upon seeing the Lord, the five Pandavas became overwhelmed with affection and embraced Him again and again out of their great love. Lord Krishna, in order to please king Yudhishtira, remained in the city for some time and engaged in many pastimes with His devotees there.

Yudhishtira: My dear Lord Krishna, foolish persons consider Your Lordship an ordinary human being, and they try to find fault with You. Therefore, I wish to perform this Rajasuya sacrifice. I will invite all the demigods, beginning with Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, and I will show the world that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that everyone else, including the demigods, are your servants.

Krishna: My dear king Yudhishtira, O ideal justice personified, I completely support your decision to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice, for such a sacrifice will satisfy every living entity, and it will establish your good name forever in the history of human civilization. But first of all, it is necessary for you to conquer all the kings of the world and collect all requisite paraphernalia for executing this sacrifice.

Yudhishtira: Then I shall dispatch my brothers to conquer in all directions. Sahadeva! You will conquer the southern countries. Nakula! The kings of the western side should be conquered by you. Arjuna! Your conquest will be over the northern kings. And you, Bhimasena, will conquer the kings of the east. It is not my intention to declare war upon these kings, but you may inform them that they are required to pay taxes for the execution of the sacrifice. However, if any king refuses to act accordingly, then we must certainly fight!

Bhimasena: (enlivened) That's what I like to hear! Come, my brothers, there is no time to waste!

SCENE THREE

Hastinapura

SCENE THREE

Hastinapura

Narrator: Thereafter, the four brothers—Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva—set off to conquer in different directions. By their strength and influence, they won over all the kings, and thus they were able to acquire sufficient taxes and presentations.

Yudhishtira: Ah, my dear brothers! How did you fare?

Arjuna: By your blessings and by the mercy of Krishna, we have met with great success!

Bhima: Yes, every person—from the kings down to the common men—has accepted your position as emperor of the world.

Nakula: Except for one! (others gasp) King Jarasandha of Magadha refuses to accept your sovereignty!

Yudhishtira: What? Jarasandha!

Krishna: Unless we are victorious over all the kings, we cannot perform this Rajasuya sacrifice.

Sahadeva: Jarasandha possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants...

Nakula: And his armies are most powerful!

Arjuna: Bhimasena also possesses such strength... he alone can conquer him.

Yudhishtira: But what of his armies? We will lose many soldiers...

Krishna: Yudhishtira! Do not fear. My friend Uddhava has instructed Me how this rascal Jarasandha can be defeated. Listen carefully how we shall do this: Now as you all know, Jarasandha is very much inclined towards the brahmanas...

SCENE FOUR

Jarasandha's Palace

SCENE FOUR

Jarasandha's Palace

Jarasandha: What a joke! Yudhishtira wants to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice. But he cannot do so unless he conquers all the kings of the world... including me, Jarasandha! (laughs) What an impudent fool! To even dare to dream about

surpassing my strength, why if it wasn't so comical, I'd get annoyed! Haven't they understood yet that my bodily strength is immeasurable? That my military legions are unconquerable? Obviously, by worshipping this Krishna, they lost all their intelligence! Ha! Krishna, what kind of a kshatriya is He? Why, the last time we met, He fled from the battlefield in complete fear of my prowess!

Aide: Your Majesty?

Jarasandha: Oh, yes. See that all my household affairs are duly performed. You have carefully noted down the requests of all my queens?

Aide: Yes, my lord.

Jarasandha: Good. See that they are carried out. And make sure that all due sacrifices and oblations are properly executed. One can never be too careful in following the Vedic injunctions.

Aide: Yes, my lord.

Jarasandha: And one more thing—twenty thousand fools, who would not bow down to me, are now within my dungeons. Release one from his shackles to be offered in sacrifice to Lord Shiva, my Lord and benefactor.

Aide: Yes, Your Majesty. Your Majesty, there are some brahmanas here to see you.

Jarasandha: Oh, brahmanas! Show them in immediately. (Lord Krishna, Arjuna and Bhima enter, disguised as brahmanas)

Krishna: We wish all glories to Your Majesty. We are three guests at your royal palace, and we are coming from a great distance. We know about your good qualities, and we have come to ask charity of you. We hope that you will kindly bestow upon us whatever we may ask.

Jarasandha: (aside to Aide) They do not appear to be actual brahmanas. Mark the different signs on their bodies. Their shoulders are marked with an impression due to their carrying bows, they have beautiful bodily structures, and their voices are grave and commanding. Therefore I can understand that they are warriors; and it appears that I have seen them somewhere before. However, they have come to my door begging alms like brahmanas. Therefore in spite of their disguises, I am prepared to give them anything. Even if they ask for my body, I shall not hesitate to offer it to them. If I can achieve immortal reputation by this perishable body, I must act for that purpose. (aloud) My dear brahmanas, you can ask from me whatever you like. If you so desire, you can take my head also—I am prepared to give it.

Krishna: My dear king, please note that we are not actually brahmanas. We are all warriors, and we have come to beg a duel with you. We hope that you will agree

to this proposal. You may note that here are two of the Pandavas—Bhimasena and Arjuna. As for Myself, you may know that I am your old enemy, Krishna!

Jarasandha: You fools! If you want to fight with me, I immediately grant your request. But Krishna, I know that You are a coward. I refuse to fight with You because You become very confused when You face me in battle. As for Arjuna, I know that he is younger than me and is not in any way an equal competitor. But as far as Bhimasena is concerned... yes! I think he is a suitable match for me. Come! We shall battle outside the city walls.

SCENE FIVE

Outside the City Walls

SCENE FIVE

Outside the City Walls

Narrator: Bhimasena and Jarasandha engaged themselves in fighting, and with their respective clubs, which were as strong as thunderbolts, they began to strike one another very severely, both of them being eager to win... in this way, the fight went on until at last, evening approached...

Bhima: (breathing heavily) Night approaches.

Jarasandha: Yes. The day of fighting is ended. Come, let us dine at my place. We shall continue this business in the morning. (they exit along with Krishna, Arjuna and others)

SCENE SIX

The Slaying of Jarasandha

SCENE SIX

The Slaying of Jarasandha

Narrator: As evening fell, the two great fighters, Bhimasena and Jarasandha, stopped fighting and lived together as friends in Jarasandha's palace until the next morning, when the fight continued with even greater ferocity than the previous day. Like two fierce elephants, Bhima and Jarasandha smashed each other with their clubs. Day after day the fighting went on, and eventually all the clubs used by Bhima and Jarasandha were broken; and so the two enemies began to strike each other with their fists, and this made the sound like thunderbolts. Unfortunately, however, neither was able to defeat the other, and for twenty-seven days they were equally matched, blow for blow... (Bhima, Lord Krishna, Arjuna, Jarasandha and Aide are preparing for another day's fight)

Bhima: My dear Krishna, after twenty-seven days of fighting, I must frankly admit that I cannot conquer Jarasandha. We are both of equal strength, and our fighting techniques are also equal.

Krishna: Listen carefully, Bhimasena, there is a mystery behind the birth of Jarasandha. He was born in two different parts from two different mothers. When his father saw that the baby was useless, he threw the two parts in the forest, where they were later found by a black-hearted witch named Jara. She managed to join the two parts of the baby from top to bottom...

Bhima: But how is he to be slain?

Jarasandha: Come along, Bhimasena! The morning has passing, are we to fight or have you lost your nerve? (Bhimasena moves away from Krishna in order to begin the fight. At that moment, the Lord picks up a twig from a tree and, in front of Bhima, He bifurcates it as a hint)

Jarasandha: All right, Bhima, I have decided to put you out of your misery. For a long time I have played with you; now I shall show no mercy! (the fight begins, and after some fierce attacks from Jarasandha, Bhima, though appearing to be having a hard time, picks up Jarasandha by the leg and bifurcates him)

Krishna & Arjuna: Jai! Well done, Bhima! (they embrace him)

Krishna: Come now. Let us go and release all the imprisoned kings from the mountain cave.

SCENE SEVEN

Preparations for the Sacrifice

SCENE SEVEN

Preparations for the Sacrifice

Narrator: After the annihilation of Jarasandha, Lord Krishna immediately called for the son of Jarasandha, whose name was Sahadeva, and after installing him upon the throne, He released all the kings and princes who had been imprisoned by Jarasandha. Then the Lord returned to the city of Hastinapura, accompanied by Bhima and Arjuna. When they heard the sound of Krishna's conchshell as He approached the city, the citizens of Hastinapura felt their hearts become joyful, because they could understand that Jarasandha had been killed. King Yudhishtira attentively heard the narration of the killing of Jarasandha and the tactics adopted by Lord Krishna to achieve that, and afterwards he became even more bound in love for Krishna; tears of ecstasy glided from his eyes and he became so stunned that he was almost unable to speak.

Yudhishtira: My dear Krishna, O eternal form of bliss and knowledge, all the demigods, including Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Indra are always anxious to carry out Your orders, which they treasure in their hearts, considering themselves most fortunate to receive such orders. O Krishna, You are unlimited, and although we sometimes think of ourselves as royal kings of this world, and become puffed up in our meager positions, actually we are very poor in heart. We are fit to be punished by You, but instead of punishing us, You so kindly and mercifully accept our orders and carry them out properly. Others are surprised that Your Lordship can play the part of an ordinary human being, but we can understand that You are performing these activities just like a dramatic artist. Your position is always exalted, therefore You are just like the sun, which only appears to rise and set, but which always maintains its intensity of heat and light. My dear Madhava, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus You are never defeated by anyone.

Let us now perform the Rajasuya sacrifice. Let me see now—Bhimasena, you shall be in charge of the kitchen department, and Nakula, you shall take charge of the store department.

Arjuna: Yudhishtira, I wish to look after the comforts of the elderly persons.

Yudhishtira: So be it! And Sahadeva, you be in charge of the reception department. See that someone washes the feet of all incoming guests. That will be very nice.

Krishna: Yudhishtira, let Me take charge of that matter.

Yudhishtira: What? But my Lord, I could not ask such a thing of You!

Krishna: My dear Yudhishtira, to engage in your service pleases Me so much more than receiving service or glorification from You! Come now, let us begin at once!

SCENE EIGHT

The Rajasuya Sacrifice

SCENE EIGHT

The Rajasuya Sacrifice

Yudhishtira: Gentlemen! Gentlemen! All the members present here in this sacrificial assembly are very exalted personalities. Present here are all the resplendent demigods, brahmanas, sages and kings from all parts of the universe. Therefore let us now consider, with due deliberation, who shall be worshipped first in this great ceremony. (voices call out different names)

Voices: I recommend Lord Brahma... Lord Shiva... Lord Indra... Chandra, etc..

Sahadeva: My dear friends! Lord Krishna, the best amongst the Yadu dynasty, and the protector of His devotees, is the most exalted personality in this assembly. I think that He, without any objection, should be offered the honor of being worshipped first. Although Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and many other great personalities are present here, no one can be equal to or greater than Krishna—not in wealth, strength, reputation, wisdom or any other consideration. Lord Krishna is present as the Supersoul in the heart of every living being, so if we can satisfy Him, then automatically every being becomes satisfied.

Everyone: Jai! Jai!

(Maharaja Yudhishtira and his family members begin to wash the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, and afterwards they sprinkle the water on their heads. Then they offer the Lord silken garments and jewelled ornaments. At that time, all the members in the assembly stand up with folded hands and begin to chant “Jai! Jai! Namah! Namah!” When all join together in respectful obeisances to Krishna, there are showers of flowers from the sky)

SRI KRISHNA BHAGAVAN KI JAI! (kirtan)

The End

Çrémad Bhāgavatam Plays

Maharaja Pariksit Cursed By A Brahmana Boy

from Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, Canto One, Chapters 18 & 19

Maharaja Pariksit Cursed By A Brahmana Boy

from Çrémad-Bhāgavatam, Canto One, Chapters 18 & 19

* * * * *

CAST: Suta Goswami (the Narrator), Maharaja Pariksit, Shamika Rishi, Shringi, Shringi's Friend, Messenger, Sages, Shukadeva Goswami.

SCENE ONE

In the Hermitage

SCENE ONE

In the Hermitage

Suta: Once upon a time, Maharaja Pariksit, while engaged in hunting in the forest with bow and arrows, became extremely fatigued, hungry and thirsty. While

searching for a reservoir of water, he entered the hermitage of the well-known sage, Shamika Rishi, and saw the sage sitting quietly with closed eyes.

Pariksit: O Sage, give me water. I am thirsty! What is this! This so-called sage does not offer me a seat! No water? No welcome? He neglects me because he thinks I am a lower caste kshatriya; thus he feigns trance! (picks up dead snake and garlands Shamika Rishi) Therefore I garland you, O Sage! (Pariksit leaves)

Suta: Upon returning home, Pariksit Maharaja began to wonder if he had acted too harshly. "Perhaps, he was actually deep in meditation," he thought. Meanwhile, the young son of Shamika Rishi named Shringi heard of the incident while he was playing with his friends. (two children come out, playing with a ball)

2nd Child: Shringi, go home quickly! The king has insulted your father by garlanding him with a dead snake while he was meditating!

Shringi: Just see the behavior of the king, who by caste is just like a crow or watchdog! He commits offenses against his own master! On what grounds can dogs enter the house of the master and expect to dine on the same plate? This is all due to the departure of Lord Krishna. These upstarts have now flourished, and I myself shall take up this matter and punish them! Just witness my power! Touching the holy river Kaushika, I pronounce this curse: On the seventh day from today, a snake-bird will bite the most wretched Maharaja Pariksit because of his insulting my father!

(Shringi goes home, sees his father and begins to cry. Shamika Rishi opens his eyes and throws the snake garland on the ground)

Shamika: My dear son, why are you crying? Has someone harmed you?

Shringi: Maharaja Pariksit has offended you by placing a dead snake on you as a garland. Therefore, I have cursed him to die in seven days!

Shamika: Alas! What a great sinful act you have performed! You have awarded heavy punishment for an insignificant offense. My dear boy, you are immature and therefore have no knowledge that the king, who is the best of human beings, is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the king is absent, then the world becomes filled with rogues and thieves and the poor citizens become victimized. People will be killed and injured; animals and women will be abducted, and for all these sins we shall be responsible. Emperor Pariksit is faultless because he is a first-class devotee of the Lord. He does not at all deserve to be cursed. O all pervading Supreme Person, please pardon the behavior of my immature son.

SCENE TWO

In the Palace

SCENE TWO

In the Palace

Pariksit: I acted rudely at the hermitage of that sage. I was fatigued and troubled by hunger and thirst, thus I was forgetting my actual position. I have neglected the injunctions of the Supreme Lord, and thus I must expect some punishment in the near future. Let the calamity come now so that I may be free from the sinful reaction and not commit such an offense again. I am certainly uncivilized and sinful. Let my opulence burn up immediately by the fire of the brahmana's wrath!

Messenger: Your Majesty, the sages say that you have been cursed by the son of a sage to die in seven days!

Pariksit: This is not bad news. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to prepare myself for death. I shall become indifferent toward all worldly things and concentrate my mind in Krishna Consciousness. I shall go to the banks of the Ganges river and I shall fast until death.

(Pariksit takes off his crown and jewels. He goes to the far side of the stage and sits for meditation. Many sages enter, one at a time, and sit with Maharaja Pariksit)

Pariksit: I have decided to fast until death. The Lord has come, out of His causeless mercy, appearing before me in the form of a brahmana's curse. Let the snake-bird, or whatever magical thing the brahmana created, bite me at once. I am not afraid. My only desire is that all of you continue singing the pastimes of Lord Vishnu. If I take birth again in this material world, then grant that I may have devotion to Lord Krishna, association with His devotees and friendly relations with all living beings.

Sage: We shall all stay here until Maharaja Pariksit returns to Godhead!

Sages together: Jai! All Glories to Sri Krishna! (Shukadeva Goswami enters, and Pariksit offers obeisances. All offer respects with folded hands. Some indicate that he should take the highest seat as the most respected sage in the assembly)

Pariksit: O Shukadeva Goswami, son of Çréla Vyasadeva, you are the Spiritual Master of great sages and devotees. I therefore beg you to tell me the way of perfection for all people, especially for those who are about to die. Please let me know what a man should hear, chant, remember and worship, and also what he should not do.

Shukadeva: My dear King, your question is glorious because it is beneficial to all kinds of people. The answer to this question is the prime subject matter for hearing. The gross materialists are blind to the Absolute Truth. They spend their days making money and waste their nights by sleeping and sex indulgence. They do not inquire about Krishna Consciousness because they are too attached to the fallible soldiers of wife, children and their own body. Yet, they do not see that their

own death is coming, although they have seen that all their friends and relatives have passed away. O King, one who desires to be free from all miseries must hear about, glorify, and also remember Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The highest perfection of human life is to remember Krishna at the time of death. Therefore, I shall narrate the Çrémad-Bhägavatam, which is the sound incarnation of the Lord. The Çrémad-Bhägavatam is that very means of conquest which will enable you to cross over the insurmountable ocean of birth and death.

Suta: Shukadeva Goswami spoke the history of the Supreme Lord Krishna and His devotees continually for seven days, and Pariksit heard it with rapt attention. Thus Maharaja Pariksit became purified and passed from this world in full Krishna Consciousness. Devotees around the world study this conversation daily. We hope that you have enjoyed our play today and that you will join us for the Çrémad-Bhägavatam class in the temple, as often as you are able. Thank You.

The End

Dhruva—The Boy Who Saw God

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Fourth Canto, Chapters 8 & 9

Dhruva—The Boy Who Saw God

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Fourth Canto, Chapters 8 & 9

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CAST: King Uttanapada, Dhruva, Uttama, Queen Suruchi, Queen Suniti, Lord Narayana.

SCENE ONE

Throne Room

SCENE ONE

Throne Room

(King Uttanapada is playing with his two children, born of different queens. Both children want to sit on his lap)

Uttama: What does it look like when you address your council from the throne? Do they look smaller? Let me climb up on your lap and pretend I'm the king managing the nation's affairs!

Dhruva: I want to climb up on your lap too, father!

Suruchi: My dear child, you not deserve to sit on the throne or on the lap of the king. Surely, you are also the son of the king, but because you did not take your birth from my womb, you are not qualified to sit on your father's lap. Your attempt is doomed to failure. If you at all desire to rise to the throne of the king, then you have to undergo severe austerities. First of all, you must satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, and then, when you are favored by Him because of such worship, you shall have to take your next birth from my womb! (the king says nothing. Dhruva becomes very angry and runs away)

SCENE TWO

Queen Suniti's Quarters

SCENE TWO

Queen Suniti's Quarters

Dhruva: Mother!

Suniti: What is the matter, Dhruva? Why are you crying? Have you been fighting? (Dhruva shakes his head. He is still very angry) Has someone been unkind to you? Who was it?

Dhruva: My other mother.

Suniti: Mother Suruchi? What would cause her to be mean to you? What did you do?

Dhruva: I didn't do anything, Mother. Uttama was sitting on Father's lap and I wanted to get up there, too, but Mother Suruchi said I wasn't allowed because I was not her child. She said I had to worship Lord Narayana if I wanted to become qualified to sit on the throne, after taking my next birth in her womb!

Suniti: (fighting back tears) My son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pain upon others, suffers himself from that pain. My dear boy, whatever has been spoken by Suruchi is so because the king, your father, does not consider me his wife or even his maidservant. He feels ashamed to accept me. Therefore, it is a fact that you have taken birth from the womb of an unfortunate women. This may be very hard to hear, but if you truly desire to sit on the royal throne, you must follow exactly the instructions of your stepmother. Giving up all envy, engage yourself in the service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Narayana.

Dhruva: Is God so great?

Suniti: He is so great that simply by worshipping His lotus feet, your great grandfather, Lord Brahma, was able to create this universe. And your grandfather, Svayambhuva Manu, achieved the greatest material success and afterwards was

liberated. Dear Dhruva, as far as I am concerned, I do not find anyone who can relieve your distress but the lotus-eyed Supreme Lord.

Dhruva: Mother, I understand what you are saying, and I am convinced that you are right. I am determined to win the favor of Lord Narayana, and nothing shall stop me. Where does one go to find God?

Suniti: I understand that great sages go to the forest to find him out, but you are too young and inexperienced, you could not...

Dhruva: I shall not return without seeing God Himself... in person!

Suniti: Dhruva! Dhruva... wait!!! (Dhruva exits with great determination)

SCENE THREE

Queen Suniti's Chambers

SCENE THREE

Queen Suniti's Chambers

King: My dear Suniti... I don't know what to say...

Suniti: My Lord?

King: Can you ever forgive me for the grief I have caused you? My attachment to my young and beautiful wife has made me so fallen that I have abandoned all merciful behavior... even to my own son, Dhruva. I have banished him even though he is without fault. And I have banished my own happiness with him. The only thoughts in my mind have been worries about him. Who is protecting him? Instead of being his guardian, I have become his executioner... I have shoved him out into the forest to be eaten by hungry wolves. Out of his affection for me, the boy was trying to get up on my lap. Did I accept him? Did I even pat his head or say a kind word? Just imagine... by my hard-heartedness, I have caused him—and everyone else—to suffer severely!

Suniti: What have you heard? Where is he? Is he alright? Please don't keep anything a secret?

King: I have just received a visit from the great sage, Narada Muni, who knows everything past, present, and future.

Suniti: What did he say about Dhruva?

King: He has seen our son and talked with him.

Suniti: Oh, thank God!

King: He tried to stop Dhruva. He told him to go home and return to the forest when he was older. But, like a true warrior, Dhruva refused. He said he would not return home until his desire is fulfilled.

Suniti: What does he want?

King: He wants to become greater than any king in all the three worlds.

Suniti: Heaven's above!

King: I cannot believe his determination. The holy sage told me not to worry, because Dhruva is under the protection of the Supreme Lord Himself. He has arrived at the bank of the Yamuna river in the Madhuvana forest, and is engaged in heroic austerities. Sri Narada taught him to meditate on the form of the Supreme Lords Narayana in sound by chanting the mantra: Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

Perfectly following the science of yoga, for the first month he ate only fruits and berries on every third day. For the second month he took grass and leaves every six days. In the third month he drank water only every nine days. The next month he inhaled air only every twelfth day, and this last month he is standing on only one leg, fully concentrating his mind on the Supreme.

All the while he has been completely absorbed in transcendental consciousness, chanting the Holy Names constantly, and he has now become so powerful that the three worlds are trembling... and very soon the Lord will bless him with the divine vision of Himself.

Suniti: Will we ever see him again?

King: Oh yes, he will return soon, bringing a radiance of celestial glory brighter than ten thousand suns!

SCENE FOUR

The Forest

SCENE FOUR

The Forest

(Dhruva is meditating and chanting Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Lord Narayana appears. Dhruva falls prostrate before Him. Lord Narayana touches Dhruva's head with His conchshell)

Dhruva: My dear Lord, I came to worship You because I desired some land on this earth, but fortunately I have attained You, who are beyond even the perception of

great sages and saintly persons. I have come to search out some particles of colored glass, but instead I found a very valuable gem like You. I am fully satisfied, and I do not desire to ask anything of You.

Narayana: Dear Dhruva, son of King Uttanapada, I know the desire within your heart. They are very ambitious and difficult to fulfill, but listen to these future events: your brother, Uttama, will be killed while hunting, and your father will award the rule of his kingdom to you. You will rule this land for 36,000 years, and the kingdom will know great prosperity. You will never grow old. Then, when you leave this world, I shall favor you with the rule of the Polestar—that glowing planet around which all other planets revolve, and which continues to exist even after the dissolution of all the worlds. (Lord Narayana exits)

Dhruva: This is amazing! Kingship of the Polestar? Never growing old... and immortality! I'm such a fool—I approached the Supreme Lord for things that are temporary and material. That Lord can immediately cut the chain of repeated birth and death, but I wanted to be a worldly king. I'm very ashamed of myself. The Lord is so kind, so merciful, that instead of rejecting me, He has not only fulfilled all my material desires but has given me the crest jewel of loving devotional service to His Holy Name: Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya!

SCENE FIVE

The King's Palace

SCENE FIVE

The King's Palace

(All are present as Dhruva returns)

King: Dhruva! My dear son! We're so glad you're home!

Suniti: You are dearer to me than life itself! I have been constantly praying for your safe return!

Suruchi: My dear boy, we're all relieved that you're safe. Long may you live!

King: Dear friends, our beloved son was lost a long time ago, and it is the greatest good fortune that he has been returned to us. It appears that this boy will be able to protect all of us for a very long time and will put an end to all our sufferings. So now let us return to the city where we will have a great celebration in honor of our glorious little hero... Dhruva Maharaja!

(kirtan)

The End

The Deliverance Of Ajamila

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Sixth Canto, Chapter 1 & 2

The Deliverance Of Ajamila

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Sixth Canto, Chapter 1 & 2

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CAST: Narrator, Ajamila, Old Man, Ajamila's Father, Ajamila's Wife, Ajamila's Friend, Pritha the prostitute, Man, 2 Yama-dutas, 2 Vishnu-dutas. (NOTE: "Ajamila" is pronounced like A-jah-mil, not A-jamila)

Narrator: The following play is a true story from the pages of the Çrémad-Bhägavatam. It was recited by Shukadeva Goswami to Maharaja Pariksit in order to show the extraordinary potency of the chanting of the Holy Names. The Holy Name of the Supreme Lord is so powerful that if a person sincerely chants it only once, he will be delivered from all sins. One who witnesses this drama with faith and devotion is no longer doomed to hellish life, regardless of how sinful he may have been.

SCENE ONE

The Marketplace

SCENE ONE

The Marketplace

Ajamila: Sir, you dropped your money.

Old Man: Oh, thank you very much! What's your name?

Ajamila: Ajamila, sir.

Old Man: You are a good boy, Ajamila. Stay like this. Here, this is for you.

Ajamila: Oh no, sir, I don't want a....

Old Man: (interrupts) No, no—I insist. Here, take it.

Ajamila: Thank you, sir.

SCENE TWO

Ajamila's home

SCENE TWO

Ajamila's home

Ajamila: ...And then he forced me to accept the money as a reward, father!

Father: Then we should just see it as Lord Krishna's mercy! Let's prepare a nice feast for our Deity of Laddu Gopal!

Ajamila: Yes!

Father: Why don't you go to the bazaar and get a pot of ghee and some nice fruits and vegetables?

Ajamila: Yes, father. (Ajamila happily runs outside)

Father: Oh yes, also get some fresh yogurt!

Ajamila: (off stage) Yes, father!

Narrator: Ajamila grew up as a nice young man... he was a reservoir of good conduct and noble qualities... he was pure, respectful to others, gentle, self-controlled, austere, and had all the qualities of a first-class brahmana. Ajamila's father married him to a beautiful and chaste daughter of a respectable brahmana.

SCENE THREE

Ajamila's house

SCENE THREE

Ajamila's house

(Ajamila and father enter, carrying packages)

Ajamila: Where shall I put it, father?

Father: Put it near the altar.... hmmm, would you just wash these coconuts for me, Ajamila?

Ajamila: Sure!

Father: (sings) Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare!

Ajamila: Anything else?

Father: (thinks) Hmmm! Yes, bring in the mango leaves and the flowers. They are outside the kitchen in one of the baskets.

Ajamila: (goes off stage) I can't find them father! Are you sure you put them here?

Father: Ohhhh! I'm sorry! I must have put them in the kitchen. Look on the table!

Ajamila: (off stage) I can't find them, father! Are you sure you put them here?
(Ajamila re-enters)

Father: I'm sorry; I had them right in front of me all the time! I'm getting old, Ajamila.

Ajamila: Lord Krishna is waiting for you, father!

SCENE FOUR

In front of the Prostitute's house

SCENE FOUR

In front of the Prostitute's house

(A man is flirting and acting lusty with a prostitute named Pritha. Ajamila is walking by, stops and watches intently. He is amazed and very interested)

Pritha: (giggles)

Man: Ah! There you are! (she pulls away but stumbles) I've got you!

Pritha: Hmmm? (holds out her hand) You going to talk business tonight or not?

Man: Why not?! (gives her some money) Now let's enjoy! (he pulls off her veil. She points at Ajamila)

Pritha: Let's go to my place. There we won't be disturbed. (she looks at Ajamila flirtatiously as they leave)

Narrator: Although Ajamila tried to control his attraction to the prostitute, the force of lust within his heart was too strong, and he failed to control his mind. In the same way that the sun and moon are eclipsed by a lowly planet (Rahu), the young brahmana lost all his good sense. Ajamila always thought about the prostitute. (he walks about, contemplating)

(Man and Prostitute come through curtain)

Man: (while he fastens his coat) See you next week, then!

Pritha: (nods while fixing her clothes and hair. Then she notices Ajamila) Hi! You wanna come in? (he looks around) Come on, I won't bite you! No one will know!

Narrator: Within a short time, Ajamila became attached to the prostitute and took her as a maidservant in his house.

SCENE FIVE

Ajamila's house

SCENE FIVE

Ajamila's house

(Ajamila and Pritha are on stage, laughing and talking. There is a knock at the door. Pritha leaves. Ajamila goes to the door)

Father: Ajamila!

Ajamila: Come in, father! Nice to see you! Please sit down.

Father: I brought you some maha-prasad of Laddu Gopal.

Ajamila: That's very kind of you. Do you want some lassi?

Father: Yes, please!

Ajamila: How's your knee?

Father: Still a little stiff, but at least it doesn't hurt anymore.

Ajamila: That's good.

Father: By having a material body, one automatically has to suffer the inconveniences of old age and disease... and ultimately death.

Ajamila: That's true.

Father: But when one is young and healthy, it is difficult to remember that life is very temporary.

Ajamila: Yes.

Father: What happened to that other maidservant you had? What's her name again?

Ajamila: Sarasvaté?

Father: Yes!

Ajamila: She was getting too old for her job, so I hired this new one, Pritha.

Father: I would get another one if I were you. She doesn't look very first-class to me.

Ajamila: Well, she might not look the part, but she is expert in her job and that's what counts to me!

Father: Still, I suggest you find another one, Ajamila!

Ajamila: Oh, father! Please stop going on and on about it!! I'm grown up, I'm 26 and I don't need you telling me what to do in my own house! (Ajamila exits)

Father: What has come over him? He almost looks like a different person to me. I'm sure it has something to do with that woman! Ajamila!

Narrator: Despite the good advice of relatives and friends, Ajamila was unable to give up the company of the prostitute, and he became more and more attached to her.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

(Ajamila is reclining with a book in his hands as Pritha is dusting around the house. Ajamila's wife watches him, looking at Pritha while she works)

Wife: Prabhuji! What's wrong? I've been watching you and you seem so disturbed. What's bothering you? Please tell me! Maybe I can help!

Ajamila: (interrupts her) There is nothing wrong! Why don't you leave me alone and mind your own business! (she starts crying) I'm sorry, Devi. I didn't mean to upset you. I'm really sorry.

Wife: It's alright. If you don't mind, I would like to go away and stay with my parents for a while.

Ajamila: That might be a good idea. (wife leaves the room and Pritha enters)

Ajamila: Psst! I've got a present for you. Close your eyes and hold out your hands! (Ajamila hands her a box)

Pritha: (opening the box) Darling, these are beautiful! (She tries the jewelry on, but cannot manage on her own)

Ajamila: Here, let me help you! (he is helping her when his wife re-enters)

Wife: I forgot my... (sees them) Ajamila! How could you? In our own home! (starts crying)

Pritha: Let's go! I've had enough of this place! (Ajamila and Pritha leave)

Wife: Ajamila!!!

Narrator: Having abandoned his righteous wife and home, Ajamila moved in with the prostitute and engaged in all kinds of sinful acts in her association. When his father passed away in due course of time, Ajamila lavishly spent his inheritance to satisfy the prostitute, and by her association he engaged in more and more sinful activities.

SCENE SEVEN

At the Prostitute's house

SCENE SEVEN

At the Prostitute's house

Friend: (Ajamila throws dice) Ah! you win again, Ajamila! you're having a good run tonight.

Ajamila: This is nothing!

Friend: Alright, then! Let's get into some big money!

Ajamila: As it is my lucky day, alright! Woman! Give me another drink!

Pritha: You've drunk too much already.

Ajamila: Another drink, I said!

Friend: Shall we say five gold coins? (Ajamila chokes on his drink)

Pritha: Where would you get that kind of money?

Friend: That's my business, I have my resources. (Ajamila looks worried)

Pritha: Come on, Ajamila! Have you lost your nerves?

Ajamila: Alright! I can match that!

Friend: You throw first then!

Ajamila: Double four! Double four again!

Friend: Double three!

Ajamila: Ha, Ha! I've got you, friend! Only a double six can save you now!

Friend: Come on now... lucky, lucky, lucky... Double six! I win!!! Bad luck, Ajamila! I think the gods have turned against you... well, I'm off... better luck next time! Thanks for the wine. See you later!

Pritha: Well, what's wrong with you? It's not the end of the world, is it?

Ajamila: No, not the end of the world, but it is the end of my savings. I'm broke!

Pritha: No money?! You can forget about me, then!

Ajamila: No wait, I'll get some money... I'll find some money... somehow!

Pritha: Well, you better start looking, then... Here—(she hands him a large knife)—you may need this, Ajamila, to rob the drunks! Ha!

Narrator: While Ajamila thus spent his time in abominable activities to maintain his family, eighty-eight years of his life passed by. Having completely forgotten that the purpose of life is to render loving service to Lord Krishna, he had become very attached to his unlawful wife, home and especially to his children. The youngest of his ten sons was called Narayana, and old Ajamila was very attached to him. Indeed, he was so much absorbed in caring for this son, that he couldn't understand that his own time was now exhausted—and that death would soon be upon him.

SCENE EIGHT

Old Ajamila is lying on his deathbed

SCENE EIGHT

Old Ajamila is lying on his deathbed

Ajamila: Narayana! Where are you? Ah! There you are! Come to your father, Narayana! Narayana! Oh! Gasp! I think I'm dying... O Narayana! (enter ugly Yama-dutas; they are laughing and snarling and are about to take his soul, when the Vishnu-dutas suddenly appear)

Vishnu-duta 1: Stop!

Vishnu-duta 2: Leave him alone!

Yama-duta 1: Who are you, sirs, that have the audacity to challenge the jurisdiction of our master—Yamaraja, the Lord of Death and Punishment?

Yama-duta 2: Your effulgence has dissipated the darkness of this place with extraordinary illumination! Now, sirs, why are you obstructing us?

Vishnu-duta 1: If you are actually servants of Yamaraja, you must explain to us the meaning of religious principles and the symptoms of irreligion.

Vishnu-duta 2: What is the process of punishing others? Who are the actual candidates for punishment?

Yama-duta 1: That which is prescribed in the Vedas constitutes dharma, the religious principles, and the opposite of that is irreligious. Thus we have heard from Yamaraja.

Yama-duta 2: The sun, fire, sky, air, demigods, moon, evening, day, night, directions, water, land and Supersoul Himself all witness the activities of the living entity. The candidates for punishment are those who are confirmed by these many witnesses to have deviated from their prescribed regulative duties.

Yama-duta 1: This man Ajamila, although born of a brahmana family, spent his long lifetime transgressing all the rules and regulations of the holy scriptures!

Yama-duta 2: As he did not undergo atonement, because of his sinful life we must take him into the presence of Yamaraja for punishment. There, according to the extent of his sinful acts, he will be punished and thus purified!

Vishnu-duta 1: Alas, how painful it is that those in charge of maintaining the religious principles are needlessly punishing a sinless, unpunishable person! Ajamila has already atoned for all his sinful actions, for in a helpless condition he chanted the Holy Name of Lord Narayana!

Vishnu-duta 2: If a person takes a certain medicine or is forced to take it, it will act even without his knowledge, for its potency does not depend on his understanding. Similarly, if one chants the Holy Name of the Lord, knowingly or unknowingly, that chanting will be positively effective.

Vishnu-duta 1: Simply by chanting the Holy Name of Lord Vishnu, sinful persons may attract the attention of The Supreme Lord, Who therefore considers: "Because this man has chanted My name, My duty is to give him protection!"

Vishnu-duta 2: At the time of his death, this Ajamila helplessly and loudly chanted the Holy Name of the Lord. That chanting alone has already freed him from the reactions of all sinful life! Therefore, do not try to take him to your master for punishment!

Yama-duta 1: We have never heard such philosophy before! By your effulgent appearance, we know that you are correct. From this day on, we will not take

away the souls of the Vaishnava devotees of Lord Narayana! (Yama-dutas exit, Vishnu-dutas Ajamila blessings and exit)

Narrator: The Yama-dutas left Ajamila, and he regained his health for a few more years. He changed his ways, travelled to holy places, and made atonement for his sins, becoming known for his selfless charity and devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Ajamila: Alas, being a servant of my senses, how degraded I had become! I fell down from my position as a duly qualified brahmana. I gave up my chaste and beautiful young wife and begot children in the womb of a prostitute. I am certainly most abominable and unfortunate to have merged in an ocean of sinful activities! But nevertheless, because of my previous spiritual activities, I could see those exalted personalities who came to rescue me. Were it not for my past devotional service, I would now be writhing in Hell! How could I have gotten an opportunity to chant the Holy Name of the Lord when I was just ready to die? I am such a sinful person, but since I have now gotten this opportunity I must control my mind, life and senses, and always engage in devotional service so that I my not fall again into the deep darkness and ignorance of material life.

The End

The Glories Of Maharaja Ambarish

(And Durvasa Muni's Life Spared)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Ninth Canto, Chapter 4 & 5

The Glories Of Maharaja Ambarish

(And Durvasa Muni's Life Spared)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Ninth Canto, Chapter 4 & 5

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CAST: Narrator, Maharaja Ambarish, Servant, 2 Brahmanas, Durvasa Muni, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu.

Narrator: According to the Çrémad-Bhägavatam, many thousands of years ago there lived a very exalted and meritorious king named Maharaja Ambarish. He was a most powerful and celebrated devotee of the Supreme Lord Krishna, and although he was emperor of the entire world and possessed unlimited opulence and prosperity, Maharaja Ambarish did not care for it at all. He knew that attachment to such material opulence, which is temporary and illusory, is a cause of downfall in this material life. Therefore, he constantly engaged his senses, mind and everything he possessed in the service of the lord.

In order to worship the Lord, for one year Maharaja Ambarish and his queen observed the vow of Ekadashi, fasting completely on that day. In the month of Kartika, after observing that vow for one year, after fasting for three nights, and after bathing in the river Yamuna, Maharaja Ambarish performed the bathing ceremony for the Deity of Lord Krishna with all paraphernalia. Then he dressed the Deity with fine clothing, ornaments, fragrant flower garlands and other paraphernalia for worship of the Lord. With great attention and devotion, Ambarish Maharaja first worshiped Lord Krishna, and then he satisfied all the brahmanas and guests who came to his palace. After giving away in charity 600 million well-decorated cows, the king sumptuously fed all the brahmanas. At that time, the astrologically auspicious moment for breaking his own fast drew near.

SCENE ONE

The palace of Ambarish Maharaja

SCENE ONE

The palace of Ambarish Maharaja

(The King is worshipping the Deity)

Brahmana 1: Maharaja Ambarish is such a perfect ruler of the people. Is it not a great wonder to see how devoted he is to the service of the Lord?

Brahmana 2: Indeed! His mind is always absorbed in meditating on the lotus feet of Krishna, and the words he speaks are always relating the glories of the Lord!

Brahmana 1: Yes! He uses his hands to cleanse the Lord's temple, and his ears are constantly hearing about the Lord. And His eyes—they are always seeing the beautiful Deity of Krishna!

Brahmana 2: His sense of touch is engaged in touching the bodies of the Lord's devotees, his nose in smelling the fragrance of Tulasi offered to the Lord, and his tongue in tasting maha-prasada. His legs... Hmmm...

Brahmana 1: His legs are always walking to the holy places and the temples of the Lord, and his head is always bowing down before the Lord!

Brahmana 2: Yes! And all the desires of Ambarish Maharaja are for serving the Lord's desires, twenty-four hours a day! He is a pure devotee of the Lord, and his only attachment is to pleasing the Lord and His devotees.

Brahmana 1: Surely we are the most fortunate men to be able to assist such a great Vaishnava in his service to Krishna! Come, the time of the breaking of his fast draws near... let us see if all preparations are ready. (they exit. Meanwhile, Durvasa Muni, who has been overhearing the conversation and becoming increasingly envious, comes to the front of the stage and begins to speak)

Durvasa: “Maharaja Ambarish”... Pah! Who does he think he is? He is just a puffed-up king, entangled in household affairs. Of course, he puts on a nice show before those who should be respected. And who should actually be honored, indeed worshipped? Me, of course, Durvasa Muni!!! I am the most powerful yogi in the world—a perfect, self-realized brahmana—and Ambarish, he is just a proud householder! Anyway, I'll teach him a lesson... yes... I'll smash him! And then they'll all bow down to me! (exits cackling. The brahmanas enter again as Ambarish Maharaja is just finishing his ceremonies)

Brahmana 1: Maharaja, you have perfectly worshiped the Supreme Lord, and all the brahmanas have been satisfied. It only remains for you to break your fast. At this very moment, all the stars are correctly positioned for this, but there is less than one hour before the auspicious time passes, so we advise you to break your fast immediately.

Ambarish: Indeed? I shall do so; but first I would just like to thank you for your kindness. O best of the twice born brahmanas, I am deeply indebted to you for assisting me so nicely on this occasion, as you have done on so many others.

Brahmana 2: Maharaja, it is a privilege and our great fortune that you have allowed us to do so.

Ambarish: You are kind, but in truth I am most fallen... a wretched householder absorbed in politics, diplomacy and other materialistic affairs. Without the merciful guidance of pure-hearted brahmanas like yourselves, who are all my spiritual masters, I surely would never have been blessed with such nectarean opportunities to serve Lord Krishna.

Brahmana 1: O Maharaja Ambarish, you are the most exalted of all devotees, and your freedom from pride only further proves your transcendental position. Only out of duty you act as a king of this world, but you are not in any way bound by material designations such as “householder” and “statesman” because you are completely fixed in your devotional service to the lord.

Ambarish: Come, let me honor the prasada of the Lord, and break the Ekadashi fast before the auspicious time has passed.

Servant: (entering suddenly) My Lord, I am sorry to disturb you! The great mystic yogi, Durvasa Muni, has just arrived at the palace!

Ambarish: What? Show him in immediately... such an elevated personality as Durvasa Muni must be properly honored.

Durvasa: Ah! Ambarish Maharaja!

Ambarish: Durvasa Muni! We are indeed honored by your presence!

Durvasa: Yes! It is the duty of the brahmanas to travel and enlighten the entangled householders; therefore, I decided to pay you a visit.

Ambarish: It is our good fortune! Please sit down and allow us to serve you! O great sage, would you kindly take some eatables?

Durvasa: I had intended to take lunch here...

Ambarish: Wonderful! (to servant) Bring the best feast you have ever prepared; nothing is too good for such a holy brahmana.

Durvasa: Wait! It is time for my noon prayers. First, I will take bath in the Yamuna river; then I will take lunch.

Ambarish: Oh yes, of course! We will have everything ready for you on your return. (Durvasa Muni gets up and exits)

Brahmana 1: This is completely unexpected! Why has Durvasa Muni suddenly appeared?

Ambarish: Never mind, he is a great brahmana and a powerful yogi. As king I must show him proper respects.

Brahmana 2: But this creates a dilemma for you, Maharaja. As you know, it is against religious principles to break a fast before your guest has eaten.

Ambarish: Yes, of course, I shall simply wait until he returns and take prasada with him.

Brahmana 1: But the auspicious time has almost passed. If you do not break your Ekadashi fast very soon, then there will be a flaw in the observance of the regulative principles.

Ambarish: Hmmm, yes. If I break my fast now it will be an offense against Durvasa Muni... but if I do not break fast now, then I will be transgressing the religious principles. A dilemma, indeed...

Brahmana 2: Time is running out!

Ambarish: Krishna's mercy! I have an idea. My dear brahmanas—if one drinks water, isn't that considered to break the fast and also to not break the fast?

Brahmana 1: Why, yes! If you drink a little water, Maharaja, it will be sufficient to break the Ekadashi fast, and at the same time will not break the rules of etiquette in regard to receiving a brahmana.

Brahmana 2: It is a perfect solution. Come, Maharaja, take some water without delay, for the time is auspicious. (Maharaja Ambarish takes some water; a few moments later Durvasa Muni enters)

Ambarish: Oh, my dear sage, you have bathed so soon! Please sit down! Everything is ready. I will just have the prasada brought...

Durvasa: Ambarish, do you take me for a fool?

Ambarish: Oh... I am sorry, have I offended you in any way?

Durvasa: Do you not know that I have mystic powers? I know what goes on in distant places, and even in peoples' minds.

Ambarish: I do not understand...

Durvasa: Alas! Just see the behavior of this cruel man! He is not a devotee of Lord Vishnu! He is a puffed-up rascal, and being too proud of his material opulence and aristocratic position, he considers himself God! Look how he has broken the religious principles! Ambarish Maharaja, you invited me here as a guest, but instead of feeding me, you yourself have eaten first! You fool, you have offended me... Now I shall teach you a lesson you will never forget! Raaaargh! (Durvasa Muni in a fit of anger pulls out a bunch of hair from his head and throws it to the ground. By his mystic power a huge fiery demon is created, who comes towards Ambarish Maharaja to kill him. But Maharaja Ambarish does not even move slightly. At that moment, the Lord's divine weapon, the Sudarshana Chakra appears and burns the demon to ashes, then comes towards Durvasa Muni. Durvasa Muni exits in great haste)

Narrator: The fiery demon created by Durvasa Muni was burnt to ashes by the Sudarshana Chakra, the personal weapon of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus Maharaja Ambarish, being a surrendered servant of the Lord, was saved. This Sudarshana disc, which is the most powerful of all weapons, is employed by the Lord to kill sinful and dangerous demons who threaten the Lord's devotees, and even Durvasa Muni could only flee in fear from that disc. Flying at the speed of mind, Durvasa Muni travelled all over the planet, trying to escape the burning heat of the Sudarshana Chakra. Through forests and mountains, and even into the depths of the ocean he fled, but wherever he went, he was immediately followed by the unbearable fire of that divine weapon. Then, by his mystic power, Durvasa Muni left the earth's atmosphere and flew into outer space, seeking shelter on the higher planets. But even the demigods on the heavenly planets were unable to afford any shelter to that fearful brahmana. Finally, in great anxiety, Durvasa Muni approached the topmost planet in the universe—Satya-loka, where the chief of all the demigods, Lord Brahma, resides.

SCENE TWO

The planet of Lord Brahma

SCENE TWO

The planet of Lord Brahma

(Durvasa Muni rushes in and kneels at Brahma's feet)

Durvasa: O my Lord, O Lord Brahma... please, you must help me, otherwise my life is finished!!!

Brahma: (after a short silence) When the time comes for the material world to end, the entire universe, along with all the living entities, including myself, is vanquished by a flick of Lord Vishnu's eyebrows. We are not independent. As demigods, we simply follow the orders of the Supreme Lord. And even I, Lord Brahma, though I am the engineer of the whole creation, bow down my head to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without whose grace I am able to do nothing.

Durvasa: You mean... you cannot help me?

Brahma: No... even if I wanted to, I could not help you.

Durvasa: Then I am doomed! But wait—I will go to Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva, who is even more powerful than Lord Brahma. Surely, he will give me shelter... ah! I feel the heat... I must run!!!

SCENE THREE

Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva

SCENE THREE

Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva

(Durvasa Muni runs in and falls at Lord Shiva's feet)

Durvasa: Lord Shiva!... O Mahadeva!... O Bhuta-natha!... O Greatest of demigods!... O Lord of Darkness!

Shiva: Durvasa Muni, do you want something from me?

Durvasa: My Lord, I am being pursued by the blazing disc of Lord Vishnu—please... please save me!!!

Shiva: Past, present, and future are known to me, yet I am still bound by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord Vishnu. I may be deluded with the misconception of my own greatness, but after all, what is this universe, over which I have some small influence? It is but one tiny universe, like a mustard seed

amongst millions of others, wherein so many countless Shivas and Brahmas reside. My dear son, if you want relief, you should simply approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Go to Him, for He will certainly be kind enough to bestow all good fortune upon you.

Durvasa: Approach Lord Vishnu?

Shiva: Yes!

Durvasa: (begins to feel the heat of Sudarshana coming) Oh! All right! I shall go at once!

SCENE FOUR

The spiritual world

SCENE FOUR

The spiritual world

Narrator: Unable to find shelter even on Lord Shiva's planet, Durvasa Muni penetrated the eight-fold layers of the universe and entered the spiritual planet known as Vaikuntha, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Narayana, resides with his eternal consort, the Goddess of fortune. (Durvasa Muni enters, falls prostrate before Lord Narayana)

Durvasa: O infallible Lord, protector of the entire universe! I am a great offender, but please, please be merciful to me! O my Lord, You are the Supreme Controller, but out of ignorance I have offended Your most dear devotee. Kindly save me from the reaction of this offense.

Narayana: Although I am considered to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, actually I am not at all independent!

Durvasa: What?!

Narayana: I am completely under the control of My devotees, due to being obliged by their pure love for Me!

Durvasa: But how is that possible?

Narayana: Because My pure devotees have given up everything simply to serve Me—their homes, wives, husbands, children, riches, and even their bodily comfort—how can I give up such devotees at any time? Indeed, just as a chaste woman brings her gentle husband under her control by service, My pure devotees, who are equal to everyone and completely attached to Me, bring Me under their full control. The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of My pure devotees. They know nothing else but Me, and I know

nothing else but them. What to speak of My pure devotees, even those who are devotees of My pure devotees are very, very dear to Me. O brahmana, please hear My advice. Austerity and learning are certainly auspicious, but when acquired by one who is not gentle, they are most dangerous. Out of envy, you have offended Maharaja Ambarish, and thus your mind has become your greatest enemy. Therefore you should go to him without a moment's delay. I wish you all good fortune. If you can satisfy Maharaja Ambarish, then there will be peace for you. (Durvasa Muni exits, followed by the Chakra)

SCENE FIVE

The palace of Ambarish Maharaja

SCENE FIVE

The palace of Ambarish Maharaja

(Durvasa Muni enters and falls at the feet of Ambarish Maharaja)

Durvasa: My dear Maharaja Ambarish, please forgive my offenses! I am so fallen.. please help me! Please save me... I have been fleeing the most fearsome Sudarshana Chakra for an entire year!

Ambarish: O Sudarshana Chakra, you are fire, you are sun and you are moon; you are water, earth and sky, and you are the air; you are the maintainer of the entire universe and you are Sudarshana, the original vision of the Lord. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto you. Please be merciful to Durvasa Muni, and if I have accumulated any pious activities, or if the Supreme Lord is pleased with me in any way, I wish that this brahmana be freed from the pain of being burned! (Sudarshana Chakra turns away and leaves Durvasa Muni)

Durvasa: O Maharaja Ambarish, you have saved my life! You are so merciful, for in spite of my horrible offenses, you have prayed for my good fortune, and therefore I am indebted to you.

Ambarish: My dear brahmana, I deserve no credit for deliverance—everything has happened by the mercy of the Lord. Come now, please sit down and I will bring you sumptuous prasadam. (Ambarish Maharaja sits Durvasa Muni down on his own throne and then exits to get prasadam)

Durvasa: Today, I have experienced the greatness of the devotees of the Lord's devotee!

Brahmana 1: Yes, there is nothing in the three worlds which is superior to the association of a pure devotee, who is free from all vice. Maharaja Ambarish is certainly one such jewel amongst pure devotees!

Brahmana 2: Yes, indeed. Maharaja Ambarish is endowed with such good qualities of purity and humility... why, he has even fasted from grains for one whole year, since you were here, considering himself to have committed an offense! (Maharaja Ambarish enters with prasada)

Ambarish: Here is the prasada. I hope it is to your satisfaction!

Durvasa: I am satisfied... by your grace, I am fully satisfied! (takes plate and rises, inviting Ambarish Maharaja to sit down instead)

Ambarish: But...

Durvasa: Come now, I have made you fast too long already. Sit down and take prasada! I insist! Maharaja Ambarish, I thought you were an ordinary human being, and out of foolish arrogance I tried to punish you. I have certainly learned my lesson, and now I understand that you are the most exalted devotee of the Lord. Simply by seeing you, touching your lotus feet and talking with you, I have become greatly pleased... and obliged to you. Surely your glories and spotless character will be praised throughout the entire three worlds forevermore. Indeed, I myself will begin to do so at once. By taking your leave, Maharaja, I will now go and travel throughout the universe to preach the glories of the Lord's pure devotees.

Narrator: Thus, Durvasa Muni left the palace and, travelling through the skyways, he continuously glorified Maharaja Ambarish. Thereafter, being endowed with all transcendental qualities, Ambarish Maharaja perfectly executed his devotional service to the Lord. After some time, to set an ideal example, he gave up his kingdom and opulence and went to the forest to concentrate his mind fully on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna.

The Çrémad-Bhägavatam gives the following benediction: Anyone who hears this narration will be liberated in this very lifetime, but one who describes or even thinks about the glorious activities of Maharaja Ambarish certainly becomes a pure devotee of the Lord.

The End

The Appearance Of King Prithu

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Fourth Canto, Chapters 14 & 15

The Appearance Of King Prithu

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Fourth Canto, Chapters 14 & 15

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CAST: Narrator, King Anga, 2 Brahmanas, 2 Citizens, Servant, Queen Sunitha, Vena, Bahuka, Dacoit.

Narrator: In the Vedic social system, the king was seen as a representative of Lord Narayana Himself, and it was his duty to protect the citizens and lead them on the path of godly life. If, for some reason, the king did not do this properly, then the brahmanas and sages would occasionally interfere in such political events to set matters right, although strictly speaking, this is not their duty. One example of this was seen in the story of King Anga and his son Vena, which led to the appearance of the Supreme Lord Vishnu as an empowered incarnation in the form of King Prithu. The great King Anga, who was a most pious and religious man, once arranged for the performance of a sacrifice known as the ashvamedha yajna, at which all the most expert brahmanas were present.

SCENE ONE

The Arena of Sacrifice

SCENE ONE

The Arena of Sacrifice

(The brahmanas are performing the sacrifice, but are becoming anxious as it does not seem to be working)

Brahmana 1: O worthy Anga, know for certain that the performance of this sacrifice is without flaw or fault of any kind. But though the clarified butter has been properly offered into the sacred fire, the demigods do not accept these oblations.

Anga: But what is the reason for this? O best of the brahmanas, you whose knowledge is without limit, please tell me why this great endeavor brings no success.

Brahmana 1: O king, we know that the paraphernalia to perform the sacrifice is well collected by you with great faith and care and is not polluted. Our chanting of the Vedic hymns also is not deficient in any way because all the brahmanas and priests present here are expert and are properly executing the performances. I see no cause for the demigods to feel in any way insulted or neglected, but still they do not accept their shares. I do not know why this is so.

Anga: O my lords, who is there within the three worlds with greater wisdom than yourselves? Where else am I to find shelter? What offense have I committed that the great demigods, although invited, do not take part in this sacrifice or accept their share? (the priests and brahmanas confer)

Brahmana 2: My dear Anga, most pious king, certainly in this life you have not performed any sinful activities even within your mind, but the fact that you have

no son, despite all your qualifications. indicates that in a previous lifetime you did not live completely in accordance with scriptural injunction; for this reason, the demigods will not partake of your offering. But if you pray to the Supreme Lord Hari for a son and perform a sacrifice for that purpose, certainly He will fulfill your desire. For when He is invited, all the other demigods will accompany Him. We wish all good fortune unto you, and therefore we will offer oblations unto Lord Vishnu so that you may achieve His mercy. (they continue the sacrifice, and an effulgent personality appears from the fire carrying a golden pot, which he offers to Anga)

Anga: My lords, this must surely be a great boon offered to me by the Supreme Lord, due to your mercy upon me. Now, with your permission, I will partake of this sweet rice which I have received from the sacrificial fire.

Brahmana 1: My dear king, may you always receive the Lord's mercy! Now partake of this foodstuff, which will surely bestow all good fortune upon you. (Anga eats some of the rice and offers some to his wife)

Brahmana 2: (aside to Brahmana 1) There is danger here, for this woman is the daughter of death personified. I fear the king is too liberal.

Brahmana 1: (aside to Brahmana 2) You speak the truth, but now it is too late. Let us not disturb the mind of the king until the outcome of these events becomes more apparent.

Anga: Now, great sages, I am greatly indebted to you, for by your mercy this sacrifice has been successfully completed, even though the demigods were previously not willing to accept the oblations. Now, whatever wealth or property I own is yours—take villages, cows and riches as you desire; I can never repay my debt to you.

Brahmana 1: My dear king, please be careful in your actions, for the outcome of the sacrifice is still uncertain, and I cannot say whether or not it will be auspicious.

Anga: Holy sirs, I am dependent on your mercy.

SCENE TWO

The Palace of King Anga

SCENE TWO

The Palace of King Anga

Anga: For so long I have been waiting for this moment, when my son will be born. What is the use of my ruling over this kingdom if I have no son to reign after me? But now, by the mercy of Lord Vishnu and the brahmanas, surely my wife will bring forth a male child. Is this the perfection, the peace for which I am longing?

Many nights I have laid awake lamenting and grieving that I had no son. Then I would have given all my vast possessions for such a boon, yet the Lord has given this gift freely to even the lowest of men. So now the time has come, and all of us stand as the lowest slaves to act only as our fates decree.

Servant: My lord, surely all the gods are with you now, for although you had given up hope, they have fulfilled all your desires—O mighty Anga, your son is born.

Anga: O Vishnu, you are indeed the savior of your devotees, and now you have delivered me from an ocean of lamentation. I offer my obeisances unto You. (to Servant) Please go at once and send for those saintly brahmanas, whose spiritual strength and mercy has now delivered me. Offer my prostrate obeisances unto them and beg them to come and offer their blessings to the child.

Servant: My Lord, I will. (he exits)

Anga: At last, as if a great burden has been removed from my shoulders, I feel relief from all the anxiety that so oppressed me. Now I can live peacefully, knowing that all will not turn to chaos when I die. Surely this is indeed absolute perfection. (Servant enters with Brahmanas) Holy sirs, beloved of the Supreme Lord, how can I ever repay you for this great benediction that you have bestowed upon me? Your mercy is all-pervading and therefore it reaches even the fallen kings such as myself, who delight only in worldly things.

Brahmana 1: O noble Anga, know that everything moves in accord with the desire of the Supreme Lord, Vishnu. This is His will, and whether it be for good or for evil, should be accepted as such.

Anga: Why do you say “for evil”? How could there be anything inauspicious in today's events?

Brahmana 2: My dear King, although your wife, Sunitha, is the most chaste and elevated lady, still she is the daughter of death personified. When you offered her the beverage produced from the sacrificial fire, you acted most rashly. Therefore, the signs indicate that your son will prove to be a burden to the earth.

Anga: (to Brahmana 1) O my lord, surely this cannot be true! Please set my heart at rest by nullifying this fearful prophesy.

Brahmana 1: Anga, you are a most pious, devoted man, and therefore I am certain that the Lord will indeed deliver you from all your anxiety and lamentation. But always remember that there is no way of understanding how He will arrange things for us. At times, it may even seem that He is against us. But, if you surrender to His will and take shelter of His lotus feet, then the dualities of this temporary world will never harm you. Let your son be called Vena, and may the mercy of Sri Vishnu be upon you at all times. (Brahmanas exit. Anga offers obeisances)

SCENE THREE

A Park near the Palace

SCENE THREE

A Park near the Palace

(A deer is seen, followed by the young Vena. He shoots the deer)

Vena: Ha ha! Another victim for me! (kicks the deer) Pretty little creature, aren't you?—or rather weren't you? Ha ha ha! Now then, let's see what else there is to kill in these woods. (two citizens enter, talking)

Citizen 1: Oh, it's Vena, our cruel prince! Just see how he takes such pleasure inflicting pain on poor harmless creatures! How is it possible that such a personality has taken birth in the family of our most pious king, Anga?

Citizen 2: Sunitha, the queen, is the daughter of death personified, and now, therefore, a bad influence has entered the royal lineage. Just see the result! So many times the king has chastised Vena for his evil ways, but this boy is a law unto himself and will accept no instruction! I do not like to think what would happen if he were ever to become king!

Citizen 1: Such a thing is impossible! Do not even mention it! It would never be allowed!

Citizen 2: Well, the noble Anga is now an old man and has no other sons to succeed him. Who can say what will be the outcome of these events? (Vena comes forward)

Vena: Do you old fools have nothing better to do than to stand around gossiping all day? Don't you see that I'm hunting here? Now be off with you before I become angry!

Citizen 1: Sir, you have no right to speak to us in such an insulting fashion!

Citizen 2: Indeed, this is an outrage!

Vena: Do you not know that I am Vena, the son of the king, himself? You have angered me and you will regret your arrogance! (he starts to beat them) There! Now perhaps you will learn a little humility before your betters! (he beats Citizen 1 unconscious, Citizen 2 runs off) Ha ha ha, everyone runs away at the very sound of my name, and those that don't will regret it, just like this old fool! (King Anga and Citizen 2 enter)

Anga: Vena, how much longer must I tolerate these outrages? Previously you have killed young boys of your own age, and now you turn your wickedness against the

very citizens that it is our duty to protect. I warn you, Vena, I will have you most severely beaten for this!

Vena: My dear father, I think it would be better for you not to threaten me. You are an old man and no longer possess your former strength. You have had me beaten before, but did it have any effect? Of course not, I am not so weak-hearted that I can be subdued that easily. Be careful, father, don't try my patience too far!

Anga: Oh, what is to become of me? I am so unfortunate to have such a wicked son, who is a constant source of pain and grief to me. For so long I yearned for a son, praying and longing for such a benediction—but now that my wish is fulfilled, it is simply a further cause of anxiety. Surely, the whole nature of this material world can be seen in this. There is no pleasure here; all is simply frustration.

Citizen 2: My lord, do not grieve. Indeed, my heart breaks to see you so afflicted, for you have ever been the most dear friend and protector of your citizens.

Anga: Thank you for your kindness. Now, please take your companion home and be sure he is properly cared for.

Citizen 2: Yes, my lord.

Anga: What is left for me now? My life has slipped by me in a moment, like a cloud drifting across the sky. It seems but a few days since I was a young man, filled with the joy and hope of youth. How subtly time betrays us, wooing us like a false lover, with promises of delights to come, while silently plundering every last thing we possess. Nothing will be left to us, not one single thing. I was thinking that to have a bad son like Vena was the end of all my happiness and content, but now I see that in fact it is a great benediction. A good noble son will bind one to the attachments of family life and thus keep one entangled in the falsities of this material world; but for me there is nothing. The Lord in His mercy has stripped me of everything except my devotion to Him. Now is the time to cast off this cloak of darkness. Now is the time to go beyond the illusory dream of birth and death. Now is the time to seek the Lord who loves me more than I can ever imagine. I will take shelter of Him alone.

SCENE FOUR

In the City

SCENE FOUR

In the City

Citizen 1: It is certain, I assure you. The king has left us, given up all interest in the world and abandoned all his wealth and position.

Citizen 2: Can this truly be so? Why would King Anga do such a thing—leaving the citizens at the mercy of all the rogues and thieves in the country? I cannot believe that such a disaster could have befallen us!

Citizen 1: I am certain that this is due to his son, Vena. The king's heart has been broken by Vena's rascaldom and misbehavior, and now it must be that he has put aside all thoughts of his realm and citizens. I am greatly afraid of what will now become of us!

Citizen 2: We have searched everywhere and can find no trace of him. Now it is certain the pious Anga has given up all attachment to worldly things and taken to the life of a mendicant. I am certain that we shall never see him again.

Citizen 1: But what is to become of us? Our livelihoods depend on the protection of the king, and are we now to be left at the mercy of the thieves and rogues who are always waiting for the opportunity to plunder our wealth and livelihood?

Citizen 2: The future is black indeed, but look—here is Bhrigu and the other sages. Surely they can guide us in our difficulty. (Brahmanas enter) O Brahmanas, surely you know that King Anga has given up the throne and gone to the forest to live the life of a mendicant. We are greatly afraid of the evil-minded people who will take advantage of this situation to plunder and oppress the honest citizens of the state.

Brahmana 1: Is it certain that the king will not return to give the protection to those who are dependent upon him?

Citizen 1: Holy sir, no trace of him can be found, even though we have searched near and far.

Brahmana 1: It is indeed a time of great distress for the people in general when there is no strong government to protect them from sinful people. It is essential that there be a king to rule over the state, a strong king who can instill fear into the hearts of all those who seek to deviate from the path of righteousness. Under the circumstances, it seems that there is no alternative but to make Vena the king. (exclamations of lament) There is no alternative, there must be a strong king to rule the state.

Citizen 1: But not Vena, the gods forbid that he should ever come into such a position. Why, there is no doubt that he is the most dangerous of all the villains who are threatening us.

Citizen 2: Surely there must be some other way—what future is there for us, under the rule of such a demonic king?

Brahmana 2: There is no other way—already hosts of dacoits are gathering around the city waiting for an opportunity to attack. Unless Vena is made king without further delay, everything will be devastated.

Citizen 1: My lords, most noble sages, is it possible that you yourselves could become the protectors of the state? Everyone knows that your spiritual potency is far greater than that of any weapon.

Brahmana 2: This is not possible, for we are brahmanas and therefore we must act as such. If we were perform the function of kshatriyas, then the whole social order would be put into ruin. There is no other way. Despite his bad character, it is inevitable that Vena must become king.

Citizen 1: My friends, do not discuss the matter any further. The saintly brahmanas have given their decision, and our duty is simply to obey. Therefore send at once for Sunitha, the mother of Vena, and let us hear her decision. (Citizen 2 exits) Certainly the situation is very unfortunate, but if we simply have faith in the words of the holy sages, then I am sure that everything will be happily resolved. (Citizen 2 re-enters with Sunitha) Noble lady, wife of saintly king Anga, due to the dangerous situation which threatens all of us, these elevated saints, who understand things far beyond the vision of common men, have decided that your son, Vena, should be crowned king.

Sunitha: Although in the past it is true that Vena has displayed evil qualities, I think that if he were to be made king, the importance of the position would change his heart and he would become a noble man, suitable in every way to rule over the kingdom. Therefore, I will certainly give my permission for him to be made king.

Citizen 1: Yes, there may well be truth in this. Send for Vena at once. (Citizen 2 exits) Our only hope now is that Vena will protect us as well as his father did; certainly he possesses all the attributes of a great warrior. (Citizen 2 re-enters with Vena) O lord Vena, it has been decided by the sages that you should be our king. I pray that you will be as noble a ruler as was your father, Anga.

Brahmana 1: Here is the crown that was worn by your father. Do not take this honor lightly, O Vena. (he goes to place the crown on Vena's head, but Vena snatches it away and crown himself)

Vena: Now, at last, I have the power which is rightfully mine! Kneel before me, your king, and let me see your humility! (citizens kneel, but brahmanas remain standing) What! Your pride is limitless. Simply because of your learning you arrogantly strut here and there in a vain show, a gross delusion! You forget so easily that you depend upon us, the kshatriyas, for your protection!

Brahmana 2: Such words from the king are intolerable! He should be destroyed at once.

Brahmana 1: Wait, the time is not ripe for such action. Vena, you are a foolish man of small intelligence, but since this great honor has been bestowed upon you, you

must act accordingly and protect the citizens from the attacks of rogues and thieves.

Vena: How dare you insult me in this way and then seek to instruct me in my duty! Your time will come, old grey-beards, and then we will see how much your learning avails you. As for the rogues and villains, like everyone else they will flee in fear at the very sound of my name, for I am Vena the king, and my power is limitless!

Brahmana 1: That which is rotten can never become wholesome, and Vena's heart, which is as black as the darkest regions of hell, will never be pure.

Brahmana 2: He will have to be destroyed!

Brahmana 1: The time is not yet ripe. Let us return to our ashrams to perform a ritual and thereby satisfy the Lord. Who knows what He intends for us? These events are hard to foretell.

Brahmana 2: Noble sages, like a dark cloud, the influence of King Vena spreads across the land, bringing calamity and misfortune to all men. Though he has certainly chastised all the thieves and dacoits, he himself has now become an even greater source of distress.

Brahmana 1: He has forbidden the performance of any sacrifice or religious ceremony. On his order, the people are no longer allowed to offer charity or clarified butter.

Brahmana 2: It is intolerable. For the welfare of both the sages and common men, he must be destroyed. It was simply because of an emergency that he was made king, although not qualified. Evil is his very way of life and cruelty his second nature. He must be destroyed.

Brahmana 1: It is not our duty to interfere in such political dealings, but since this Vena has forbidden our sacrificial performances, we are forced to act. Let us approach him with sweet words and see if it is still not possible to change his heart. If we address him with wisdom and logic, surely it is possible to soften his anger, even as a serpent may be charmed by mantras.

Brahmana 2: Very well, we will approach him, but I am not hopeful, for Vena is more dangerous than any serpent.

SCENE FIVE

Vena's Palace

SCENE FIVE

Vena's Palace

Brahmana 1: Dear king, we have come to give you good advice. Please hear us with great attention, and thus your life-span, opulence, strength and reputation will increase. Those who live by religious principles are certainly promoted to heavenly planets at death, where they enjoy unlimited pleasure.

Brahmana 2: Therefore, you should not cause the people in general to deviate from the path of righteousness. A king who rules piously, protecting the citizens from rogues, will certainly be happy in this world and in the next.

Brahmana 1: If the king arranges for the worship of Sri Vishnu, certainly the Lord will be pleased with him, and when the Lord is pleased, all good fortune will come to you.

Vena: How much more of your impudence must I be forced to hear? You talk of Lord Vishnu, but you do not understand that in the state the king is actually the Supreme Lord. The king is the embodiment of all gods, but simply due to your envy of me you neglect to offer me the proper paraphernalia for worship, and therefore you are condemned. There is no one superior to me, and therefore you must kneel before me like worthless beggars.

Brahmana 2: Enough! Now you have even dared to insult the Supreme Lord and therefore your death is certain!

Brahmana 1: He must die!

Brahmana 2: His life is finished!

Vena: You dare to threaten me, old grey-beards! Now certainly I will kill you!

Brahmana 1: Your soul is damned, O cursed king,
your black heart we will rend!

The Lord of death waits at your door —
your life is at an end!

Brahmana 2: Our anger strikes, no more
can you your worthless soul defend!

The Lord of death waits at your door —
your life is at an end!

Brahmana 1: O cruel Vena, now be gone,

to the depths of hell descend!

The Lord of death waits at your door —

your life is at an end!

(they curse him and he dies)

Brahmana 2: Now let us depart and return to the forest, it is unfortunate that we have had to become involved in the affairs of the state.

Brahmana 1: But what will become of the citizens? We have removed one source of misery in the form of this wretched King Vena, but now who will give them protection?

Brahmana 2: It is not proper for us to become entangled in political affairs. Let us return to the forest and continue to perform sacrifices to satisfy the Supreme Lord.

Sunitha: O Vena, my son, now what is to become of me? Due to your sinful acts, you have been destroyed by the wrath of the great sages, and now I am left here alone. You are gone, but in order to keep your memory fresh in my heart, I will preserve your body by using oils and mantras. All hail to you, Vena, only son of the great king Anga!

SCENE SIX

Outside the City

SCENE SIX

Outside the City

Citizen 2: All is finished, our city ransacked and burned. Everywhere thieves are plundering the wealth and homes of the citizens, and there is no king to save us! We must flee for our lives! Surely it was better to have a king like Vena than no king at all! (Citizen 1 runs in, dishevelled)

Citizen 1: Quickly leave this place, the dacoits have seized everything I possess, my house is destroyed, my family scattered! You must leave this place, for if you are captured they will have no mercy upon you! (Brahmana 1 enters at rear and then Dacoit enters dragging a woman. Citizen 2 runs off) My wife! O sir, have you no mercy? You have plundered all my wealth, but please do not harm my wife—leave her, I beg you.

Dacoit: Ho ho! Be quiet, you old wretch! I take whatever I desire! Come on, woman!

Citizen 1: I forbid you! You cannot act in such a way! (he tries to free his wife, but Dacoit throws him down and stabs him)

Dacoit: I warned you. When there is no king, we can do as we please! (shouting to others offstage) Come on, let's away! We have plundered enough here!

Brahmana 1: (coming forward) This is intolerable! How can we stand unmoved while there is such suffering in the world? The situation is impossible; only the Lord Himself can provide a solution! Come, lofty sages, you must use your mystic power. Come to me once more. (sound of wind and thunder. Enter Brahmana 2) Sir, we can no longer ignore the plight of the citizens; a final solution must be found.

Brahmana 2: O most powerful sages, we will do as you direct us.

Brahmana 1: (touches body of Citizen 1 and revives him) Please bring Queen Sunitha here. (Citizen 1 exits) In my heart it has been revealed that the Lord intends to appear as an empowered incarnation in the family of King Anga. Since Vena was his only descendant, the Lord must appear from his body. (Citizen 1 re-enters with Sunitha) Queen Sunitha, I have heard that you preserved the body of your son Vena by oils and mantras. Now please let us take possession of this body so that we may use it for the good of all the citizens.

Sunitha: My Lords, in times of emergency such as this, we are all dependent upon your mercy. Therefore I will not try to hinder your instructions.

Brahmana 1: Please bring here the body of Vena, for a new king is required, and he should be of the family of King Anga, the great devotee of the Lord. (the citizens go out and return bearing the body of Vena) Now, let us churn his thighs and chant the proper mantras. (they churn Vena's thighs and a small dark person—Bahuka—appears from his body)

Bahuka: Holy sirs, what would you have me do?

Brahmana 1: Please, sit down here. This is Bahuka, born of Vena's sinful activities. Now we may bring forth a completely pure being from his body. (they churn Vena's arms, and Prithu and Archi appear from his body)

Brahmana 2: Surely this is none other than the Supreme Lord Himself and His eternal consort, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune!

Brahmana 1: All glories to Maharaja Prithu, and his wife Archi, who have appeared to remove the burden of the earth!

Brahmana 2: Now, out of His causeless mercy, the Lord has appeared to protect the righteous and annihilate the miscreants. While King Prithu rules the earth, all the rogues and thieves will hide in terror, there will be no famine or pestilence on

earth, and all the citizens ruled by Him will come to understand the spiritual values of life! Prithu Maharaja ki jai! (kirtan)

The End

The Appearance Of Lord Varaha

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Third Canto, Chapter 13

The Appearance Of Lord Varaha

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Third Canto, Chapter 13

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CAST: Narrator, Marichi, Brahmana, Manu, Lord Brahma, Varuna, Commander, Hiranyaksha, Lord Varaha.

Narrator: Many thousands of years ago, the light of the sun and moon suddenly became darkened, so all the demigods went, in great fear, to Lord Brahma and asked him to explain the cause of that darkness. Lord Brahma explained to them that, once upon a time, the four Kumaras wanted to visit the Supreme Lord Narayana in Vaikuntha, the spiritual world. These four Kumaras are great self-realized devotees and are the oldest of all living creatures, and yet by their mystic power they always appear to be small boys of five years old. When they tried to enter the gate of Vaikuntha, however, they were stopped by two gate-keepers named Jaya and Vijaya, who mistook them for ordinary small boys. The Kumaras become angry because they wanted very much to see Lord Narayana, and thus they cursed the doorkeepers. When the Lord heard of this, He approved this curse, for an offense to the lotus feet of a devotee is the greatest offense one can commit.

By the Lord's will, Jaya and Vijaya fell down from Vaikuntha and entered the womb of Diti, destined to be born as the two most powerful demons ever known—Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha! These two demons were so powerful that even while they were in their mother's womb, the sun and moon become darkened by their prowess! And what to speak of other demigods, even Lord Indra, king of the heavens, hid in fear of them. But of the two demonic brothers, the demigods were especially afraid of Hiranyaksha, who traveled all over the universe challenging everyone, and destroying all who got in his way.

SCENE ONE

Outside the palace of Lord Brahma

SCENE ONE

Outside the palace of Lord Brahma

(Marichi and other brahmanas discuss the catastrophe)

Marichi: This demon, Hiranyaksha, is so powerful that even Lord Brahma is powerless to stop him!

Brahmana: But something must be done to save the earth. This Hiranyaksha has extracted all the gold from the planet, and because of this the earth has fallen out of its orbit, plunging into the great body of water at the bottom of the universe!

Marichi: Patience! Sri Manu has already gone to Lord Brahma with this problem. We must wait to hear what he has to say.

Brahmana: Look, here they come now. (Lord Brahma and Sri Manu enter, conversing)

Manu: So you see, my Lord, the earth is in a precarious position, and somehow it must be rescued. I am sure it can be done by your endeavor, and by the mercy of the Supreme Lord!

Brahma: Yes, something must be done, but what can be done by we who are engaged in the matter of creation? It is best to let the Almighty Lord direct us. (suddenly, Lord Brahma becomes struck with wonder) Manu, did you see that? A small creature just flew out of my nostril! Look—there it is, up in the sky!

Manu: It's getting bigger!

Brahma: What in the three worlds is it? It looks like a great boar, but it is so beautiful!

Brahmana: Yes, it is wonderful!

Marichi: It must be a manifestation of the material energy...

Brahma: No, surely this is an avatara of Lord Vishnu, come to save the earth from this catastrophe! (Varaha roars and everyone gasps. Brahma confirms:) Yes, it is the Supreme Lord Himself, appearing in the form of a wonderful boar!

Everyone: Jai! All glories to Lord Boar! (Lord Varaha roars again) Jai! All glories to Lord Boar! Haribol! Haribol! (they bow down and offer their obeisances)

Narrator: The fabulous creature was indeed an avatara of Vishnu, known as Lord Varaha, who had appeared in the form of a wonderful boar. The Supreme Lord is unlimited and transcendental, and therefore He can appear in any form He likes just for His pleasure pastimes. Before diving into the Garbhodaka ocean to save the earth. Lord Varaha flew into the sky, slashing the air with His tail, His hard hairs quivering and His very glance appearing luminous. As the Lord scattered the clouds with His hoofs and His glittering white tusks, all the residents of the upper

planets praised the Lord by chanting Vedic hymns—and in reply, the Lord Boar roared tumultuously, enlivening the devotees and filling the demons with fear.

Meanwhile, the demon Hiranyaksha, having conquered space, was busy conquering the ocean. For years he smote the wind-tossed waves with his iron mace and struck terror into the hearts of all the aquatic creatures. Finally he approached Vibhavari, the capital of the watery kingdom, where Varuna, god of the ocean, resides.

SCENE TWO

In the palace of Varuna

SCENE TWO

In the palace of Varuna

(Varuna sits on his throne. His military commander enters in great anxiety)

Commander: O Lord Varuna! The demon Hiranyaksha is now at our gates! O great god of the ocean, you are the mightiest of warriors, only you can stop this fiend!

Varuna: No, not I! Hiranyaksha cannot be checked by any mortal creature in the universe!

Commander: Then we are doomed!

Varuna: Fear not, my friend! Have faith in the Supreme Lord—He will not leave us for lost!

(demonic roaring is heard from offstage. Commander runs in fear. Hiranyaksha enters, falls at Varuna's feet and challenges him mockingly)

Hiranyaksha: O Varuna! You are the most powerful of rulers and have crushed the might of many arrogant warriors! O great lord, please fight with me!

Varuna: (subduing his anger) My dear Hiranyaksha, I have grown too old for combat; besides, you are so powerful that there is no one in the three worlds who can challenge you!

Hiranyaksha: (rising and moving towards Varuna) Yes! Ha ha ha!

Varuna: No one, that is, except...

Hiranyaksha: (stopping in his tracks) Yes?

Varuna: Lord Vishnu!

Hiranyaksha: Lord who? Ha ha ha!

Varuna: You laugh too soon, Hiranyaksha... Lord Vishnu has already appeared within this universe for your destruction. Upon reaching Him, your pride will be smashed and you will lie down on the field of battle, surrounded by dogs and vultures!

Hiranyaksha: (curling up with laughter) O Varuna, you jest with me! Ha ha ha! Don't you know? No one can kill me—I am immortal! Ha ha ha ha! Where is this Lord Vishnu? (spits) I will kill Him! (he exits, roaring madly)

Narrator: Lord Varaha had penetrated the Garbhodaka ocean with His hoofs, which were like sharpened arrows, and He had found out the limits of that ocean, although it was unlimited. Seeing the earth lying as it was in the beginning of creation, and picking it up very gently on His tusks, Lord Boar took it out of the water and flew into space. Meanwhile, the demon Hiranyaksha searched everywhere for the whereabouts of Lord Varaha, for out of belligerent madness he wished to challenge the Lord in battle.

SCENE THREE

By the Garbhodaka Ocean

SCENE THREE

By the Garbhodaka Ocean

Hiranyaksha: Where is this Lord Vishnu? (hears the sound of Lord Varaha's voice. Looks into the sky) Oh, here He is—an amphibious beast! You big foolish animal, today I shall enliven my kinsmen by killing You! Ha ha ha ha! Do You hear me? When Your skull is smashed by my mace, the sages and devotees who engage in Your devotional service will cease to exist! Ha ha ha ha! (Lord Varaha roars again and then appears on stage)

Varaha: Indeed, we are creatures of the jungle, and we enjoy searching after dogs like you. One who is free from material entanglement does not fear insults of the kind in which you are indulging, because you are bound by the laws of death! Now give up your nonsensical talk—you are supposed to be the commander of many soldiers, so now you better take prompt steps to overthrow Me!

Narrator: (continues narration as actors act it out) Hiranyaksha trembles with rage, and hissing indignantly he deals a blow with his mace, but Lord Varaha moves slightly and dodges the blow. Hiranyaksha begins to brandish his mace around, but Lord Varaha strikes him to the right of his brow. The demon, however, protects himself by a maneuver of his own mace. In this way, the demon and the Lord begin striking each other angrily. At this point, the demigods appear in the sky and view the battle from their flower airplanes. The Lord aims His mace at Hiranyaksha, but His mace is struck by the demon and slips from His hand. The

demigods cry out in alarm, but the demon does not strike the Lord because He is unarmed. Lord Varaha becomes even angrier because of this and invokes His Sudarshana disc as the demigods cheer. Hiranyaksha begins to hiss like a serpent and shouts, “You are slain!” as he aims his mace at the Lord, who playfully knocks it down with His left foot. Lord Varaha then says, “Take up your weapon and try again!”

The demon picks up his mace and hurls it at the Lord, roaring loudly. The Lord then catches it with ease and offers it back to the demon. Hiranyaksha, feeling humiliated, takes a trident and hurls it at the Lord, who tears it apart with His Sudarshana disc. The demon, enraged, roars loudly and strikes his hard fist against the Lord's chest and disappears. Then he begins to employ many magic tricks against the Lord—fierce winds, hailstorms, volleys of stones, rains of puss, blood, bones and stool. The Lord however dispels all this with His disc. Hiranyaksha appears again, and from behind tries to crush the Lord with his arms, but the Lord slips out of his arms. Hiranyaksha then begins to strike the Lord with his fists, but the Lord then slaps him indifferently at the base of the ear. Hiranyaksha begins to wheel, eyeballs bulging, and with his arms and legs broken, he falls down dead.

Demigods: Jai! Jai! All glories to Lord Varaha! (Lord Varaha roars and walks off stage, victoriously)

Brahma: Oh, what a blessed death! To die by the lotus hand of the Supreme Lord Himself... All glories to Lord Varaha who has assumed the form of a boar to save the world! This demon was a torment to the three worlds, but he has been slain by You so that we may live peacefully in devotion to Your lotus feet. Lord Varaha ki Jai! Lord Varaha ki Jai! Lord Varaha ki Jai! (kirtan)

The End

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#1)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2 - 9

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#1)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2 - 9

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CAST: Narrator, Hiranyakashipu, Guard, Minister, Kayadhu Devi, Indra, Demigod, Servant, Narada, Amarka, Sanda, Lord Vishnu, Prahlada, 3 Boys—Mudha, Tamaguna and Rajaguna, Lord Nrisimhadeva.

Narrator: Many, many thousands of years ago, the two doorkeepers of the spiritual world of Vaikuntha, Jaya and Vijaya, obstructed passage to the boy sages, the four Kumaras, because they did not understand their elevated position. Hence

the four Kumaras cursed them to fall down into the deep dark well of the material world. The curse was that they would have to take three births in a demonic family. Thus hurtling down through the layers of the material universe—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—Jaya and Vijaya entered into the womb of Diti and became the twin sons of Kashyapa Muni, who named them Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu. Once, Hiranyaksha was causing havoc in the universe, and thus he knocked planet Earth out of its orbit. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Vishnu appeared in the form of a boar, retrieved the Earth, and put it back in its original place. This, of course, disturbed the mind of Hiranyaksha to such an extent that he later challenged the Lord to combat with him. A wonderful fight took place in which all the denizens of heaven waited as the Lord ultimately struck the demon down and killed him.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Hiranyakashipu is in his court in the heavenly planets, enjoying music, dance and wine. Guard bursts in)

Guard: My dear lord, I am so sorry to intrude on your entertainment, but I have terrible news to tell you!

Hiranya: Guard, do you not see me having a good time? Why do you come and disturb me while we are all enjoying ourselves? The news can wait until later. Let the dancing and music continue! (claps, music starts)

Guard: But please—my dear king, it is most urgent that you hear this news now!

Hiranya: Alright, if you want to persist. Tell me the news that can't wait until later.

Guard: But, I think we should discuss this in private.

Hiranya: Oh, really! First you disturb my enjoyment, then you insult all who surround me. They are all part of one nice big family.

Guard: Alright then—today your great brother, Hiranyaksha, was killed in combat!

Hiranya: What, my brother killed? Who? Where? When? Why? Do you know what you are talking about? Do you not know that absolutely no one can defeat my dear brother, who is so powerful that all the demigods fear him! Have you got the right information? If not, I'll have you killed for causing this disturbance!

Guard: No, no, it is true! I am completely sure about it! The information I relate to you about your brother's death is absolutely true!

Hiranya: Tell me what happened. Who did he fight with? Who could have had the strength to kill my brother?

Guard: It was Vishnu, our...

Hiranya: Vishnu!!!

Guard: Yes, Vishnu our arch-enemy, who always sides with the useless demigods.

Hiranya: Well, what happened?

Guard: Your brother Hiranyaksha had knocked the Earth out of its orbit.

Hiranya: Good!

Guard: Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and retrieved the Earth, putting it back to its original position. Your brother charged Vishnu, but as fate would have it, your brother lost the fight.

Hiranya: Tricks, tricks, tricks of Vishnu. He killed my brother by those useless tricks of His. In a fair combat, my brother would have won, without a doubt. This Vishnu has taken the side of the demigods, our enemies. But the battle is not over yet. No, my dear friend Vishnu, the battle is not over yet. I will avenge my brother's death. I will offer Vishnu's blood to my brother! He was always very fond of drinking blood. And only then will I be satisfied!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Hiranya: O Danavas, Daityas, and all my assistants, listen to me carefully now! I want you to go to the Earth planet and disturb all the sacrifices meant for Vishnu! Kill all the brahmanas, kill the cows! Wherever charity and the Vedas reside, destroy those places! No signs of Vishnu worship should be found anywhere! Go immediately and destroy, destroy, destroy this Vedic culture which the brahmanas and Vishnu are so proud of! Go, go, go!!!

Minister: I will arrange for our army to go at once.

Hiranya: Yes, I must avenge my brother. When there is no offering made to Vishnu by the brahmanas' sacrifices, then He will dry up and die of starvation, just as by ceasing to water the plant, one kills the plant. In the same manner, I will kill Vishnu and avenge my brother. When Vishnu dies, the whole of the Vedic culture and brahmanas will collapse. Ha ha ha! In the meantime, I shall go to perform austerities to gain more power. Then I will be unmatched in my power, fame and glory. No one will be able to defeat me. With Vishnu and the brahmanas dead, I shall rule the universe according to the way I want!

Kayadhu: I can't believe our Hiranyaksha has been killed. (she cries)

Hiranya: My dear wife, do not lament so for the death of a great hero, for a hero's death in front of his enemy is glorious and desirable. Sometimes travellers meet together in a place and drink, enjoy and talk, but then they continue on to their destinations. In the same manner, we meet together, form a family, and later we are separated. The spirit soul is eternal and never dies. So what use is your lamenting for a soul passing from its body? In a bewildered state we accept the body, mind, self, family and kinsmen as one's own self, but this is just a misconception. So, do not identify with this body. Come, let us go. I have much work to do.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: Meanwhile, in the valley of Mandara hill, Hiranyakashipu began to perform severe austerities by standing on the tips of his toes, keeping his arms stretched upwards. This position was extremely difficult, but he accepted it as a means of attaining perfection. Because he stood there for so long, ants had built an anthill on top of him, and plants and creepers grew around him. From his body there emanated an effulgent light. (Hiranyakashipu on stage. Demigods appear)

Indra: Look at this Hiranyakashipu! He has performed such severe austerities!

Demigod: He has been standing there for so long, his flesh has been eaten away. Look at the ants—they built a hill around him!

Indra: He has been bitten constantly by ants, but still he does not move an inch. He is maintaining his life on just air alone. He has not moved despite difficulties such as rain, sun, wind, storms, hunger and thirst.

Demigod: We can feel the intense heat coming from his body!

Indra: Look at that smoke coming out of his body. This is completely amazing. It is covering the entire globe with its mountains and islands, which are trembling.

Demigod: Yes, just look at all the stars, they are falling from the sky because of his austerities. All directions are blazing hot.

Indra: We cannot even remain in our own residence or planets because of these disturbances. We must do something about it.

Demigod: Let us approach Lord Brahma and explain our pitiful situation.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Demigods travel to Satyaloka)

Indra: My dear Lord Brahma, you are the protector of all the residents within this universe, of which you are the maintainer. Thus we have come to take shelter of you. Please help us.

Demigod: Yes, this demon Hiranyakashipu is performing such incredible austerities that it is very difficult for us to stay in our own planets.

Indra: If you think it proper, kindly stop these disturbances, which are meant to destroy everything, before all your subjects are annihilated.

Demigod: There is so much heat everywhere. You must do something to save the whole universe before this Hiranyakashipu destroys it.

Indra: Although you know his plan, please kindly listen to us. Since you acquired your own exalted post by means of severe austerity, meditation and trance, thus he is thinking along the same lines.

Demigod: Yes, he says if you can get your post by performing austerities, then he, too, will perform these kinds of austerities to get Brahma's post.

Indra: His plan is to change all the religious principles and make a mockery out of all the brahmanas, demigods and cows.

Demigod: Yes, my dear Lord Brahma, this is certainly most inauspicious that he should curse the brahmanas, cows, demigods and Vedic culture.

Indra: My dear Lord, let me say just this one thing. Your post as Lord Brahma is certainly most auspicious for everyone, especially the cows, brahmanas and all of us. But unfortunately, if this demon takes over and occupies your seat, then you can be sure that all of this will be lost. (silence)

Brahma: My dear demigods, I hear your pleas with great attention. I am quite aware of all the disturbances caused by this demon Hiranyakashipu. I am also aware of the fact that he wishes to occupy my post. Therefore I shall go and see him. (Brahma leaves)

Demigod: Lord Brahma will sort him out. Come Indrajai, let us return to our abodes.

Indra: No, no, I still am not fully satisfied. We must do something to help the situation. I wonder what we can do.

Demigod: I tell you what we can do...

Indra: What?

Demigod: Nothing, nothing, whatsoever. We are so powerless against the mighty Hiranyakashipu.

Indra: Yes, quite true, I agree with you. But still, my mind tells me we can do something.

Demigod: What then, what?

Indra: (laughs) Yes, I've got it. I've got just the thing we can do.

Demigod: What? Tell me.

Indra: Quite simple. Come, let us make haste, lest we lose valuable time.

Demigod: Yes, but tell me what we have to do.

Indra: Listen carefully, what we have to do is this: when Hiranyakashipu is still out there in the forest, all we have to do is...

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Hiranyakashipu full of creepers)

Brahma: Now where could he be? I can't see him anywhere. I am sure I was told he was here. Ah, what on earth is this? No, I can't believe it's true. It can't be possible. It can't be. O son of Kashyapa Muni, please get up. You are now perfect in your performance of austerities. Therefore I will give you a benediction. You may ask me whatever you want and I shall try to fulfill your desire. (comes forward) I am very astonished to see your endurance. In spite of being eaten and bitten by all kinds of worms and insects, you are keeping your life airs circulating within your bones. Certainly this is wonderful. Even saintly persons like Bhrigu could not perform such severe austerities. Nor will anyone else ever be able to do so. Who within the three worlds could sustain his life without drinking or eating for one hundred celestial years? I am certainly conquered by your austerities. (throws sacred water, Hiranyakashipu's body is restored)

Hiranya: Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto you, the supreme being within this universe. You are the creator of these cosmic manifestations. Because of you, everything exists. You are the origin of life within this universe. You are known as Hiranyagarbha, the reservoir of the universe. Let me thus offer my humble obeisances unto you, who are the supreme personality of godhead. My dear Brahma, grant me this one boon—that I will never die.

Brahma: My dear Hiranyakashipu, although it may seem that I will never die, according to human calculation, actually I do have to meet mortal death when my time of governing this universe is finished.

Hiranya: Then grant me this—that I will never meet death by any of the living beings you have created.

Brahma: Yes, of course.

Hiranya: Then grant me this—that I will never die during the night or during the day.

Brahma: Yes.

Hiranya: Then grant me this—that I will never be killed inside or outside of any place, grant me no rival in this universe. Grant me power over all the living entities, grant me all fame and fortune. Grant me all mystic powers. Grant me this. I want all of this right now. Grant me all of this, Brahma.

Brahma: Yes, now that is everything. (leaves)

Hiranya: Now I am immortal!!! Now, everyone—worship me, Hiranyakashipu, for I'm the Supreme God in the universe! No one can challenge my powers. I am the most powerful man in the universe!

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

Narrator: So, having decided to try to gain the upper hand over Hiranyakashipu, Indra and the demigods went to the palace of Hiranyakashipu while he was performing his austerities in the forest.

Kayadhu: Oh, what shall I do? My husband has gone away for such a long time now! I have heard from our spies that Indra and his army are coming to attack us while we have no leader to guide us!

Servant: Do not worry. You should not react in this way, especially as you are pregnant. Now put your mind at ease. (loud knocking on door)

Kayadhu: Oh, no. What's that noise? It looks like Indra is coming!

Servant: Come on, let's make our way around the back. They will never catch us.

Kayadhu: I fear greatly for my child! Come, let us go. (Indra and company bursts in)

Indra: You will go nowhere, my lady, for I want to send your child to Yama-loka.

Servant: How dare you speak like that to the queen!

Indra: Out of my way, you imbecile, lest I send you also with the child to visit Yama-loka. Come here, you can make things easy for yourself and others.

Kayadhu: No! Help!

Narada: (chanting Hare Krishna maha-mantra) My dear demigods, what are you doing with this lady?

Indra: My dear Narada, please accept my humble obeisances. This lady is the wife of Hiranyakashipu. She is carrying within her womb the son of Hiranyakashipu, a snake who will be worse than his own father. So we are taking her until she gives birth to this heinous demon. Then we shall kill him and then let her go.

Narada: No, no, my dear demigods, you are greatly mistaken. Within her womb is a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Even if you tried to kill him, you cannot. His name is Prahlada Maharaja.

Indra: We are so sorry for this mistake. We shall return to our abode.

Narada: (to Kayadhu Devi) Please come to my ashram. There you will be much safer. I shall look after you until your husband returns from his austerities.

Kayadhu: Thank you so much.

Narada: Come, I have much knowledge to impart to your saintly son.

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

Demigod: Did you hear what happened to Hiranyakashipu?

Indra: Yes.

Demigod: Instead of helping us, Lord Brahma made the situation much worse by giving Hiranyakashipu all those benedictions.

Indra: Now this Hiranyakashipu is much more powerful than before. We are completely helpless against his invincible power.

Demigod: Why has Lord Brahma made him immortal? All our weapons will be of no use against him.

Indra: Even my mighty thunderbolt is of no avail against his might. I fear greatly that he will soon come and take my kingdom. (Hiranyakashipu boldly enters)

Hiranya: Well, fear not. If you hand over all your kingdom to me, you will be in peace.

Indra: What? Hiranyakashipu, you are back so soon?

Hiranya: Well, you didn't expect me to meditate forever, did you? Now get down from that throne. I am the supreme controller. I am the ruler of the universe. So I think it quite appropriate that I rule my subjects from your throne. Now get down from there!

Indra: Yes, at once.

Hiranya: Come here. Where do you think you are rushing off to? Now bow down to me, your king, or else feel the edge of my sword. You wretch, bend lower, that's better. You too, bend down! Now give me that crown. Good, good, I am very pleased with you, Indra. Yes, indeed I am. Now place this crown on my head and declare to everyone that I am now king of heaven. Go on.

Indra: I hereby declare that from henceforth, I give my entire kingdom over to Hiranyakashipu to rule. Are there any objections?

Hiranya: Good, good, that's what I like to see, a bit of submissiveness around here. Now listen to me, all you human beings, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Charanas, so-called saints, Manus, Yakshas, Rakshasas, ghosts, Bhutas and demons. From today onwards, I rule this universe. I make my own rules. There shall be no worship of Vishnu, no charity, no Vedic culture shall exist henceforth. No sacrifices are to be offered to Vishnu. I shall take all the shares of the sacrifices from now onwards. If by any chance anyone defies this order, he will have to meet with my sword. Everyone—worship me as the supreme god! Alright, you useless Indra, bring me some Soma-rasa.

Indra: But that cannot be allowed. It's only for those who have accrued many pious credits.

Hiranya: What did you say, servant Indra?

Indra: Only the demigods are fit... I mean to say, only you have the right to drink it!

Hiranya: (laughs) Go! (Indra brings the Soma and Hiranyakashipu drinks it, enjoying) Alright, you may go.

Narada: Jai Hiranyakashipu!

Hiranya: Ah, Narada Muni, welcome. Ah! My wife! Oh, who is this little boy?

Narada: He, my dear Hiranyakashipu, is your dear son, Prahlada. I have been looking after your wife and son.

Hiranya: My son, my son. Come here, let me touch you. I thank you, Narada. Guards, reward him!

Narada: Thank you, but no thank you. Jai Hiranyakashipu, Jai!

Hiranya: Come my child. Come to your father. You must feel proud to have a father like me. So I want the best for you, Prahlada. Come, sit with me on my newly accepted throne, which in due course of time will be yours. I want you to learn everything nicely so that when you take over my throne, you will be better than me—and you will be, you will be, just wait and see. You will inherit all my wealth, power, gold—my entire universal kingdom! Now, if this is to happen, we have to arrange a suitable education for you. The sons of my guru, Shukracharya—Amarka and Sanda—will be good enough to teach you the art of diplomacy and so forth. Guard, call Amarka and Sanda here at once.

Guard: Yes, sir!

Hiranya: Ah! Welcome, Amarka and Sanda!

Amarka & Sanda: Jai Hiranyakashipu! Of what service can we be to you?

Hiranya: Since you are the sons of my guru, I think it quite suitable that you teach my son, Prahlada. Give him the best education a child needs. I trust you will do a good job.

Amarka: Oh yes, we will do our best.

Hiranya: So off to school, Prahlada, and learn well the art of diplomacy.

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

Demigod: I feel completely depressed about this whole new ruling system. This Hiranyakashipu is too much!

Indra: You feel depressed? You? Ha! What about me? It's my kingdom he stole! My wealth, my women, my precious Soma-rasa!

Demigod: I can't believe Lord Brahma gave him all those benedictions! Why doesn't he give us these benedictions so we can fight with him?

Indra: Well, go and stand on your toes and then you might get it! Ah, what to do?

Demigod: He chastises everyone unnecessarily. Everyone is so fearful of him. Why, all the foods, grains, rains, all the life... only flourish due to fear of Hiranyakashipu.

Indra: Stop talking so much. You are driving me crazy!

Demigod: You are just angry because you lost your Soma-rasa. I know you, Indra, you just want to get that back.

Indra: Alright, alright, let's not quarrel amongst ourselves. I've got a good idea. Let us pray to Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He will help us, just as He has done so many times in the past.

Demigod: Yes.

Indra: We offer our respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vishnu, who is the well-wisher of His devotees. My dearest Lord, hear our prayer. We have been put into such a distressful condition because of the wicked demon Hiranyakashipu. Please free us from this terrible situation. Protect us, O Lord. Kindly dispose of this terrible demon, whose power is so great that only your Lordship can challenge it.

Vishnu: O best of learned persons, do not fear. I wish you all good fortune. I know about the activities of Hiranyakashipu, and I shall surely put a stop to him very soon. Please wait patiently until that time. One who is envious of the devotees, brahmanas, cows, Vedas, religious principles and Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will be doomed and destroyed without delay. When he teases the great devotee Prahlada, his own son, I shall kill him immediately, despite the benedictions of Lord Brahma.

Indra: My dear Lord, You are so kind upon us. Our obeisances are unto You forever. Come, let us go back to our abode. This Hiranyakashipu is as good as dead now.

SCENE NINE

SCENE NINE

Hiranya: Bring me some more Soma-rasa. I like this stuff very much.

Guard: But you had so much already!

Hiranya: I said bring it and let the music begin!

Guard: (claps) Music please. Dance!

Hiranya: Ah, my son Prahlada, come, come here to your father. Let us sit on the throne together. (Prahlada offers obeisances to father) Good boy. Now let me hear what you have learned from the teachers.

Prahlada: One should not mistake this body to last forever, but understand its temporary nature and its real purpose—which is to practice Krishna Consciousness and take shelter of Krishna by serving Him in pure devotion.

Hiranya: Hmm, hmm... What is this nonsense? You two teachers come here. This child's intelligence has been spoiled by the words of the enemy. You must ensure all protection is given to this boy at the gurukula so he will not be polluted any further by those devotees of Vishnu who might come there in disguise. Is that quite clear?

Teachers: Yes, sir!

Hiranya: Good. (he leaves)

Amarka: Now, my boy Prahlada, come here. Good boy. Do you not realize you nearly cost us our lives by uttering those words, Prahlada?

Sanda: Now where could you have possibly gotten those wild ideas from?

Amarka: Krishna Consciousness?

Sanda: Hmmm. Krishna Consciousness... Our enemies have been trying hard to convert you, but they won't succeed. We are really your friends.

Prahlada: How can you speak of “enemy” and “friend” when all this is external? Krishna Consciousness is the reality of life, and hence Krishna is really your true friend.

Sanda: What? How dare you say that, Prahlada? I shall beat this Krishna out of your head!

Amarka: No, no, no. How can you lift a stick to the son of Hiranyakashipu? Let us deal with him in a nice manner. Good boy, Prahlada, good boy... Come Prahlada, I've got some nice sweeties for you—gulabjamans, rasagullas, sandesh. Now just tell us where you have learned such things. Who is teaching you this nonsense that Krishna is our friend?

Sanda: Amarka, will you stop?

Amarka: No, you stop it. He nearly told us and you spoiled it! Now Prahlada, who were you going to say told you all these things?

Prahlada: If you cannot get off of this platform of “friend” and “enemy,” you will never realize Krishna.

Sanda: How dare you speak like that! You spoil our good name. We will just have to be more severe with you! Alright, let's start school again. Well, ring the bell, Amarka.

Amarka: Alright boys, I am going to ask you some questions. Please answer them correctly. Alright—Mahamudha, what is the goal of life?

Mahamudha: To have lots of sense gratification.

Sanda: And Tamaguna, what development is best?

Tamaguna: Development of economics.

Sanda: Good, good. Now at last we seem to be moving in the right direction. Alright Mahamudha, your turn again. What should one acquire?

Mahamudha: Lots and lots of money.

Sanda: Good boys! Alright Rajaguna, what do we do if someone comes in the way of our enjoyment?

Rajaguna: You kill them.

Sanda: Yes. Mahamudha, what association is best?

Mahamudha: Association with loose women.

Sanda: Alright, let us break for twenty minutes.

(Scene with kids drawing teachers' faces, etc.)

Sanda: Alright Prahlada, I think you must have learned a lot by now. We are proud of you. Smarten up and we will go and see your father and tell him the good news. He will be very proud of you.

SCENE TEN

SCENE TEN

(Hiranyakashipu and Minister talking)

Hiranya: So, all is going well?

Minister: All is fine. (mother brings son)

Hiranya: Good. Ah, Prahlada, my dear son, come to your father. (Prahlada offers obeisances) Now, tell me what is the best knowledge you have learned in school?

Prahlada: Shravanam kirtanam vishnoh, etc... Hearing and chanting about Vishnu, remembering Vishnu, serving Vishnu's lotus feet, worshiping Vishnu, offering prayers to Vishnu, becoming Vishnu's servant, becoming Vishnu's best friend, and surrendering all to Vishnu—these are the nine processes of devotional service. One who follows any of these nine processes is said to have the best knowledge.

Hiranya: You so-called teachers! O unqualified, most heinous sons of brahmanas. You have disobeyed my order and have taken shelter of the worst of enemies, Vishnu. You have taught this boy about devotional service. What nonsense is this? I shall chastise you for this!

Sanda: O enemy of Indra, whatever your son Pahlada has said has not been taught by us. His spontaneous devotional service has naturally developed in him. Give up your anger and do not accuse us unnecessarily.

Hiranya: You rascal Pahlada, most fallen of our family, if you did not receive this information from my teachers, then where did you get such rubbish from?

Pahlada: Because of your uncontrolled senses and addiction to the materialistic way of life, your love for Krishna will never be aroused. Only if you surrender to Krishna will you be able to understand.

Hiranya: Me—uncontrolled? Me—surrender to Krishna? I will never do that! I control everything. Everyone surrenders unto me. I am the most powerful man in the universe, and don't you ever forget it! Hmmm, but we'll just see how this Krishna of yours will save you from the jaws of death. Guards, kill this boy at once!

Guards: Yes, sir! (they attempt, but fail)

Hiranya: What's this? You can't kill him. Your weapons won't affect him? Alright, then throw him off that cliff.

Guards: Yes, sir!

Kayadhu: (grabs Pahlada) No, no, don't do this to your own son! Let me speak to him! Please leave our child alone. He is only five years old! Wait until he grows up!

Hiranya: No, no, do not call him my son! He is a disgrace to our family! He has glorified Vishnu, killer of my brother, and thus he is our enemy and must be killed at once! Now, let him go! Guard, take this woman away from here!

Kayadhu: No, no, my son Pahlada!

Hiranya: Take Pahlada away and throw him off the cliff. (guards go, but come back soon)

Guard: It was no use at all.

Hiranya: What do you mean?

Guard: Well, we threw him off the cliff and then went down to see the dead body, but there he was, happily chanting as if nothing had happened.

Hiranya: Throw him, then, in the pit of fire.

Guard: Alright. (goes and comes back) No use.

Hiranya: Not affected by fire? It can't be true, it can't be. What's going on here? I can't believe this is true. Not affected by fire? Alright, bring a big pot of ghee here and I will boil him. (guards bring pot) Alright Prahlada, boil, boil, boil until you're tender enough to eat. What's this? Not affected by hot ghee? Throw him in front of the elephants—let them squeeze the life out of little Prahlada.

Guard: Alright. No use! The elephant just lifted the boy as he chanted and took him for a joy ride!

Hiranya: Then throw him in the pit of snakes!

Guard: Yes, at once! (after a few minutes the guard returns) It's no good! The snakes just ignored him!

Hiranya: Take him to a place where it is extremely cold, windy and rainy. (guard rushes off but returns in a while)

Guard: No good, no good!

Hiranya: What's going on here? He is not affected by fire, wind, rain, hot ghee, snakes and elephants! It can't be true! It can't be true! Bring him here! So, Prahlada, I see you have some powers. Yes, you have some powers. Maybe, you would like to take lunch with your father? Come, sit down. Bring some food and lots of poison... enough poison to kill hundreds of men. (puts in poison) Here Prahlada, eat!

Prahlada: But first I must offer it to Krishna; only then can I partake of His remnants.

Hiranya: Never mind this Krishna, just eat, just eat.

Prahlada: (offers the food) Hare Krishna.

Hiranya: It can't be true! Not even affected by poison! I put enough poison in that food to kill hundreds of men. Despite all my endeavors to kill him, he cannot be killed! He is not affected in the least by these treacheries and abominable actions. Even though he is only a mere child, he is completely fearless. He never forgets this Krishna at all. I can see this boy's strength is unlimited, for he has not gotten a single scar despite all my efforts to hurt him. He seems to be immortal. Because of my enmity towards him, I shall die. Oh, what shall I do?!

Sanda: O lord, we know that when you simply move your eyebrows, all the commanders of various planets are most afraid. You have conquered this whole world. So do not be full of sadness or anxiety. As for Prahlada, he is only a boy. Do not take him seriously. We shall try our best to impart good instructions to him.

Hiranya: Alright then, please try your best, as this child disturbs my mind.

Sanda: Come Prahlada, break is over. Back to school. Ah, that's a good boy!

SCENE ELEVEN

SCENE ELEVEN

Sanda: Alright boys, let's copy this down. The best way to make progress in life is to focus on economic development and to have lots of sense gratification. So I hope this is all very clear. Prahlada, have you copied this down?

Prahlada: Hmmm.

Sanda: Alright, good. We will have a break and I will be right back. This is good news, Prahlada. At last you are beginning to learn how to bend a few rules. Otherwise we'd have to bend your arm this time. After break, we shall discuss "so much wealth I have today, and so much more wealth I will have tomorrow." Alright, be good now, Prahlada.

Friend: Come on, Prahlada, let's play.

Prahlada: My dear demonic friends, do not waste your human form of life by playing around all day. You should engage in serving Krishna. This human form of life is very rare.

Friend: But we are only five years old, Prahlada!

Prahlada: Yes, but we should start at an early age. Otherwise most of our life will be wasted on sense gratification.

Friend: But Prahlada, we want to play. We can serve Krishna when we grow up.

Prahlada: Yes, I know you want to play. But learn how to play for Krishna.

Friend: How can we play with Krishna? We can't even see Him.

Prahlada: My dear non-believers, it is so easy. Just by chanting Hare Krishna and dancing, we can play and serve Krishna. (they have a kirtan)

Sanda: What is going on in here? Prahlada, is this your doing? You have been polluting these innocent boys by giving them Krishna Consciousness. How dare you! Come, let's go and see your father about this!

SCENE TWELVE

SCENE TWELVE

Sanda: Hiranyakashipu... your son is teaching love of Krishna in our school! We just can't control him!

Hiranya: What? O most impudent, O disrupter of the family, lowest among mankind, you have violated my power to rule and therefore you are an ignorant fool. Today I shall send you to the place of Yamaraja. You know when I am angry the entire universe shakes in great fear. By whose power has a rascal like you become so impudent that you appear fearless and overstep my power to rule?

Prahlada: My dear demonic father, my source of power is the same as yours—Lord Krishna. Now give up your demonic mentality and accept Krishna as your master.

Hiranya: You dare minimize my power? You think you can control your mind better than I? Then you should prepare to meet your death. You always talk of this Krishna being superior to me. Then tell me, where is this Krishna? Where is He? For I wish to see Him.

Prahlada: Krishna is everywhere, father.

Hiranya: Everywhere? Is He here? Is He here? Is He here?

Prahlada: Yes, father.

Hiranya: Is He in this pillar?

Prahlada: Yes, father.

Hiranya: Then I shall kill Him! (strikes pillar with sword, a growl is heard!)

Narrator: Out from the pillar burst Lord Nrisimhadeva, the half-man and half-lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He was anger personified! (FIGHT SCENE. After a long struggle, Lord Nrisimhadeva takes Hiranyakashipu across His lap and tears out his intestines. Prahlada and the demigods are hesitant to approach Lord Nrisimhadeva because He is so angry)

Brahma: My dear Lord, You are unlimited and possess unlimited powers. No one can estimate Your power. Long were our hearts full of fear because of this demon; but You, my Lord, are so kind towards Your devotees that You have protected us and killed this demon, despite the benedictions I gave him. You did not violate any of them. He was killed neither in the day or night but at twilight, neither inside or outside but in the doorway, neither by man or beast or demigod but by half-man half-lion, neither in the sky, the sea or the air but in Your lap. No weapons were used, only Your transcendental nails—thus You have kept all the boons intact.

Indra: You are our deliverer and protector. Our shares of sacrifices, which are actually Yours, have been recovered from this demon by You. We were in constant

fear of this demon, but You have eliminated our fears by killing him. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

Demigod: This form of Yours is truly very powerful, fearsome and rare. Never before have we seen such a wonderful form of Nrisimhadeva. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You over and over again!

Brahma: Prahlada, Lord Nrisimhadeva is extremely angry at your father. Please go forward and appease Him.

Prahlada: O Lord Nrisimhadeva! How can I offer my prayers to You, when I am born of a demonic family? If Lord Brahma could not satisfy You, I have no chance if I simply offer my humble obeisances unto this wonderful form of Nrisimhadeva! My only request is that Your Lordship please give salvation to my father.

(Namaste prayers by Gandharvas and kirtan)

The End

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#2)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2 - 9

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#2)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2 - 9

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Hiranyakashipu, Ilvala, Paka, 2 Demigods, Kayadhu Devi, Narada Muni, Lord Brahma, Prahlada, Prahlada's Friend, Sanda, Amarka, Demons, Lord Nrisimhadeva.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: Once, long ago, after the great demon Hiranyaksha was killed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a boar, the demon's brother, Hiranyakashipu, spoke to his family members and friends with great anger:

Hiranya: My heart is full of rage, and in my mind lives only the thought of destroying the demigods and killing Krishna, who has killed my dear brother! My brother liked to suck and drink blood, and I will please him by cutting off Krishna's head! Yes, I will do that! When I see pools of blood flowing from Krishna's neck after I chop His head off, I will know that my brother is pleased... and then I will also be pleased! So, my friends, what do you think? You, Ilvala, you have no love for the demigods!

Ilvala: Hiranyakashipu, you know I will always support you, especially against Krishna and the demigods!

Hiranya: And you, Paka?

Paka: Seeing your eyes blaze in anger like this fills me with great joy! What is your plan? How will you kill Krishna and destroy His devotees, the demigods?

Hiranya: You and I know that pleasing Krishna is the basis of religion. My aim is to kill Krishna, take over and destroy the kingdom of God—and then, what will there be left of religion? Who will there be to please?

Ilvala: Yes, and with Krishna dead, all the demigods will automatically die, just as leaves dry up when the roots of a tree are cut!

Paka: I am impressed, Hiranyakashipu. As I said, I am all for killing, especially the demigods. How will we go about our scheme?

Hiranya: My plan is simple and will not fail. I will take care of the killing of Krishna, and your parts will begin on earth. Set fires, kill all the holy men, kill the cows, cut down the trees, and... but especially kill the holy men and slaughter the cows! With those who desire to satisfy God dead, no sacrifices will be offered... and then, the demigods who depend on sacrifices will die! (demons cheer)

Ilvala: Excellent, excellent! With the fire of your determination and the smoke of your anger, we will certainly choke the demigods and kill Krishna! Tell me more of your plan to kill Krishna.

Paka: We should certainly not underestimate Krishna; remember, He has somehow killed your powerful brother.

Hiranya: I have not forgotten that Krishna killed my brother—don't worry about that! My plan is to become all-powerful and deathless, and to become the king of the entire universe! I am leaving now for the valley of Mandara Hill. There I will perform austerities to obtain all that I desire!

While I am away, I am leaving you in charge of my kingdom. Take special care of my queen, Kayadhu, for she is pregnant with my child. With the powers I will gain from these austerities, even Krishna will have to fall down before me. It will not be long before the universe is ours!

Ilvala: (to audience) I am fond of just the kind of activities that Hiranyakashipu has recommended. For I, too, like Hiranyaksha, enjoy sucking blood and eating flesh! I and Paka, along with Shambara and many other demons, will go to the earth where we will set fires everywhere—in the gardens, the villages and the forests! We will destroy the government houses, break down bridges, chop down trees and bring terror to the hearts of people in general!

Narrator: Thus the demons, delighting in the mood of Hiranyakashipu's envy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, left for the earth and began directing their powers against all living beings. While these terrible acts were going on, the demigods gathered all their strength and attacked the kingdom of Hiranyakashipu in a great battle, defeating the demons and killing them one after another. The demons, fearing for their lives, fled from the palace of their master, Hiranyakashipu, leaving his pregnant Queen Kayadhu unprotected.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Kayadhu: Oh, what should I do? The demigods, our enemies, are coming, and no one is here to protect me! I cannot flee, I am pregnant... I wish Hiranyakashipu was here! I must hide.

Demigod 1: This is the throne room. Let us enter! Come quickly!

Demigod 2: There is a woman here! Who are you, Mother?

Kayadhu: I am Kayadhu, the wife of Hiranyakashipu.

Demigod 2: So you are wife of that wasp... that killer!

Demigod 1: Look! She is pregnant with the child of Hiranyakashipu.

Demigod 2: We must kill that child! He will be just like his father.

Kayadhu: No, no, no, don't kill my child! Please! (Narada Muni suddenly enters)

Narada: Stop!

Demigod 1: It is Narada Muni! (they offer obeisances)

Demigod 2: We were not going to hurt her, sage Narada, for she is a woman; but within her womb is the seed of the great demon, Hiranyakashipu.

Demigod 1: We must stop this evil seed from bearing its evil fruit. We will hold the mother until the child is born, and then kill the child!

Narada: The child within this women's womb is pure and sinless. He is a great devotee of Krishna.

Demigod 1: Even though his father is the most envious demon?

Narada: Yes, although his father is Hiranyakashipu, the boy will be a powerful devotee. Because of his being a devotee, even if you try to kill the child, you will not be able to do it, for he is protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Demigod 2: Narada, you are the sage amongst sages and your knowledge is perfect. We will release this wife of Hiranyakashipu unto your protection.

Narrator: Narada Muni, being compassionate, brought Kayadhu, the wife of Hiranyakashipu, to his ashram and invited her to stay until the return of her husband. There, Narada Muni assured her of all protection. Kayadhu served the sage with great devotion and Narada, in turn, instructed the wife of the king of demons in pure religion—love and service to God. Having achieved Krishna Consciousness within the womb of his mother, the unborn devotee, whose name was Prahlada, heard the instructions of Narada Muni and did not forget them. Thus Prahlada became a great devotee of Lord Krishna.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Narrator: Meanwhile, Hiranyakashipu journeyed to Mandara Hill and began to practice austerities. Hiranyakashipu's powers grew and grew until a great fire came from his head, and thus smoke and fire spread throughout the sky. The demigods were very frightened of the increased power of Hiranyakashipu, so they asked Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, to stop Hiranyakashipu from increasing his power any further. When Lord Brahma arrived at Mandara Hill to stop Hiranyakashipu, he could not find him, as the body of Hiranyakashipu had been eaten by ants and was completely covered with vegetation.

Brahma: At the request of the demigods, I have come to stop Hiranyakashipu—but where is he? I cannot find him. Oh, now I see him—his body has been covered by an ant hill! Ants and worms have bitten him and eaten his flesh until only his bones remain, but he is still alive! Some Ganges water from my water pot will restore Hiranyakashipu's body... he will be made young and strong, strong enough to withstand the striking of a thunderbolt!

Hiranya: O, Lord Brahma has arrived! O my Lord, you are the origin of life within this material world, and you are the cause of everything! (offers obeisances)

Brahma: Please get up, Hiranyakashipu. I am amazed at your determination! What you have done is impossible for anyone—even great sages and saints.

Hiranya: Thank you for taking note of my humble attempt to please you.

Brahma: Because of your amazing determination, I have decided that I will give you anything you desire.

Hiranya: So, you are prepared to give anything I desire? Well, I want to be immortal! I wish never to die!!!

Brahma: Hiranyakashipu, I belong to the world of the demigods, but even I must die!

Hiranya: (aside) I expected to become deathless by the powers of Lord Brahma, but he has said that even he must die! How, then, will he give me freedom from death? But I am very intelligent; I will become deathless in another way, by carefully getting certain powers that Lord Brahma can give me. (to Lord Brahma) Then let me not meet death from any living being created by you.

Brahma: That, Hiranyakashipu, I can grant you.

Hiranya: Grant me that I can't be killed either in the daytime or night, neither on the ground, nor in the sky, neither inside nor outside!

Brahma: Granted.

Hiranya: Grant me that I can't be killed by either human or animal, neither by a weapon, a snake, nor a demigod nor a demon.

Brahma: Granted.

Hiranya: Grant me that I will have no equal, and that only I will be the supreme Lord. Grant me that I will have all glory and all power.

Brahma: To obtain all these powers that you are asking for is very difficult, but I am granting them all to you. (Lord Brahma leaves)

Hiranya: I cannot be killed, and I am all-powerful within the universe! Who can kill me? I am the strongest—I am deathless—and now I am remembering the death of my younger brother, Hiranyaksha, caused by Krishna! Mark my words, I will conquer the entire universe... and ultimately kill Krishna!

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

Narrator: Taking full advantage of the powers that he had received from Lord Brahma, Hiranyakashipu became the ruler of the entire universe. He took over all the planetary systems and began living in the palace of Indra, the King of heaven, and began enjoying all the riches of heaven. He remained always drunk on wines and liquor, and therefore his eyes were always rolling. All of the demigods, except for Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, personally brought offerings to appease him, and still Hiranyakashipu treated the demigods, his natural enemies, very cruelly. In spite of his unequalled opulence, Hiranyakashipu had neither

happiness nor peace. Hiranyakashipu became more and more proud and therefore had no regard for the laws of God.

Hiranyakashipu had four wonderful sons, of whom Prahlada was the best. Because Prahlada was a pure devotee of the Lord, he was decorated with all good qualities. From the very beginning of his childhood, Prahlada was not interested in childish toys, for he was always thinking of Krishna. (enter Prahlada)

Prahlada: (walks around chanting Hare Krishna) I can't understand why everyone doesn't give their hearts to Krishna. That is real pleasure! Sometimes, when I can't see Krishna, I call out really loud—KRISHNA! Then, when I see Him again, I dance in great happiness! Sometimes, when I feel the touch of the Lord's lotus hands... I don't say a word... and when I really miss Krishna, I cry and cry and cry. (chants Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare)

Friend: Prahlada, catch! Let's go out and play!

Prahlada: Thanks, but I am pretty busy right now.

Friend: I know how we can really have fun. I just got a new flower airplane! Wanna come for a ride?

Prahlada: Maybe later.

Friend: Look, Prahlada, I'm so strong! When I grow up and I'm bigger I'm going to smash our enemies, the demigods, just like this: UUHHH! (he stomps on the ground)

Prahlada: Friends, enemies! No. Everyone is a servant of God!

Friend: Prahlada, where have you learned this? You go to the same school as us, you learn to hate the demigods just as we do from our teachers, Sanda and Amarka. Aren't you afraid?

Prahlada: No, I'm not afraid.

Friend: Why aren't you afraid?

Prahlada: Because Krishna is my dearest friend.

Friend: Maybe you're not frightened, but I am. Here comes your father, Hiranyakashipu. See you later, Prahlada!

Hiranya: How are you, Prahlada? Did you go to school today? (he takes Prahlada on his lap) You're getting big. Soon you'll be a mighty warrior like your father. Is your schoolwork going well? Are you doing your homework? My dear son, you are

going to school, and I'm not, right? Well, why not teach me what you think is the best out of all the instructions that you have heard?

Prahlada: My dear father, best of the demons—I have learned from my spiritual master that if one wants to be successful in life, one should understand that he is part and parcel of Krishna, and his greatest pleasure should be to center his life around serving God. If we don't do that, we will rot in this material world, and one's life will be a complete failure.

Hiranya: What! The intelligence of my own son has been spoiled and filled with crazy ideas! My enemies, the demigods, must be poisoning this poor boy! It was probably that Krishna! Sanda, Amarka, O teachers of this poor boy, come immediately! (they scurry in, fearfully)

Sanda: Yes, Hiranyakashipu?

Amarka: How can we serve you?

Hiranya: This boy Prahlada has been poisoned.

Sanda: Really! I'll call a doctor!

Amarka: Quick—lie down and put your feet up.

Hiranya: No, you fools, you misunderstand me. His poisoning is of the mind.

Sanda: What do you mean?

Hiranya: Krishna is my enemy, and I have banned all followers of Krishna from seeing my son and the other innocent boys!

Sanda: We didn't allow any devotees to speak to Prahlada. We especially protected him and kept him away from saintly people.

Hiranya: Somehow you have failed... and I am becoming increasingly angry that my son is being brainwashed by the enemy! I will never let Krishna fulfill His plan to brainwash my son, never!

Sanda: What can we do about it, O greatest of demons?

Hiranya: My dear demons, give complete protection to this boy at the school so that he won't be further influenced by devotees. Be careful, because they might come in disguise—they sometimes wear wigs!

Sanda: Yes, yes!

Amarka: Certainly, certainly!

Hiranya: Be very careful. I will check back in a few weeks to see how he is doing.

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

Sanda: Dear Prahlada...

Amarka: Our dear, dear, dear student Prahlada...

Sanda: You are such a nice boy.

Amarka: And so intelligent, too.

Sanda: We know that you never tell lies.

Amarka: Just speak the truth.

Sanda: The other boys in school aren't crazy like you. You don't smoke or drink or vandalize state property like the others.

Amarka: Now tell us. Who has taught you to be such a deviant?

Sanda: Where did you learn this nonsense?

Amarka: Which enemy has taught you this garbage about surrender to Krishna?

Sanda: Who has spoiled your fine intelligence?

Amarka: We are your teachers, so tell us.

Sanda: Who has spoken to you about devotional service?

Amarka: Tell us who this sneaky enemy is. We can bring him to the presence of Hiranyakashipu, your father, and have him killed.

Sanda: For his pleasure!

Amarka: Who was it, Prahlada?

Prahlada: I offer my respects unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, whose illusion is so strong that it has fooled people into thinking, "He is my enemy; he is my friend." Every living entity is meant to serve the Lord, just as the parts of the body are meant to serve the body.

Sanda: How dare you speak like that before us!

Amarka: Where did you learn this nonsense? Where?!

Prahlada: By the grace of my spiritual master and by the grace of Lord Krishna, I have learned that everyone is a servant of God, and that He is allowing us to fulfill our desires.

Amarka: Stop that talk immediately before I use my stick on you!

Prahlada: Krishna means all-attractive! Just as iron moves towards a magnet, I cannot stop my mind, for it is naturally attracted to the all-attractive Krishna.

Amarka: You deviant!

Sanda: You rascal, we feel sorry for you!

Amarka: You should use your stick on him!

Sanda: You have shamed us!

Amarka: You must learn from us correctly.

Sanda: Now listen carefully, or you will be beaten until you bleed, dear Prahlada.

Amarka: Listen and you will hear real knowledge.

Sanda: Hiranya means gold...

Amarka: ...and Kashipu means soft bed.

Amarka: Enjoy gold, and all that money can buy—silks and fame...

Sanda: Soft beds, plush cushions,

and feminine smiles...

drinking wine, feeling fine...

Be a man, not a child.

Amarka: If you're interested in religion,

that's certainly all right.

Just use it to get rich...

and put God out of sight.

Sanda: Eat what you like,

kill all you can—

cows, bulls, pigs, snakes —

and why not men?

Amarka: Divide your citizens and rule them;

tell them they'll never die.

Tax them to death...

you must learn to be sly.

Sanda: Come on, Prahlada, think big—

don't just sing.

Don't waste your life —

we'll make you the King.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

Narrator: After some weeks, the two teachers, Sanda and Amarka, thought that their student Prahlada Maharaja had learned the fine art of enjoying the world. They therefore informed Hiranyakashipu that his son was ready to see him again. (Hiranyakashipu enters)

Hiranya: Step forward, Prahlada. (Prahlada steps forward and bows down) Now Prahlada, my good, reformed son, you have two good teachers and you have heard of many wonderful things from them—all of them useful and very important. Now tell me, which do you think is the most useful, most important, the best knowledge that you have heard?

Prahlada: Father, hearing and chanting about the Holy Name, fame, qualities and activities of Krishna is the best thing.

Hiranya: WWWWHHHHHAAAAATTTTT!!!

Prahlada: Anyone who uses his life to worship the Lord in devotional service is the most learned person—and he has complete knowledge. All your diplomacy and politics are useless.

Hiranya: You rascal son, you curse of our family—you disgrace! You could not have learned this nonsense from our teachers. Tell me where you have learned this or I will kill you!

Prahlada: I cannot tell you, father, for you could never understand.

Hiranya: Tell me, you rascal—tell me!!!

Prahlada: Even if I would tell you, you could not understand because you are envious of Krishna.

Hiranya: Kill him, KILL HIM, KILL HIM!!! He must be killed—this boy must be killed as soon as possible. He has become a devotee of the enemy Krishna. Kill him, kill him!!!

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

Narrator: Simply because of Prahlada's devotion to Krishna, Hiranyakashipu became the enemy of his five-year-old son—an enemy who was determined to kill him. Hiranyakashipu called for some demon Rakshasas and told them, “Take this boy and strike him with your weapons.”

Demons: Strike him—chop him—stick him—pierce him—kill him!!!

Narrator: Although the Rakshasas could strike fear in the hearts of all, they could not bring fear to the heart of Prahlada, who always kept Krishna there with great love and devotion; therefore Prahlada was not hurt. Then Hiranyakashipu threw Prahlada in a pot of boiling oil, but the oil did not burn Prahlada. Hiranyakashipu grew fearful and put Prahlada beneath the foot of a giant mad elephant, but Lord Krishna, being within the elephant's heart, saved the boy from this danger. Hiranyakashipu tried throwing Prahlada off a hill. He tried killing Prahlada by putting him in great cold wind, in rain, and in ice. He tried to crush Prahlada with rocks, to burn him with fire, to poison him, and to starve him, but Prahlada remained safe, for Krishna has promised that His devotee will never perish. Hiranyakashipu, fearing Prahlada's power, then throw him in a pit of great poisonous snakes. When Krishna protected Prahlada from the snakes, Hiranyakashipu become full of anxiety and great sadness. Indeed, he saw his own death approaching because of his anger towards his sinless son, Prahlada. Not knowing what to do, Hiranyakashipu gave Prahlada once again to the teachers, Sanda and Amarka, who were determined to change the intelligence of the boy devotee, Prahlada Maharaja.

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

Sanda: You are here in school with your other friends. You should be like them.

Amarka: Money, women, power, enjoyment... that is life!

Sanda: Follow in the footsteps of your great father!

Amarka: Everyone is worshiping your father, and you should do the same!

Sanda: We have books for you to study. They will educate you and change your way of thinking.

Amarka: Read this one, Prahlada. It is called "Man—Master of the Universe." In this book you will learn of your destiny!

Sanda: And in this one, "God is Dead," you will learn the real truth.

Amarka: Read this—"Darwin's Theory"—you'll learn that you are not part of God, but that you're a chance combination of chemicals, and you're just an intelligent monkey.

Sanda: Read this adventure novel... it's called "Eat, Sleep and be Merry, for Tomorrow You Die." In this book you'll learn about real pleasure. Oh, by the way, you don't have to read the second part of the book—it's not important.

Amarka: Now Prahlada, study hard. Read all these books again and again. We must go out for a while and attend to some business. You certainly have enough to do.

Sanda: All of you be good. Make sure you study the books!

Amarka: Prahlada, remember—books are the basis, money is the principle, violence is the force, and lust is the essence. Alright children, listen up everyone! Practice the ten offenses and then we'll have torture time. We're going out to have a smoke! (they leave)

Friends: The teachers are out—let's all play. Come on, I have my ball. Come on, Prahlada.

1st Boy: Let's play Kill. You're "it!"

2nd Boy: No, I don't want to be "it." You're "it!"

Both: NO NO NO NO!

1st Boy: Stop hitting me!

2nd Boy: You hit me first!

1st Boy: I'm telling! I'm telling!

2nd Boy: Tattle tale! Tattle tale! Take that! (hits 1st Boy)

Prahlada: I know that we are just little boys, we want to play—but now is the time to take to Krishna Consciousness, while we are still young.

Friends: No, Prahlada, we'll think about that later, when we're older!

Prahlada: No, now is the time! We should take to Krishna consciousness while we're young, otherwise we'll waste our lives. We'll waste our first 10 years being babies and children, then 10 years as young boys sporting and playing. That's 20 years wasted already. Then the next 40 years we won't have time for Krishna because we'll be interested in girls and sex, and then we'll want to get married and have kids and have the best job to get a house and money to send the kids to school, and two flower airplanes, and on and on... no, we just won't have time for Krishna. And during our last 20 years we'll be too old and sad to change our ways and learn to love the Lord. Let's not waste our lives. Let's go home, back to Godhead. Let's sing Hare Krishna while we're young. Let's sing to become purified.

Friends: We would, Prahlada, but we don't know how.

Prahlada: It's easy, just repeat after me, Hare... Krishna... (they learn the mahamantra and have a nice kirtan until Sanda comes in and yells:)

Sanda: Stop it, stop it! Stop this immediately. You're a disgrace to the demons, you no-good angel! You have ruined all of these sons of the demons with your nonsense devotion... I'm finished with you! You are Hiranyakashipu's son, and he can do with you as he wants!

SCENE NINE

SCENE NINE

Narrator: So Prahlada Maharaja was brought before his father, Hiranyakashipu, by his furious teacher, Sanda.

Sanda: Your son, Prahlada, has ruined my entire class... he had all the students singing that terrible Hare Krishna mantra! He has turned all those nice obedient demons into devotees of our enemy, Krishna. You take Prahlada; I will not have anything more to do with him!

Hiranya: Prahlada, you have foolishly gone against my orders. Where are you getting your powers to disobey me, for I am supreme? Who is giving these powers to you?

Prahlada: Father, the one who is giving me my strength is the same one who is giving your strength. Without Krishna, no one can be strong.

Hiranya: You dare to talk to me like this? I am the strongest person in the universe, and because you are the greatest fool, I must kill you myself, with my own hands. You are as crooked...

Prahlada: O King, you should give up your envy and worship the Supreme Lord, Krishna.

Hiranya: You say that there is someone greater than me, and someone who is a greater controller than me, and someone whose power is everywhere? If He is everywhere, why isn't He here? Is He everywhere?

Prahlada: Yes, father, Krishna is everywhere.

Hiranya: Is he in this pillar?

Prahlada: Yes, father, He is in that pillar.

Hiranya: Ha ha, you are speaking crazy words now. It is certain that you are about to die. I will now cut your head from your body just like I cut down this pillar! (he strikes the pillar with his sword. A roar is heard. Hiranyakashipu looks about with alarm. Then, Lord Nrisimhadeva bursts from the pillar. They fight for a few moments, then Lord Nrisimhadeva sits on Hiranyakashipu's throne, takes the demon across His lap, rips open Hiranyakashipu's body and pulls out his intestines, then lets Hiranyakashipu's dead body fall to the floor. He sits there angrily. Demigods approach humbly, but they are afraid of the fearsome Lord)

Brahma: My dear Lord, You are unlimited and possess unlimited powers. No one can estimate Your power. Long were our hearts full of fear because of this demon, but You, my Lord, are so kind towards Your devotees that You have protected us and killed this demon, despite the benedictions I gave him. You did not violate any of them. He was killed neither in the day or night but at twilight, neither inside or outside but in the doorway, neither by man or beast or demigod, but by half-man half-lion, neither in the sky, the sea or the air but in Your lap. No weapons were used, only Your transcendental nails—thus You have kept all the boons intact.

Demigod 1: You are our deliverer and protector. Our shares of sacrifices, which are actually Yours, have been recovered from this demon by You. We were in constant fear of this demon, but You have eliminated our fears by killing him. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

Demigod 2: This form of Yours is truly very powerful, fearsome and rare. Never before have we seen such a wonderful form. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You over and over again!

Brahma: Prahlada, Lord Nrisimhadeva is extremely angry at your father. Please go forward and appease Him.

Prahlada: How can I offer my prayers to You, I who was born of a demonic family? If Lord Brahma could not satisfy You, I have no chance to do so. I simply offer my humble obeisances unto this wonderful form of Nrisimhadeva! Please don't be so angry at my father. I request that you give my father liberation, by Your causeless mercy. (Prahlada sits on Lord Nrisimhadeva's lap as everyone sings the prayer to Lord Nrisimhadeva. Kirtan)

ALL GLORIES TO PRAHLADA MAHARAJA!

The End

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#3)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2-9

Prahlada Maharaja And Lord Nrisimhadeva (#3)

from Çrémad-Bhägavatam, Canto Seven, Chapters 2-9

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Hiranyakashipu, Demons, 2 Demigods, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Prahlada, 2 Teachers, Pupils, Lord Nrisimhadeva.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: Once, when the four sons of Lord Brahma, the Kumaras, were wandering throughout the three worlds, they came to Vishnu-loka. These four great sages appeared like small naked children of five or six years old. When the gatekeepers of Lord Vishnu's abode, named Jaya and Vijaya, saw the sages approaching, they thought them to be ordinary children and forbade them to enter. The great sages angrily cursed Jaya and Vijaya to go immediately to the material world and take birth as demons. Jaya and Vijaya became the most terrifying personalities known as Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. The day they took birth, inauspicious planets appeared in the sky. It rained blood and puss, and the wind was howling. We will now go to the palace of Hiranyakashipu, where he laments over his brother's death.

Hiranya: Danavas and Daityas, listen to me! My enemies, the demigods, have killed my brother, Hiranyaksha. That cheater, Vishnu, took the form of a boar and thus helped them kill my dearest brother, who was the greatest Rakshasa—after me, of course! Therefore we must kill them all and I shall separate Lord Vishnu's head from his body with my trident. Go immediately to planet Earth and kill the saintly persons, ruin the holy places of pilgrimage and slaughter the cows! Quick! Go!

Demons: Yes, my Lord, yes, yes! (they exit)

Hiranya: I shall go now to Mandara Hill and win Lord Brahma's favor by performing great austerities! I shall demand power! I shall demand immortality! Then I shall become greater than Lord Brahma! (he laughs, exits)

Narrator: Meanwhile, the demigods went to see Lord Brahma about their distressful situation.

Demigods' Song: Dear Lord Brahma what can we do?

We have come to this place to take shelter of you.

The greatest of demons, Hiranyakashipu,

Performs great austerities to gain a boon from you.

He wants the whole Universe to rule and control.

To live here forever is his ruthless goal!

Brahma: So, this sly demon wants my post! Then, I shall travel on my swan to this distant place to see his austerities. Come, Demigods and Sages—come with me. (all exit)

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Mandara Hill—anthill and foliage is seen)

Demigods: Oh there he is, covered by an anthill! He has stood there, arms upstretched at least for a hundred years!

Brahma: O best of demons, for this great austerity I shall grant you a boon! Step down.

Hiranya: Thank you, Lord Brahma, for helping me reach my goal. Now grant me this boon—that I may never die!

Brahma: I'm sorry, this I cannot do, for even I also must die.

Hiranya: Then grant me this—that I may never die on land, in sea or sky.

Brahma: I comply!

Hiranya: That I may never be killed by any man nor beast nor weapon.

Brahma: I comply!

Hiranya: That I may never be killed in the day nor at night.

Brahma: Yes, I comply!

Hiranya: Success is mine! I've reached my goal! I'm immortal, I'm immortal! Now everybody—worship me! (he laughs, exits)

Demigods: O Supreme Personality, we take shelter of you. Please finish this demon Hiranyakashipu and save us from our plight.

Vishnu: Worry no more, please do not fear.

The death of this demon is certainly near.

Soon in his family a son will appear —

Prahlada he'll be called, a devotee most dear.

When this greatest of fiends will torture his son,

in a most fearsome form I promise I'll come.

I'll kill him at once to protect this boy.

At that time your hearts will again fill with joy.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(At the palace of Hiranyakashipu)

Hiranya: Prahlada, you are five years old now. Tell me, Prahlada, what worldly subjects have you learned today? Have you learned to lie, to cheat, to steal, and to destroy your enemies? Do tell me the good subjects you have studied.

Prahlada: O father, best of the demons, do hear this knowledge, which is far superior to any other. We should love God, chant His names and obey Him. By doing this, we can perfect our lives and be free from strife.

Hiranya: (angry) I never thought I'd hear such disgusting rubbish talk coming from the mouth of my own son. Teachers! I have entrusted my son to you for his education. You must see that he is not able to hear such rubbish topics of Vaishnava propaganda!

Teachers: O dear Hiranyakashipu, do not worry, we'll set him right; we'll teach him about materialism day and night! And then when he is in better consciousness we'll bring him back to you!

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(In the school)

Teachers: Now children, we'll have a song. Prahlada, you will repeat each line after us or we'll beat you with stick. Ready?

Teachers & pupils: (song)

So much wealth do I have today.

More and more will come my way.

All my enemies I will kill.

Then my scheme I will thus fulfill!

Rich and powerful I want to be,

So that the whole world will worship me.

Thousands of servants I'll employ.

Then unhindered I will enjoy!

Teachers: Very good! You can all have a black mark today! Now continue in this way. Class is dismissed! (children make rude noises as teachers exit)

Prahlada: My dear atheistic friends, listen to me.

These men are speaking bad philosophy!

Please don't be selfish as they say.

If you want to be really happy, then there's another way.

Just sing Krishna's Holy Names

and do not waste your precious time in playing games.

Then your life will become sublime!

Pupils: But Prahlada, let us play! After all, we're only five years old! We can take up Krishna consciousness another day!

Prahlada: Then learn to play for Lord Krishna. Everyone is looking for their dearest friend! That friend, being situated in our hearts, is Krishna. Your bodies are young and healthy now, so don't waste the first 20 years of your life playing ball, the next 40 in sex life and the last 20 years as an invalid. Take up Krishna consciousness now and become eternally happy. Now just try this—sing along with me. (song—Hare Krishna—tune and lyrics as in Krishna Stories tape or kirtan)

Teachers: Stop! Stop! How dare you sing this poison! So Prahlada, you are teaching these poor innocent children to worship God! Come with us, we will take you to Hiranyakashipu and see what he has to say about this!!!

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

Hiranya: So, you're back with Prahlada! I do hope he's following in his father's footsteps and becoming a great demon like me!

Prahlada: Sravanam, Kirtanam, Vishnoh, Smaranam: hearing, chanting, remembering Lord Vishnu is the best thing we can do, for love of God is the perfection of life. Please, father, change your wicked ways and surrender unto the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu!

Hiranya: How dare you speak to me like that! You are no longer my son—now you've become a poisonous snake. Where did you learn this nonsense, boy? Was it your teachers who are to blame? (threatens teachers)

Teachers: No, O master, it was not us!!!

Hiranya: Krishna is my enemy, and I have banned all followers of Krishna from seeing my son and the other innocent boys!

Teacher: We didn't allow any devotees to speak to Prahlada. We especially protected him and kept him away from saintly people.

Hiranya: Somehow you have failed... and I am becoming increasingly angry that my son is being brainwashed by the enemy! I will never let Krishna fulfill His plan to brainwash my son, never!

Teacher: What can we do about it, O greatest of demons?

Hiranya: My dear demons, give complete protection to this boy at the school so that he won't be further influenced by devotees... Be careful, because they might come in disguise—they sometimes wear wigs!

Teacher: Yes, yes! Certainly, certainly!

Hiranya: Be very careful. I will check back in a few weeks to see how he is doing.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

Narrator: After some weeks, the two teachers, Sanda and Amarka, thought that their student Prahlada Maharaja had learned the fine art of enjoying the world. They therefore informed Hiranyakashipu that his son was ready to see him again. (Hiranyakashipu enters)

Hiranya: Step forward, Pahlada. (Pahlada steps forward and bows down) Now Pahlada, my good, reformed son, you have two fine teachers and you have heard of many wonderful things from them. Now tell me, which do you think is the most useful, most important, the best knowledge that you have heard?

Pahlada: Father, hearing and chanting about the Holy Name, fame, qualities and activities of Lord Krishna is the best thing.

Hiranya: WWWWWHHHHHHHHHAAAAATTTTTT!!!

Pahlada: Anyone who uses his life to worship the Lord in devotional service is the most learned person—and he has complete knowledge. All your mundane diplomacy and politics are useless.

Hiranya: You rascal son, you curse of our family—you disgrace! You could not have learned this nonsense from our teachers. Tell me where you have learned this or I will kill you!

Pahlada: I cannot tell you, father, for you could never understand.

Hiranya: Tell me, you rascal—tell me!!!

Pahlada: Even if I would tell you, you could not understand because you are envious of Krishna.

Hiranya: Kill him, KILL HIM, KILL HIM!!! He must be killed—this boy must be killed as soon as possible. He has become a devotee of the enemy Krishna. Kill him, kill him!!!

Narrator: Simply because of Pahlada's devotion to Krishna, Hiranyakashipu became the enemy of his five-year-old son—an enemy who was determined to kill him. Hiranyakashipu called for some demon Rakshasas and told them, “Take this boy and strike him with your weapons.”

Demons: Strike him—chop him—stick him—pierce him—kill him!!! (they menace Pahlada and all exit while Narrator continues)

Narrator: Although the Rakshasas could strike fear in the hearts of all, they could not bring fear to the heart of Pahlada, who always kept Krishna there with great love and devotion, and thus Pahlada was not hurt. Then Hiranyakashipu threw Pahlada in a pot of boiling oil, but the oil did not burn Pahlada. Hiranyakashipu grew fearful and put Pahlada beneath the foot of a giant mad elephant, but Krishna, being within the elephant's heart, saved the boy from this danger. Hiranyakashipu tried throwing Pahlada off a hill, and he tried killing Pahlada by putting him in great cold wind, in rain, and in ice. He tried to crush Pahlada with rocks, to burn him with fire, to poison him, and to starve him, but Pahlada remained safe, for Krishna has promised that His devotee will never perish. Hiranyakashipu, fearing Pahlada's power, then throw him in a pit of great poisonous snakes. When Krishna protected Pahlada from the snakes, Hiranyakashipu become full of anxiety and great sadness. Indeed, he saw his own death approaching because of his anger towards his sinless son, Pahlada. Not knowing what else to do, Hiranyakashipu once again confronted the innocent and saintly Pahlada.

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

Hiranya: Pahlada, you have foolishly gone against my orders. Where are you getting your powers to disobey me, I who am supreme? Who is giving these powers to you?

Pahlada: Father, the one who is giving me my strength is the same one who is giving your strength. Without Krishna, no one can be strong.

Hiranya: You dare to talk to me like this? I am the strongest person in the universe, and because you are the greatest fool, I must kill you myself, with my own hands. You are as crooked...

Pahlada: O King, you should give up your envy and worship the Supreme Lord, Krishna.

Hiranya: You say that there is someone greater than me, and someone who is a greater controller than me, and someone whose power is everywhere? If He is everywhere, why isn't He here? Is He everywhere?

Pahlada: Yes, father, Krishna is everywhere.

Hiranya: Is he in this pillar?

Pahlada: Yes, father, He is in that pillar.

Hiranya: Ha ha, you are speaking crazy words now. It is certain that you are about to die. I will now cut your head from your body just like I cut down this pillar! (he strikes the pillar with his sword. A roar is heard. Hiranyakashipu looks about with alarm. Then, Lord Nrisimhadeva bursts from the pillar. They fight for a few moments, then Lord Nrisimhadeva sits on Hiranyakashipu's throne and takes the demon across His lap. Lord Nrisimhadeva rips open Hiranyakashipu's body and pulls out his intestines, then lets Hiranyakashipu's dead body fall to the floor. He sits there angrily. Demigods approach humbly, but they are afraid of the fearsome Lord)

Brahma: My dear Lord, You are unlimited and possess unlimited powers. No one can estimate Your power. Long were our hearts full of fear because of this demon, but You, my Lord, are so kind towards Your devotees that You have protected us and killed this demon, despite the benedictions I gave him. You did not violate any of them. He was killed neither in the day or night but at twilight, neither inside or outside but in the doorway, neither by man or beast or demigod, but by half-man half-lion, neither in the sky, the sea or the air but in Your lap. No weapons were used, only Your transcendental nails—thus You have kept all the boons intact.

Demigod 1: You are our deliverer and protector. Our shares of sacrifices, which are actually Yours, have been recovered from this demon by You. We were in constant fear of this demon, but You have eliminated our fears by killing him. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

Demigod 2: This form of Yours is truly very powerful, fearsome and rare. Never before have we seen such a wonderful form. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You over and over again!

Brahma: Prahlada, Lord Nrisimhadeva is extremely angry at your father. Please go forward and appease Him.

Prahlada: How can I offer my prayers to You, I who was born of a demonic family? If Lord Brahma could not satisfy You, I have no chance to do so. I simply offer my humble obeisances unto this wonderful form of Nrisimhadeva! Please don't be so angry at my father. I request that you give my father liberation, by Your causeless mercy. (Prahlada sits on Lord Nrisimhadeva's lap as everyone sings the prayer to Lord Nrisimhadeva, then kirtan)

ALL GLORIES TO PRAHLADA MAHARAJA!

The End

Lord Shiva And Vrikasura

from Krishna Book, Chapter 88

Lord Shiva And Vrikasura

from Krishna Book, Chapter 88

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Vrikasura, Narada Muni, Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva.

Narrator: In the portion of the Vedas known as the Karma-kanda, it is described how one may achieve different benedictions by worshipping the various demigods. This worship of demigods, such as Shiva, Ganesh and Durga, is in the category of material fruitive activity, whereas pure devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vishnu, is completely transcendental and is the only sure path of success. In the Tenth Canto of the Bhagavata Purana, Shukadeva Goswami narrated to Maharaja Pariksit the story of one such demigod worshipper—the demon Vrikasura, the son of Shakuni. He desired material benediction, but could not decide which of the demigods he should worship for this purpose.

SCENE ONE

A Forest

SCENE ONE

A Forest

Vrikasura: Power! Oh, how my heart longs for it! I cannot be satisfied to be a mortal of no significance. Only when the three worlds tremble in fear at the name of Vrikasura, son of Shakuni will I be satisfied. This desire burns like a fire within me. I must perform austerities, as Hiranyakashipu did in days of yore to satisfy Lord Brahma. But which of the great demigods should I take shelter of? (sound of chanting offstage) What is that sound? (sees Narada approaching) Narada Muni, surely Fate is with me that it brings such an auspicious meeting.

Narada: Ah Vrikasura, in whose heart the passionate longing for power knows no limit!

Vrikasura: Yes, please help me, for I know you to be the most learned of sages. I desire the benediction of the gods, but which of them is most easily satisfied—Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva?

Narada: Surely that is Lord Shiva, who is renowned as Ashutosh, “he who is very easily pleased.” Those who, like yourself, are filled with lusty desires, should try to satisfy the most magnanimous husband of Parvati. In the past, demons like Ravana and Bakasura achieved limitless might simply by satisfying Lord Shiva.

Vrikasura: This is good news, indeed, but what means should I adopt to worship Lord Shiva?

Narada: Go at once to Kedarnath in the Himalayas. There, ignite a sacrificial fire and perform severe austerities. Being pleased in this way, Lord Shiva will fulfill all your desires.

Vrikasura: Thank you, O great sage, for this advice! (Narada Muni leaves) So, now we will see! I will go at once to Kedarnath, and soon the whole world will know of my glory and might! Ah ha ha!

SCENE TWO

Kedarnath

SCENE TWO

Kedarnath

(On stage Vrikasura before the sacrificial fire)

Vrikasura: Om Namō Shivaya! Jaya Shiva Shankara! O my dear Lord Shiva, please behold these most severe penances that I perform, and quickly give me your mercy! (cuts flesh from his own body and offers it in the fire) Is a greater sacrifice demanded? Very well, there is nothing that can stop me. I will not allow any weakness of mind to hinder me. (offers more flesh) O Shiva, Mahadeva, Lord of all—do you not see this unparalleled penance performed in your name? Why do you still hide yourself from me? What more is required? (pause) O Lord, hear me. This day I vow that if you do not appear before me, I shall take my own head and offer it as an oblation in the fire! (Vrikasura prepares to cut off his own head, but Shiva quickly appears and stops him. Shiva touches Vrikasura and all his wounds are healed)

Shiva: My dear Vrikasura, there is no need for you to cut off your head. It was not necessary for you to perform such painful austerities as these, for I am satisfied by the simple offering of a little Ganges water. You may ask from me any benediction you desire.

Vrikasura: O Shiva, Maheshvara. Above all else, I desire power. Please give me the benediction that whenever I touch a person's head, he immediately dies.

Shiva: As I have promised, so I must fulfill your desire. Let it be so.

Vrikasura: At last! That power by which I will cause all the universe to tremble is mine! My life is complete, all my desires are fulfilled. Now at once I must use this power! I must enjoy! O Shiva, you are very fortunate in having the beautiful Parvati as your wife. I desire her for myself, and after I have killed you, I will take her away. Prepare to die, O Lord of Ghosts. (Shiva flees and is chased by Vrikasura. The chase continues through Indra-loka and Brahma-loka)

SCENE THREE

Shvetadvipa

SCENE THREE

Shvetadvipa

Shiva: At last I have arrived at Shvetadvipa, the abode of the Supreme Lord Himself! But even here that demon still pursues me!

Vrikasura: Ah, now I have you, O cowardly one! (Vishnu enters in the form of a brahmachari and offers respects to Vrikasura)

Vishnu: My dear son of Shakuni, it appears that you have been travelling for a great distance; surely you must be very weary by now. Your body is extremely valuable to you and therefore you should not unnecessarily tire it. Please rest here for a while and refresh yourself.

Vrikasura: Yes, what you say is true, this is good advice.

Vishnu: Most worthy sir, if you feel that you are able to disclose the nature of your mission to Me, it may be that I will be able to help you.

Vrikasura: Never have I met such an understanding person as Yourself. I have come here in pursuit of Lord Shiva, for I desire to possess his beautiful wife, Parvati. He gave me a benediction that whoever I touch on the head will immediately die. When I find Shiva, I will kill him in this way and thus take his wife.

Vishnu: This is indeed a wondrous story, but I myself cannot believe that Lord Shiva has in truth given such a benediction. You must understand that having been previously cursed by his father-in-law, Daksha, this Shiva has now become insane. But, if you still have faith in his words, then why not make an experiment by putting your hand on your own head? Then, if the benediction proves false, you can immediately kill this liar, Lord Shiva, so that in the future he will not dare to give false benedictions.

Vrikasura: Your words are just like the coolest sandalwood, driving away all my fatigue. What You have suggested is indeed the perfect solution to my difficulty. (Vrikasura touches his own head, which immediately cracks apart)

Shiva: O my Lord, I can understand that You are none other than Vaikunthanath, Sri Vishnu Himself. You have assumed this form just to save me from Vrikasura, for I am Your devotee, a soul surrendered unto You.

Vishnu: My dear Lord Shiva, a person who commits an offense to great souls cannot continue to exist. He becomes vanquished by his own sinful acts—and this

is certainly true of this demon, who has committed such an offensive act against you. (kirtan)

The End

Bhima Slays The Demon Bakasura

from the Maha-bharata

Bhima Slays The Demon Bakasura

from the Maha-bharata

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Bhima, Arjuna, Yudhishtira, Sahadeva, Nakula, Mother Kunti, Brahmana, Bakasura.

Narrator: Once there lived a great king in the land of Bharata-varsha, known today as India. He was a pure devotee of Lord Krishna named Maharaja Yudhishtira. He also had four younger brothers: Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Together they were known as the great Pandavas. They were also said to be born of a divine birth by their mother, Queen Kunti. They lived peacefully executing their duties, while their envious cousins headed by Duryodhana always plotted against them by trying to unscrupulously take away their rightful kingdom. Once their cousin Duryodhana had arranged for a house of shellac to be made for them, and he gave them the house with the intention of burning them all to death, so that he could get their kingdom. But by the grace of the Lord, they escaped. They experienced many hardships, but they always kept Krishna in the center. Here we take you to one adventure they went through, after having escaped the fire of death.

SCENE ONE

The Forest

SCENE ONE

The Forest

Bhima: Come along, let's keep moving.

Sahadeva: My dear Bhima, we are not as strong as you. Therefore we need to rest here for a while.

Arjuna: Besides, why are you in so much of a hurry? Where do you want to go? Just be glad we escaped from the house of fire.

Bhima: Well, that's just it, my brother. Why should we be glad that we escaped from death? Why should we have had to go through this anyway, having well known that it was Duryodhana and his evil friends who tried to kill us, just like he has done in the past? We should have killed him a long time ago! Right now I am eager to smash him to bits with my club!

Yudhishtira: My dear Bhima, please calm down! We shall settle everything in due course of time.

Bhima: In due course of time... in due course of time... And when will that be? When we are too old to do anything! No, I can't wait or tolerate this inconvenience caused to all of you. Look at our poor mother — do you think this is a fit way to treat her? No, I am not going to have it. What about when he tried to poison my food? You just want me to tolerate it! I will go and kill him as well as his evil-minded friends!

Kunti: My dear Bhima, please control your anger and listen to your brother. We shall speak with Lord Krishna and your grandfather Bhishma. Surely, they will help us out. Let us rest here for a while and then go to some nearby village for food and shelter. There we shall discuss what to do next.

Nakula: Look, there's a lake! Let's get some water to drink.

Sahadeva: Good, I'm really thirsty. It's such a hot day. (they all drink water. In comes a Brahmana)

Kunti: Excuse me sir, can you tell me where the nearest town is? We need to go there for some food and shelter for a few days before we continue on our journey.

Brahmana: Well, just nearby is a town called Ekachakra where I live. You can all come there. In fact, if you like you can all be my guests for few days. We are always glad to have guests in our house.

Kunti: Thank you very much. That's very kind of you.

SCENE TWO

The Pandavas in the house of the Brahmana

SCENE TWO

The Pandavas in the house of the Brahmana

Kunti: No one suspects who we are. So, we should keep our identity a secret. Since we are staying at this nice brahmana's house, we can't expect him to feed us all, so I want you to go out and collect alms. Then we shall divide it amongst ourselves. Half will go to Bhima and the other half the rest of us shall share. Be careful now! (Kunti does some cleaning. Brahmana comes in crying)

Brahmana: O my Lord, what am I to do now? How has such a terrible calamity come upon me? O my Lord Krishna, please be merciful and help me out. Please let my son live, somehow or other! (breaks down)

Kunti: My dear brahmana, I am sorry but I couldn't help but overhear what you were saying. What seems to be the problem? Is your son sick? What kind of a danger is he in?

Brahmana: Oh, what's the use of telling you? You can't do anything about it!

Kunti: Well, at least tell me, so I can see if there is anything I can do.

Brahmana: No, no. There's absolutely nothing you can do. It's all beyond our control!

Kunti: My dear sir, you have so kindly let us stay in your house, and it bereaves me to see you lament in this way without at least trying to help you. Now please tell me what is causing you so much distress.

Brahmana: If you must know, not far from here is a man-eating rakshasa named Bakasura. He used to come and attack our village, killing many people — some he would eat and some he would just kill unnecessarily. This went on for some time. The king was helpless, for the demon was extremely powerful. So the king decided to come to terms with the rakshasa. The king arranged that if he would stop attacking the town and killing so many people unnecessarily that he would arrange for lots of foodstuff to be brought to him in a cart. Being a man-eating rakshasa, he would also eat the person who took the food. So, it was decided by the citizens that each family would send one person from the house along with the food each month. So, tomorrow it is my turn to send someone, and I have to send my only son. (breaks down. Kunti thinks)

Kunti: Do not lament like this, for I can certainly help you out.

Brahmana: You can help me out? What can you do?

Kunti: Well, since I am the mother of five sons, I shall send one of my sons instead.

Brahmana: No, never! Out of the question! This is not your problem. Why should you send your son to get killed? You don't even belong in this village.

Kunti: I have already decided it shall be done. Besides, you have been so nice to us. I owe you this much.

Brahmana: What, by allowing one of your sons to be killed?

Kunti: Do not worry, he won't be killed. He is very strong. He shall defeat the demon. You should have faith in me. But you must tell no one.

Brahmana: Well, are you sure you want to do this?

Kunti: For certain, as soon as he comes back I shall inform him.

Brahmana: That's very kind of you.

Kunti: Think nothing of it. (Brahmana goes off)

Bhima: (comes in and kicks a table) This is crazy, I can't stand it any longer!

Kunti: My dear Bhima, please. This is not our house, we are only guests here. What's the matter? Why are you in a bad mood?

Bhima: I'll tell you why I am in a bad mood. Well, here I am, son of a king, the great Maharaja Pandu. I, who am the cousin of the all-powerful Krishna, the leader of the Yadu dynasty, am begging door-to-door and getting doors slammed in my face. O mother, really this is too much for me! Day by day I am getting thinner. Before long I won't be able to lift even a twig. Why can't we gather our allies, attack Hastinapura and get our rightful kingdom by force?

Kunti: Your brother Yudhishtira knows best how to act. You know he wants to avoid battle with your cousins. Anyway, I have some good news for you.

Bhima: What is that?

Kunti: Tomorrow the people of the town are cooking lots of foodstuffs to be taken to some rakshasa. All you have to do is take the food over there, eat it all and kill the demon.

Bhima: That sounds like a nice idea. At last I can satisfy my hunger! I would fight with anyone for nice foodstuffs! Is there going to be lots of puris, subjis, and laddus?

Kunti: Yes, of course, my son, they will have all this and lots more. But, be careful of the demon! They say he is very strong.

Bhima: Have no fear, mother. I will meditate on Lord Krishna and He will bring me out victorious. (the other brothers walk in)

Kunti: O my sons, you have arrived. Are you all well?

Yudhishtira: Yes, thank you, mother. Here are the foodstuffs. Hey Bhima, where did you get to? I didn't see you all day. How much food did you beg? What's the matter? Why are you looking so happy? Has something happened?

Kunti: Today, the brahmana who owns the place where we are staying was telling me of a rakshasa who lives near here and terrorizes the village. So, tomorrow the village people are cooking lots of foodstuffs for him. They also have to send one citizen along with the food to get eaten by the demon. Unfortunately, this brahmana has to send his only son. So I told him I will send one of my sons — Bhima will go instead, eat all the food and kill the rakshasa. That's why he is all excited.

Yudhishtira: O mother, what have you done? You have sent Bhima to his death! Relying on his strength, I was hoping to get our kingdom back! Alas, we will not see you, Bhima, anymore! You who are more dear to me than my own life! O Bhima! Mother, I can't understand why you have done this!

Kunti: Yudhishtira, I know the strength of my own son better than anyone. I know he will kill the rakshasa and come out victorious. You need not fear anything. Did he not slay the powerful demon Hidimba?

Yudhishtira: It shall be as you say, mother.

Arjuna: Anyway, if anything comes in the way of our Bhima and some foodstuffs, I don't think they have much of a chance to live. Ha ha!

All: (laughter)

SCENE THREE

The Forest

SCENE THREE

The Forest

(Enter Bhima, looks around)

Bhima: I think that's all the foodstuffs there now, no sign of the demon. I must eat all the food before the demon comes, otherwise it will get all scattered during the fight. We don't want all this food to go to waste, now do we? Okay, I will go back behind here and eat everything before he comes. (looks around)

Rakshasa: That was a very good sleep! Now there's nothing like having something to eat! I hope all the food is behind here. The fools last time were late. Why, if they are late I am going to teach them a good lesson or two! (opens curtain) Ah ha... who is this? It looks like he's eaten up all my food. Well, he's going to pay the price with his dear life. Hey you, get up, get up, get up! You rascal, did you eat all of my food?

Bhima: Well, I just happened to bump into all of this and I thought it would be rather a waste to leave it, so I ate it. Is that alright with you?

Rakshasa: Take this! (fight takes place — Bhima still eats with one hand while holding back the furious demon with the other hand)

SCENE FOUR

In the house of the Brahmana

SCENE FOUR

In the house of the Brahmana

Yudhishtira: Bhima, are you okay? Did everything go well?

Bhima: Yes, thank you, brother. (to mother Kunti) O mother, thank you for that fantastic feast, it was wonderful! Sorry, I didn't save any for you!

Kunti: It doesn't matter, my son. As long as you are happy, we are all satisfied.

Bhima: My dear brahmana, the rakshasa is now dead and the village people need not fear him any longer.

Brahmana: Who are you, who has the strength to kill such a powerful rakshasa?

Bhima: I performed some austerities for the pleasure of Lord Shiva, and he granted me the boon to kill the demon since he was the cause of so much trouble.

Brahmana: And if the king asks who killed him, what shall I say?

Bhima: All you have to say is the same thing, but instead of naming me, say that your own son was invested with the strength of Lord Shiva to kill him.

Kunti: Yes, that's a very good idea, now we must move on to our next destination.

Brahmana: No, no, no, you cannot go now! Please stay for a few more days!

Yudhishtira: No, we must move on now, we only planned to stay here for a little while.

Brahmana: But you saved the whole village — everyone should know!

Kunti: No one should know. If you are at all grateful to us, then our request is that you keep this a secret and let us go quietly.

Brahmana: As you wish, but you are all welcome to return here.

Arjuna: Let's go to Maharaja Drupada's kingdom — I think they are having a marriage festival there!

Kunti: Let's go, then. (the Pandavas exit)

Brahmana: My dear Lord Krishna, thank You for allowing my son to live! Let my devotion to You increase day by day. O Lord Krishna, I pray that I may never forget You and Your devotees, for You are my Lord and my master. Come, son, let us cook a big feast for the Lord.

The End

The Insulting Of Draupadi

from the Maha-Bharata

by Prema-Rasa Dasi

The Insulting Of Draupadi

from the Maha-Bharata

by Prema-Rasa Dasi

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CAST: Narrator, Yudhishtira, Vidura, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, Draupadi, Lord Krishna, Shakuni, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra, Dushasana, Gandhari.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Yudhishtira Visits Vidura

Yudhishtira: Uncle Vidura, It's so nice to see you. But you don't look happy. Are you not feeling well? Is there something happening in Hastinapura? What is the cause of your unhappiness? Please tell me!

Vidura: My health is fine; what troubles me is the message that your Uncle Dhritarashtra has sent you.

Yudhishtira: What is the message, and what is it that worries you about it?

Vidura: He wants you and your brothers to go to the inauguration of the new gambling hall. He says you can spend a few days with him and enjoy a game of dice with his sons. He says you will find it quite pleasing.

Yudhishtira: I feel there is something hidden within this kind of invitation. I believe the main motivation for the invitation is the game of dice. That is clear. I

don't like the game. It may turn out to be a cause of fighting between us and the sons of Dhritarashtra. Do you agree, Uncle?

Vidura: That's precisely the cause of my anxiety, I tried to convince my brother, but Dhritarashtra is deaf to my advice and insists on you playing.

Yudhishtira: Who will be in the game?

Vidura: Shakuni and Duryodhana.

Yudhishtira: Hmmm... Shakuni is a wizard with the dice. I'm not so good, but if it's an order from the king, what can I do? Everything that happens in this world has been ordained by the Creator. What can I do when my destiny has already been decided? I have no choice but to accept. The king knows my principles, and he knows I'll never disobey the orders of my elders. He's not interested in seeing us or in us seeing his new hall. What he wants is that I play this game of dice. Uncle Vidura—I hate to play. The game leads one to Hell.

Vidura: A kshatriya must never refuse a challenge. But I advise you to refuse this game.

Yudhishtira: Let fate have her way. I will tell my brothers, and we should depart for Hastinapura immediately.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

The Gambling Hall

Narrator: Soon the Pandavas reached Hastinapura. They were welcomed very cordially by the Kauravas. Excellent arrangements were made for their stay. The day which was to become etched in their memories as the most terrible day in their lives finally dawned. That afternoon, representatives of both dynasties were present in the assembly.

Shakuni: Yudhishtira, why don't we sit down and play a game of dice?

Yudhishtira: I'd rather not play, since dice is the cause of so many unpleasant things. It destroys friendships. It is poison.

Shakuni: It is only a game to while away the time.

Yudhishtira: You call winning wealth by cheating to "while away time"? A wise man becomes a fool once he lays his hands on the dice. It robs him of his reasoning power. It is like wine; it destroys the good qualities of a man. Once the fever gets into him, nothing can cure him. This game is a thing to be avoided like some dreaded disease. Let us not play this game.

Shakuni: Poor Yudhishtira, he has just acquired wealth after the great Rajasuya sacrifice, and now he does not want to part with it. After all, it is new to him; let him keep it. Yudhishtira, you don't need to play if you are afraid to accept the challenge.

Yudhishtira: I'm not afraid, nor am I fond of wealth as you are. You know very well that I cannot refuse to play once I'm challenged. I will certainly play! Who is my opponent and what is the wager to be?

Duryodhana: I wager whatever precious stones and wealth you wager. My uncle Shakuni will play on my behalf.

Yudhishtira: That is not the rule. You must play and you must lay the wager.

Shakuni: It is evident that you want to avoid playing by giving some excuse or other. If you do not want to play, tell us frankly. (there is silence in the room)

Yudhishtira: I wager all my jewels and precious stones.

Duryodhana: Mine against yours. (Shakuni shakes the dice and throws them on the floor)

Shakuni: Won.

Yudhishtira: My chariots, gold, and horses.

Duryodhana: Mine against yours.

Shakuni: Won again!

Yudhishtira: My elephants, army, slaves.

Shakuni: Won!

Yudhishtira: I wager everything I possess, including my kingdom!

Duryodhana: All my wealth against yours.

Vidura: (to Dhritarashtra) My Lord, you've got to listen to my words, even if they're not pleasant to your ears. Once I told you that your son would be the cause of the destruction of the world. I asked you to kill him in order to save the world, but you would not listen to me. Now—at least now believe me. The world will end if this game continues anymore. I beg you to stop it. (silence)

Duryodhana: (to Vidura) My dear uncle, ever since my childhood I've noticed one thing: you have always been partial to the Pandavas. You have never liked me.

You say you are our well-wisher, but I do not think that is true. Leave us alone. Please do not speak words like this to my father. (throw of the dice)

Shakuni: I'm afraid you have lost everything. You have nothing left now. If you have something that you still can call yours, you can wager that. I will wager all that the prince has won so far. If you win, you can claim it all back.

Yudhishtira: I still have something to offer as my wager. This young handsome brother of mine, Nakula, will be my wager.

Shakuni: Won!

Yudhishtira: The wise Sahadeva is the next wager. There is no one like him in this world.

Shakuni: Won! You have two more brothers; evidently you do not think they are good enough to be used as wagers. Or perhaps you think that they are far superior to the sons of Madri. That is perhaps the reason for your hesitation.

Yudhishtira: You are trying to cause dissension among us. You can never do that. Here is Arjuna, who has no equal in the world. He is my wager.

Shakuni: Won!

Yudhishtira: Here is Bhima, who is the commander of my army. His strength is greater than that of all of you combined.

Shakuni: You've lost again!

Yudhishtira: I'm the wager now.

Shakuni: Once again you have lost!

Yudhishtira: I have lost everything! (there is a moment of silence)

Shakuni: You still have the jewel who can free you... your wife, Draupadi. (Bhima gets up in anger, but Arjuna stops him)

Yudhishtira: Draupadi, the favored queen of the Pandavas, is my wager now.

Shakuni: **WON!!!** (everyone is silent. Vidura's face is lowered. Duryodhana embraces Shakuni)

Duryodhana: This is the happiest day of my life! And I owe it entirely to you, my dear uncle, Shakuni. Draupadi is now our slave. You must go and bring her here into our presence. Let her be made to enter the apartments of our servants. She must get familiar with her new duties.

Vidura: Even now it is not too late. Do not go any farther. You are like a deer who unconsciously provokes the tiger. These Pandavas should be considered as terrible snakes which spit poison. Do not provoke them any longer. Draupadi is not your slave. She must not be insulted. Yudhishtira had no right to use her as the wager when he had lost himself. You do not like my words; you think I'm not your well-wisher. But I am. I'm warning you against the terrible wrath of the Pandavas. If you don't listen to my words, you will be destroyed.

Duryodhana: We have had enough and more of this lowborn man who can talk of nothing else! Dushasana, go to the women's apartments and tell that slave, Draupadi, that she belongs to us now, and that her lord and master, the Kuru prince, has asked her to appear in the court.

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Draupadi's Apartments

Dushasana: Draupadi, you are wanted in the court by your new lord and master, Duryodhana.

Draupadi: What are you saying?

Dushasana: In the fever of the game, your husband Yudhishtira gambled you away. Now you belong to our Kuru prince—you are Duryodhana's slave.

Draupadi: Did my husband have nothing else to lay as the wager? How can he gamble me away like this?

Dushasana: What I'm saying is true. First he lost everything of value, then his brothers one by one, then himself, and finally he lost you.

Draupadi: Go back to the court. Find out from Yudhishtira whether he gambled himself away first or me. Come back with the answer.

Dushasana: Come, slave! Come to Duryodhana. Do not look so modest. It is but right that you should turn your lotus eyes to the Kuru monarch. You can ask this subtle question to the eldest of the court. As for our king, he has commanded me to bring you to the court. I will drag you there if you refuse. (Dushasana drags Draupadi)

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

Draupadi In The Court

Draupadi: In this great assembly I see great personalities, the elders of this ancient house of the Kurus, known from time immemorial for the dharma residing in them. You are all present; and yet unrighteousness has reared its ugly head. Can it be possible? Here is a man drunk with power, asking his cruel brother to drag a woman to the court. And you are all just looking on—even my husband, who is the very image of dharma! Righteousness has indeed fled from this court where this atrocity is allowed. I asked for a detail of the game. I wanted to know if he lost me first or himself. I was not given a reply. And this man has the audacity to drag me into the court! When people like Bhishma and Drona are allowing this, there is no such thing as dharma in this court. I will ask you all once again—do you all consider me a slave of this man, or am I free? (she addresses Bhishma) You are the home of all wisdom and learning. They say there is none wiser than you. Grandfather, can you tell me if I am a slave?

Bhishma: I am indeed at a loss to give a proper answer to your question. The subtle shades of dharma are very hard to understand. A man cannot gamble something once he has lost himself and when he has declared that he has been won by another. According to that, Yudhishtira had no right to lose you. But then there is this to be considered: A man has a right over his wife whether he is free or not. Accordingly, I cannot surely say that you are free. Yudhishtira knew that Shakuni is a wizard in the art of dice, yet he played with him willingly enough. Though he was being defeated, Yudhishtira continued to play, and he finally used you as the wager. I am unable to answer your question.

Draupadi: You give the impression that my husband played the game willingly. Your dear grandson Duryodhana and his uncle challenged him to play. Yudhishtira didn't want to play. He told uncle Vidura this in Indraprastha. He was forced to play this deceitful game. Knowing that he is not a skilled player, Shakuni made him play with him, Shakuni who is a wizard in the art of throwing the dice. My husband had no chance of winning, and you all knew it. Yet you were all looking on. Did you not see the injustice? Did you not know that it was an unfair game? You should have stopped it. Not one of you did anything to stop it, nor did you blame this sinful Duryodhana for what he was doing.

Now you tell me that my husband played the game voluntarily, that he voluntarily used me as the wager! When he lost himself and then announced me as the next wager, why didn't you interfere and say that it was not right? Please listen to my words. I ask a question to this assembly. There is no assembly where there are no elders; they are not elders who do not speak what is righteous. Where there is no truth, there is no righteousness! (Dushasana laughs)

Dushasana: You are now the slave of Duryodhana. Why do you worry about the subtleties of dharma? You are a slave; your dharma is to please your master, your new master—the great Kaurava monarch, Duryodhana.

Bhima: (speaks with anger to Yudhishtira) Look at the result of your madness! All the wealth that was ours is gone. You gambled away everything that we had. I did not speak a word. I did not mind it even when you gambled us all away. Even that

I bore with patience because you are my guru, my elder, and we are all yours forever. But my lord, look at our dear wife Draupadi, dragged into this hall of sin by that animal! Do you think I can bear this? I cannot bear this any longer. Sahadeva, bring me fire! I must burn these hands of my brother.

Arjuna: Bhima, what is this action of yours? What has come over you? You have never been so rude to our brother before! You have always treated him with the respect due a father.

Bhima: True, I did respect him once. He was different then, but now his arm deserves to be burnt. I will throw him and his burnt arms away from here. Look on this scene—doesn't your blood boil? Can you stand this?

Arjuna: Of course I'm angry, too. But can you not see that our brother is just as angry? He's burning with an anger against himself! He would burn his arms himself if he could. Do not add to his unhappiness. The Kauravas have always wanted to see us quarrel. Until now we have always been united. If you rebel against our dear brother, then their wish will be fulfilled.

Vidura: You are right, Draupadi. There is no righteousness in this hall. We all deserve to be sent to Hell for this gross crime! No one in this hall questioned the act of Yudhishtira when he offered you as the wager. Even now, why are they all silent? Is there not one here who has the courage to defy Duryodhana and speak the truth? (pause) Well, then, hear what I have to say—Draupadi has not been lost. Since she is the wife of all of the Pandavas, she was not Yudhishtira's sole property to use as a wager. Therefore, she is free!

Duryodhana: You are assuming too much wisdom. All the wise ones here, beginning from Bhishma, Drona, and Dhritarashtra, are convinced that Draupadi is a slave. If she's not a slave, and the husbands think that she's not a slave, do you think they would have allowed her to be brought into the court? You say that it is not right to call her a slave, but there is no need to consider dharma in the case of the Pandavas. Where have you seen one woman being shared by five men? She's a slave, just like her lords. They have no right to even wear the clothes they're wearing. Dushasana, remove the garments of these five men, and also those of Draupadi, and surrender them to their lawful owner, the prince. (after collecting the garments of the five Pandavas, Dushasana takes hold of the upper clothes of Draupadi)

Draupadi: I have heard that when a great danger threatens us, nothing can help us except complete surrender to the Supreme Lord. My dear Lord Krishna, Vasudeva, they say You are the last refuge of the helpless. You are everything to me. They say You're everywhere, and that You're present wherever Your devotee sings Your glories. You must, therefore, be here. I surrender myself to You. It is up to You to save me! (Dushasana pulls her clothing, Krishna appears and supplies unlimited clothing)

Bhima: Listen to me, all of you kshatriyas! If I do not kill this sinner, Dushasana, and drink his blood, let me never see the heavens where my forefathers are! I will tear his heart out and drink his blood.

Duryodhana: Why are you silent, Dushasana? Take her to the servants' quarters. Let her get acquainted with her new duties.

Draupadi: I am not a slave! Dronacharya, Bhishma, am I a slave?

Duryodhana: Stop repeating your question! Stop saying you're not a slave! We've heard it enough. Your husbands have so far made no attempt to answer your question. They stood silent even when your honor was at stake. I am waiting for Yudhishtira to speak. Let him say whether you belong to him or to me. We will decide your future after that. (Yudhishtira's head is bowed, and he remains silent)

Duryodhana: Draupadi, look! Your lords are silent. I will answer your question—you are free; free to choose a man from amongst us. You are not born to be a slave. You are meant to be the wife of a ruling monarch.

Bhima: I would have killed all of you long ago, had it not been for the fact that I respect my brother. When he announced that we were slaves of this man, we accepted his words. Look at my arms! They are aching to crush into pulp the wicked sons of Dhritarashtra! But for Yudhishtira, this would already have taken place.

Duryodhana: Yudhishtira, what do you say? Is she free or a slave? Answer if you dare. (he then exposes his thigh to Draupadi)

Bhima: (springs to his feet like a cobra) If I do not break that thigh, then I do not deserve to attain heaven! I will break that thigh with my club!

Duryodhana: Dushasana, why do you wait? Take this woman to the slave quarters!

Bhima: I am going to kill Duryodhana. My brother Arjuna will kill Radheya! Sahadeva will kill this evil Shakuni! And I will also tear out the heart of Dushasana!

Arjuna: Bhima, your words are prophetic! Let the world know that these fools amongst men have irrevocably ordered their own deaths!

Sahadeva: Shakuni, your dear dice are like sharp arrows that spell your death. I swear that I will kill you!

Nakula: My brothers have sworn to kill Duryodhana, Dushasana, Radheya, and Shakuni. I promise you that I will kill the son of Shakuni, Uluka. They will all die at the hands of the Pandavas.

Dhritarashtra: Duryodhana, in your foolishness, you have insulted the pure-hearted Draupadi. Your death is now certain. Draupadi, I will grant you any boon you want. Please forgive the behavior of my son, who did not know what he was doing!

Draupadi: This is the boon I request, then: May Yudhishtira be released from bondage. Please announce that he is not the slave of this sinner, Duryodhana.

Dhritarashtra: Consider it done! Ask for another boon.

Draupadi: Please release his four brothers.

Dhritarashtra: That, too, is done. Ask me for another boon, my daughter.

Draupadi: You have already granted two boons. To ask for a third would be to transgress dharma. (Duryodhana and friends leave the hall in a huff)

Yudhishtira: My dear uncle, Dhritarashtra. You have always commanded us, and we have always obeyed. If you will tell us what to do, we will now do so.

Dhritarashtra: Yudhishtira, I am touched by your humility! You are wise as you are good and noble! Please forget all that has transpired here today. I want you to take back all that you lost in the game today. Go back to Khandava-prastha, and continue your rule. Please consider that today was only a bad dream. Please think kindly of my son, Duryodhana.

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

Dushasana: Duryodhana, your father has returned everything to the Pandavas!

Duryodhana: What? How could he? (he runs to Dhritarashtra) Father, how could you do such a thing? The Pandavas are like deadly cobras that have been stepped on. Do you think they will forget these insults? Do you think King Draupada will remain silent when he hears of the insults to his dear daughter, Draupadi? None of them will rest until we are all dead! This madness of yours must be rectified.

Dhritarashtra: But Duryodhana, what happened in that hall was so irreligious...

Duryodhana: Just listen to me, father. I have the answer! We will challenge the Pandavas to a final game of dice. The winner will rule the entire kingdom. The loser will have to live in exile for 13 years. The 13th year must be spent in disguise. If anyone discovers their disguise during that year, they must spend another 12 years in the forest. During that time, I will become so powerful and secure in my position that they will have no chance to take their power back when they return.

Gandhari: (to Duryodhana) My son, I wish we had taken the advice of Vidura and destroyed you as soon as you were born. You are the root cause of this terrible injustice. Even now it is not too late. Listen to me. If you repent and desist from further sin, the Pandavas may even forget their oaths and spare your life. Do not try to convince your father. He is so easily led.

Dhritarashtra: I cannot refuse my son anything!

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Narrator: Eventually there was a great war between the Kurus and the Pandavas and their followers. As the Maha-Bharata tells us, by the grace of Lord Krishna the mighty Bhima broke Duryodhana's thigh and killed him. Arjuna shot an arrow and cut Karna's head off. Such is the end result of lust, anger and greed. This concludes our drama today—a small portion of the Vedic literature, the Maha-Bharata. (kirtan)

The End

Draupadi And The Gambling Match

from the Maha-Bharata

Draupadi And The Gambling Match

from the Maha-Bharata

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Yudhishtira, Vidura, Bhima, Bhishma, Arjuna, Draupadi, Lord Krishna, Shakuni, Karna, Drona, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra, Dhrishtadyumna, Dushasana, Servant.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: Many centuries ago, in the land of Bharata, now India, the Kuru dynasty was the most powerful empire, headed by Bhishma, Drona, Dhrishtadyumna and Kripa. Although Maharaja Yudhishtira was the rightful heir to the throne of the Kuru house, due to deceitfulness of their uncle, Dhrishtadyumna, they were mistreated and thrown into exile in a jungle. But by the grace of Lord Krishna, they turned that jungle into a wondrous and mystical city known as Indraprastha. Having completed the building of that city, king Yudhishtira, under the direction of Lord Krishna, performed the great Rajasuya sacrifice, in which all the nearby kings surrendered themselves unto the Supreme King. Duryodhana and his friends were all invited to come. With great envy, Duryodhana toured the new city. At one point he mistook water to be the land and fell in the water, to the great

amusement of everyone including Draupadi and the Pandavas. (laughter of Draupadi. Shakuni enters)

Shakuni: My dear nephew, you seem to be troubled. What seems to be causing your problem?

Duryodhana: Please leave me alone, I do not wish to be disturbed!

Shakuni: Come, come my son, would you tell your uncle—who is your well wisher—to go away? Now tell me, what is bothering you?

Duryodhana: Uncle, please, I do not want to discuss it. I just want to be left alone.

Shakuni: Is it the Pandavas who are bothering you? Or is this now wondrous and mystical city disturbing you? Or is the Rajasuya sacrifice that Yudhishtira performed before you the cause of your anxiety?

Duryodhana: Uncle, will you stop teasing me and leave me alone!

Shakuni: Oh, so that's what's disturbing you—the opulence of the Pandavas in their new city, Indraprastha, is the cause of your envy. You wish you could acquire all that wealth in one big scoop.

Duryodhana: What are you trying to get at, uncle?

Shakuni: I want to see you happy. I want you to be the king. After all, when your father passes away, his world should be yours to rule, not Yudhishtira's. Why don't you just confide in me, then I will certainly help you. With myself and Karna as your friends, you need not be in unnecessary anxiety, my dearest one.

Duryodhana: Well, alright. Ever since I returned from Indraprastha, I have never known a peaceful day. I haven't eaten. I can't even sleep at night.

Shakuni: Yes.

Duryodhana: The laughter of Draupadi is haunting me like a ghost, and now it won't leave me alone. That laughter just follows me everywhere I go!

Shakuni: So you want to punish her.

Duryodhana: Yes. Just as I was made a fool in front of everyone, I too want to make a fool of Draupadi. But I must fight and defeat the Pandavas before I can do that. Then I can keep Yudhishtira's entire kingdom, which was meant for me in the first place.

Shakuni: Now, that's not an easy task. You have seen how powerful the Pandavas have become. They can never be defeated in a war.

Duryodhana: Then am I to be a pauper and never satisfy my desire?

Shakuni: Now don't jump to conclusions. I have a weapon more powerful and sharper than mere steel. I can make all that immense wealth yours. Not a drop of blood will be shed. Nor will any blame be attached to your name. Come out of this depression and listen to me.

Duryodhana: Is this possible?

Shakuni: Yes. Yudhishtira has one weakness—he likes to play dice.

Duryodhana: Dice?

Shakuni: Yes, dice. Yudhishtira loves playing this game. But he does not know how to play. On the other hand, I am extremely clever at throwing the dice. There is no one in this world who can play against me and win. I will do what will please you by using this skill of mine—I will defeat Yudhishtira and win his kingdom for you.

Duryodhana: But what about Draupadi?

Shakuni: I will win her, too. You must be patient. Now you must tell your father and get his permission. It will then be like taking a toy from the hand of a child. But you must get your father's consent.

Duryodhana: Shakuni, you must go to father and get his consent. He will listen to you more than I. He does not consider my values very important. Father is always shielded from me by Vidura.

Shakuni: Alright, I will go to father, and when the time is right I will tell him of your depression.

Duryodhana: That sounds like a good plan. (Shakuni leaves, enter Dhrishtadyumna)

Dhrishtadyumna: Duryodhana, my son. Come here... Let me touch you. You are unhappy? What is the cause? If I can do anything to rectify the situation, then please tell me.

Duryodhana: Please listen to the cause of my depression... My heart burns at the opulence of the Pandavas. When the star of the Pandavas is in the ascent, is it hardly surprising that I am unhappy? Do you expect me to sing the praises of those well-behaved children? You seem to be doing absolutely nothing to help me. I hate them! I can't live with them on this planet! I want them destroyed! I want their opulence as my own!

Dhrishtadyumna: My son, how have you allowed yourself to be so carried away by envy? Be peaceful in mind and be happy with what you have.

Duryodhana: Peaceful? Happy? How can I be happy with what I have when the Pandavas have more?!

Dhrishtadyumna: Well then, I will speak to Vidura and see what he has to say.

Duryodhana: No! You never listen to me! You always follow that old fool's advice. Why don't you speak to Karna or Shakuni?

Dhrishtadyumna: Vidura is old and wise. He knows what is best for the both of us.

Shakuni: Yes, it's true. You never take advice from us. We too can instruct you.

Dhrishtadyumna: What do you think?

Shakuni: Well, if all Duryodhana wants is his wealth—I can acquire that for him easily, and without any bloodshed.

Dhrishtadyumna: How?

Shakuni: All you have to do is to invite Yudhishtira for a game of dice. With my expertise I can win Yudhishtira's kingdom for Duryodhana.

Duryodhana: Excellent idea. Excellent. Yes, father, I think you should invite him.

Dhrishtadyumna: I must consult my ministers first.

Duryodhana: Father, you know full well that they will never agree to this idea. Vidura will never sanction this. If you do not agree, I will kill myself. Then you can be happy with Yudhishtira and Vidura. You need not think of me.

Dhrishtadyumna: All right, I will not ask anyone. Have a beautiful hall built in Jayanta... When it is finished you can call upon the sons of Pandu. Then you can have your game of dice. I leave it in your hands.

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Bhima: Now our power has grown so much with Maharaja Drupada's allies, and this wondrous city is the talk of the country. Our fame and power is growing day by day. Now it will be very difficult for our cousins to have a war with us.

Yudhishtira: My dear brother, you must not always scorn your brothers.

Bhima: They are not our brothers—they have tried to kill us on several occasions. You still have the audacity to call them our brothers? It is not a secret, my brother,

that I long for a battle with the envious snake Duryodhana for all the harm he has done to us. I still wait for that moment. But when it does come, I will be ready.

Yudhishtira: Even if they have done us harm, it is not dharmic to seek revenge or to fight with one's brother. We are now happy here. They have given this land of their own free will, so they will not try to take it back from us.

Arjuna: Is that so? Well, let me tell you, brother, that those brothers of ours will not sleep a wink until they see us all killed and deprived of all of our belongings. Do you think they will be satisfied now that we have built this wondrous city?

Bhima: No. That will just burn his body so badly that he will probably catch fire. (Vidura enters)

Yudhishtira: Oh, Vidura, what a pleasant surprise to see you here. Is all well in the house of Kuru? Is Bhishma well? How is our guru, Dronacharya? And our uncle Dhrishtadyumna? Your face does not seem to register any happiness. Are you not well?

Vidura: All is well in our kingdom. I am fine. I have a message from the king.

Bhima: A message from the king? What does he want now?

Vidura: The king has had a beautiful assembly hall built. He wants you to go and spend some time there with him playing dice, enjoying happy times together and healing old wounds.

Arjuna: Hmmm...

Vidura: Why are you silent, my dear uncle?

Yudhishtira: I feel that there is more to this than meets the eye. I have a feeling this game of dice will be the cause of quarrel between the sons of Dhrishtadyumna and us. I am eager to know your opinion, uncle.

Vidura: That is the cause of my unhappiness. I know it is not right to play games. I tried telling my brother, but he would not listen to me.

Bhima: Tell me, who are all these rogues who are planning to join in this game?

Vidura: Shakuni, the evil-minded Duryodhana, and his brothers. These are the opponents you have to face, Yudhishtira.

Yudhishtira: I am inept at this game while Shakuni is expert at throwing the dice. But what can I do? All that happens is ordained by the Lord Himself. I am helpless. The king knows my principles, that I will never disobey the orders of my elders. It is also a rule among kshatriyas that one must play when one is invited to play. Let Lord Krishna guide us. I will make arrangements to leave soon.

Vidura: O my dearest, how much more must you go through before the world can see your righteousness?

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

Duryodhana: So the hour has arrived when all that the Pandavas have will be mine. Father, at last you can be rest assured that your son will be happy.

Karna: I think we should have just gone and marched to Indraprastha and taken over the throne by force. That's the only way to deal with rogues.

Shakuni: Why shed unnecessary blood when it can be avoided? We can still achieve the same result without spilling one drop of blood.

Dhrishtadyumna: I hope what you are saying is true. I have heard enough of this kind of talk to last two lifetimes. The Pandavas should be here soon. (Pandavas enter)

Yudhishtira: Our respects are unto you, O great king of the Kuru house. Today we have witnessed the glory of the Kurus. The hall you have built is truly astounding.

Dhrishtadyumna: Well, I am pleased that you are happy with our hall and hospitality. How is Draupadi?

Draupadi: I am well, thank you.

Shakuni: Why don't you sit down? You must be very tired from travelling. Bring some refreshments for our guests. How about a game of dice whilst we wait for the refreshments?

Yudhishtira: I wish not to partake in this activity.

Shakuni: Oh come, come, it is only a game. Do not worry. Enjoy yourselves.

Yudhishtira: You do not see my point. This game will result in a quarrel. A wise man becomes a fool after he puts his hand on the dice. Let us avoid this game.

Shakuni: So you are afraid of losing? Maybe you are not ready to lose the wealth you have acquired from the Rajasuya sacrifice. After all, it is new to you. Let him keep it. You need not accept the challenge.

Yudhishtira: I am not afraid, nor am I fond of wealth as you are. You know I cannot refuse having been challenged. I will certainly play. What are the rules?

Duryodhana: You wager jewels, precious stones, etc., and Shakuni will play on my behalf.

Yudhishtira: I have never heard of this type of game.

Shakuni: Well, it seems quite evident that you want to avoid playing, giving all these excuses of yours. If you do not want to play, you must tell us frankly. (Bhishma enters)

Bhishma: I have heard that there is to be a game of dice to be played?

Drona: It is not a good idea to play this game, my dear children. Evil will come.

Bhishma: Listen to what your acharya is saying. He speaks the truth. For your own benefit, let this game not start.

Karna: How dare you speak for all of us! You are saying this just to protect the Pandavas. From the very beginning, you always favored them. You are more fond of them. Not once have you glorified Duryodhana. It is not a secret how the acharya and yourselves held Arjuna as very dear. As a person who is head of the Kurus, you should favor no one, and guide all without cloudy vision.

Bhishma: You make me laugh, Karna. You boast too much in front of everyone. If anyone has cloudy vision here, I'm afraid it is you. You are young and immature. You act in the mode of passion. You don't think about what you are saying.

Dhrishtadyumna: Please, my dear, do not start a quarrel. We have come to enjoy each other's company, not to fight.

Yudhishtira: O grandfather, I am compelled to play this game. I have been challenged. I cannot refuse.

Bhishma: Do what you feel is right for dharma. Krishna works in ways which are beyond our understanding.

Shakuni: Hmm... shall we take our places and begin? You make the wagers. We shall see if we can match you or not.

Yudhishtira: I lay my jewels and precious stones, etc., for the game.

Duryodhana: I shall then lay my own wealth against yours.

Shakuni: Good, so we have a gentleman's agreement. Now we shall begin. (they throw dice)

Duryodhana: You won, uncle. You won! Excellent! Excellent!

Yudhishtira: I shall lay all my gold coins.

Shakuni: Good... Here, better luck this time, my friend. (he wins)

Yudhishtira: I shall lay my chariots, soldiers and armies... (Shakuni wins again)

Vidura: Stop this insane game, O king! Have I not told you before that this will lead to a fight? Evil omens can be seen. I warn you here and now: if this game does not stop, then it will lead to the downfall of the entire kshatriya race. You will suffer greatly because of this injustice caused to your brothers—sons who are sinless and pure by nature. Your son has not the power to fight the Pandavas openly, so he and his friends have to invent cheating methods to defeat them. I beseech you, O king, before it is too late. Stop this madness at once! (silence)

Duryodhana: My dear uncle, ever since childhood you have always been partial to the Pandavas. You never liked me. You are very ungrateful to the hand that feeds you. You are trying to kill the affection my father has for me. Do not try to force my father to change his mind. Leave us alone. Do not speak such words to my father again. Shakuni is here. He is more of a well-wisher to father and all of us than all of you put together.

Shakuni: I am afraid you have lost everything. If you have something left that you can call your own then you may wager that. I will give you all that Duryodhana has won.

Yudhishtira: I still have something I can wager.

Shakuni: You have something more? What do you have? Tell us! What could you possibly have left that we haven't already won from you?

Yudhishtira: The young and handsome Nakula is the next wager.

Shakuni: So we may carry on then. Good... here... (wins)

Yudhishtira: The wise Sahadeva is next...

Shakuni: Won. You have lost the sons of Madri. Why do you hesitate to wager your true brothers. Or are they so superior to the sons of Madri that you wouldn't even consider them?

Yudhishtira: Please do not say such things. Your plan is to cause dissention amongst us. Here is Arjuna, who has no equal in the world. He is my wager.

Shakuni: Good. Then you may still have a chance of winning all that you have lost... here, won!

Yudhishtira: Here is the mighty and powerful Bhima... he is my next wager.

Shakuni: Won!

Yudhishtira: I am the wager now.

Shakuni: Won!

Duryodhana: (whispering) Tell him about Draupadi.

Bhima: Duryodhana, don't you even dare to mention Draupadi, for I will smash my mace upon your wretched skull. You rogue!

Duryodhana: Bhima, calm yourself. You are no longer a free man to do what you will. You have now become a slave of the Kurus and you will remain that way.

Shakuni: So?

Yudhishtira: The favored queen of the Pandavas is my wager now.

Shakuni: Won. I now have everything of yours.

Duryodhana: You see now, Vidura, I have won everything. Now Draupadi will be our slave. Indeed this is the happiest day of my life, and I owe it entirely to you, my dear uncle.

Vidura: O shameless one. Even now it is not too late. Do not incur the all-devouring anger of the Pandavas. It is just like a deer who provokes the mighty tiger. Draupadi is not your slave. She must not be insulted. If you do not heed my words, then you will all be destroyed. Hell is already preparing herself to receive the host of the Kuru house... What can I do? They do not know what fate has in store for them.

Duryodhana: We have had enough talk from this low-born man to last ten lifetimes! Bring Draupadi here at once... What? Why do you hesitate? Are you afraid of the wrath of the Pandavas which my rotten uncle spoke of. Now go, otherwise your corpse will be fit for the dogs. (Servant enters)

Servant: My lord, Draupadi wants to ask this one question before she comes.

Duryodhana: What is it?

Servant: "Did Yudhishtira gamble away me first or himself?"

Duryodhana: What rubbish she speaks, timid servant! Dushasana, bring Draupadi here!

Dushasana: Yes, brother... come on, move! You belong to my brother now. You have been won in a game. You are a slave now. (Dushasana pushes Draupadi onto stage)

Draupadi: In this great house I see many great people: the elders of the Kurus, who are reputed to be renowned for dharma and righteousness from time immemorial. You are all present. Here is a man drunk with power, asking his cruel brother to drag a woman to the court, and yet you all just look on. I asked just one question but not one of you could answer me. When people like Bhishma and Drona are present here and are allowing this to take place, certainly dharma must have left the house of the Kurus. My question is simple. Do you all consider me a slave of this man, or am I free? (to Bhishma) You are said to possess all wisdom and knowledge. They say none is wiser than you.

Bhishma: I am indeed at a loss to give you a proper answer. A man cannot gamble something once he has lost himself. But then there is this consideration: a man has a right over his wife, whether he is free or not. He can call her his property even if he has lost himself. Yudhishtira knew that Shakuni was a master of this game, and yet he willingly played against him.

Draupadi: You seem to be giving the impression that my husband played the game willingly, but your dear grandson Duryodhana and his uncle had challenged him to play. Yudhishtira was unwilling to play, but by deceitful means he was forced to do so. You knew that this was an unfair game. All of you knew. What chance does my husband have playing against the skillful Shakuni? Yet you did not stop the game. Now you chastise my husband for playing!

Duryodhana: Dushasana, let the whole court now see Draupadi's body! Pull her clothes off!

Draupadi: No! Don't touch me! (she fights and holds onto her clothing)

Dushasana: Stop this! You are a slave of Duryodhana! No one can stop us! You know very well that you have been lost!

Bhima: Dushasana, if you as much as touch her hair I will smash you with my bare hands! (to Yudhishtira) Look at what you have done! We don't mind that you gambled us all away; but now you have gambled Draupadi away!

Arjuna: Bhima, what is this action of yours? What has overcome you? Never before have you spoken to Yudhishtira like that. You have always treated him with respect.

Bhima: I did until today. I have lost all respect for him. Look at this scene! Does not your blood boil?

Arjuna: Of course, I am angry too; but can you not see that our brother is just as angry. He could burn the entire courthouse with his anger. Please do not inflict more pain upon him. The Kauravas have always wanted us to quarrel with each other. Now they are happy to see that.

Vidura: You are right. There is no righteousness in this hall. We all deserve to go to hell! Bhishma, Drona, Dhrishtadyumna, and all the others cannot answer your question. Is there one amongst you who can defy the courage of Duryodhana? Well, let me tell you, I feel that Draupadi has not been lost. Yudhishtira has no rights over Draupadi, since he is a slave who has no rights over anything. He is not responsible for his action. He did not even think of using Draupadi until Duryodhana suggested it. He has no right to wager Draupadi since she belongs not just to him but to all the brothers. Without the consent of his brothers, Yudhishtira played with Draupadi. She is therefore free, not a slave.

Draupadi: I am not a slave!

Duryodhana: Stop saying you are not a slave. Ask Yudhishtira the question... Go on! Go on!... She is just silent. They have not tried to release you from your slavery. Look, your lords are so eager to help you. You should now chose one of us as your husband. You shouldn't be the wife of some slaves. (he shows his thigh to Draupadi)

Bhima: Duryodhana, you wretched dog! I should have killed you a long time ago. My arms, my strength, my mace, my power, is all being shackled by the chains of dharma. But hear me, everyone in this court, while I take this solemn oath that this thigh that Duryodhana has shown—if it is not smashed by my mace—I will be doomed to go to hell!

Karna: Do as your brother says.

Draupadi: O please Bhishma, help me. Drona, protect me from these rogues! O king of the Kurus, how are you allowing this to happen in your presence?

Dushasana: No one will help you. Come here!

Bhima: Dushasana, listen carefully. When the war takes place I will pull your arms out of their sockets and will surely drink the blood from your heart!

Arjuna: Your words will come true. I have yet to see someone escape the wrath of Bhima. The earth will drink the blood of these four sinners—Duryodhana, Dushasana, Shakuni and Karna. All those present please hear as I take this oath. I will kill Karna and all his followers in the war. I will lead them all to the god of death. The Himalayas may move, the sun may swerve from its orbit, or the moon may lose its coolness, but I will never swerve from my dreaded oath!

Duryodhana: Dushasana, do not be swayed by the words of slaves. (Dushasana tries to grab Draupadi)

Draupadi: O my Lord Krishna, help me! Let me surrender unto You. I am Yours! (Dushasana pulls her clothes off. He becomes exhausted as more and more cloth magically appears)

Karna: What is this evil spell that is taking place?

Dhrishtadyumna: What has happened? What has happened?

Vikarma: The sari of Draupadi which Dushasana tries to disrobe seems to be endless! There is no end to it! She seems to be protected by divine nature! You must stop this at once! Come to your senses!

Dhrishtadyumna: O my foolish son, in your greediness you have insulted Draupadi, a pure soul. Your death is now certain to be soon! O Draupadi, please kindly forgive my son's wrong-doings; I will grant you any boon that you desire!

Draupadi: O king, kindly release my husbands and free them from being slaves.

Dhrishtadyumna: Yudhishtira, you and your brothers are free to go. Your kingdom and wealth shall all be returned to you.

Yudhishtira: My dear uncle, if you allow us to go then we will depart now.

Dhrishtadyumna: Yudhishtira, I am very pleased with your humility. You are wise and are truly noble. You must not remember what has taken place today. Please overlook my son's faults and return to your city.

Yudhishtira: As you wish.

Duryodhana: What madness is this, father? After all that has happened, how could you do this? Now they are more dangerous than before! Did you not see their eyes burn for revenge? Are you so naive to think they will forget what happened to Draupadi? Do you think king Drupada will stay quiet after he hears what we did to his daughter? Now Bhima and Arjuna must be thinking up ways to fulfill their oaths. We all are doomed!

* * * * *

Narrator: Eventually there was a great war between the Kurus and the Pandavas and their followers. As the Maha-Bharata tells us, by the grace of Lord Krishna the mighty Bhima broke Duryodhana's thigh and killed him. Arjuna shot an arrow and cut Karna's head off. Such is the end result of lust, anger and greed. This concludes our drama today—a small portion of the Vedic literature, the Maha-Bharata. (kirtan)

The End

Sita's Wedding

Sita's Wedding

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CAST: Narrator, Maharaja Dasarath, Servant, Vishvamitra, Vashishtha, Rama, Lakshman, Sage, King Janaka, Sita, Ravana, Parashurama.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

Narrator: A long, long time ago in a land called Ayodhya there lived a righteous and saintly king by the name of Dasarath Maharaja. The king unfortunately had no sons, so by the grace of Rishyashringa Muni, the king performed a great sacrifice so he could beget some sons to rule the kingdom after him. In time, four powerful sons were born to the king's wives. They were named Rama, Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughna. They were all expansions of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Rama was especially loved by everyone. King Dasarath was very attached to Rama, who was endowed with all good qualities. The king saw his four sons grow into handsome and mighty princes. One day, when Rama was sixteen, his father was explaining the history of their dynasty.

Dasarath: So You see, my dear Rama and Lakshman, our dynasty comes down from the sun god himself. We've had many great kings who have ruled our land. Of course it was King Ikshvaku who founded our city of Ayodhya. The sage Bhagiratha brought the celestial Ganges to this planet from the heavens to purify us. And then there was the noble and truthful king Harishchandra, whose character is spotless. Harishchandra was put into so many difficulties by the sage Vishvamitra as a test, but he could not find any fault in him. In the end, Vishvamitra was extremely pleased with Harishchandra.

Servant: My dear king, Vishvamitra is here to see you.

Dasarath: Bring him in immediately... Pranam, Vishvamitra! Welcome to Ayodhya! Your holy feet bless our city! Our good fortune knows no bounds due to your presence! (to the servant) Bring all articles of worship for our respected guest. Bring food and refreshments quickly!

Vishvamitra: Blessings to you, O king. May you live a long and noble life. I want you to forget the formalities.

Dasarath: Rama, Lakshman—pay Your respects to Vishvamitra, who created a universe parallel to that of Lord Brahma's!

Vishvamitra: Blessings to you, Dasarath Maharaja. I have come to make a request to you.

Dasarath: Tell me, what is it you require? Name it and it shall be yours. Land, riches, men, wealth... Whatever you require is at your disposal.

Vishvamisra: At the moment I am engaged in a fire sacrifice, but there are two demons named Marichi and Subal who are causing great trouble. Because I am doing the ritual, I am forbidden to kill them.

Dasarath: Certainly I will help. I will arrange my army to protect your ashram from these demons.

Vishvamisra: I don't need your army to kill them, I only need one person.

Dasarath: One person... but who?

Vishvamisra: Rama.

Dasarath: Rama, Rama... No, no, no... not my dear Rama! This is not possible! Don't take Rama away! He's just a mere boy of sixteen. His education is not even finished! Why, He has not been fully trained in archery! How can Rama kill them? Please just allow my powerful army to kill those rakshasas! Even Indra, king of heaven, used my army to fight the demons! I will personally come to...

Vishvamisra: I have come for Rama.

Dasarath: You may tear my eyelids from my eyes, but do not tear Rama away from me!!!

Vishvamisra: Dasarath, do not brag or reason like a woman. Will you or will you not give Rama to me?

Dasarath: No, it can not be so!

Vishvamisra: You betray the good name of Harishchandra! You promise anything, but when I ask for something, you refuse! Shame on you! I do not wish to stay in the presence of a hypocrite. I will leave! I hope you remain happy in your family life.

Vashishtha: Maharishi, please do not get angry.

Vishvamisra: Mahamuni Sri Vashishtha, your counsel has little effect on your disciples.

Vashishtha: My dear Vishvamisra, Rama's beauty and qualities create such strong bonds of affection. Dasarath, do not worry. No harm can ever come to Rama as long as Vishvamisra is there to protect Him. He only desires to take this as an excuse so he can train Rama in the art of military warfare.

Dasarath: O great sage, please forgive my ignorance and be compassionate on us! You can take Rama, and please take Lakshman with you also. (to the servant) Bring Rama and Lakshman. (Rama and Lakshman enter and offer obeisances to

the sage and to their father) Rama, Lakshman, I want You to go with Vishvamitra and follow his instructions.

Rama: Yes, father. (Rama and Lakshman leave)

SCENE TWO

The Forest

SCENE TWO

The Forest

Vishvamitra: Rama, Lakshman—wake up! It's time to perform Your morning oblations. Rama, Lakshman—I will teach You the knowledge of bala and alibaba, by which You will be free from all hunger, tiredness, sleep and will conquer all Your enemies. (chants mantra and pours water) Come, let us continue. (as they walk, the roar of a she-demon is heard) This noise You hear, Rama, it is the demon named Takara. She is the mother of Marichi and Subal. She is causing this darkness. Look—there she is! Kill her at once!

Rama: How is it possible for Me to kill a woman?

Vishvamitra: Rama, do not hesitate to kill her. She is a source of great disturbance. Kill her at once, for when the night comes, her strength will increase many times! (Rama shoots her with bow and arrows) We shall rest here for a while.

Rama: Lakshman, bring some fruits and berries for our guru.

Lakshman: Yes, Rama.

Vishvamitra: Rama, Your talent in archery is especially good. I shall give You these arrows which are invisible. Only use them when it is necessary, for ordinary mortals do not know the usage of such weapons, which I acquired through the power of my austerities. (Lakshman comes in with fruit) Let us proceed further to my ashram.

SCENE THREE

The Ashram

SCENE THREE

The Ashram

Sage: My dear Vishvamitra, we have been waiting for you. Everything is ready.

Vishvamitra: Let us begin immediately.

Rama: Lakshman, we have to be vigilant. The sacrifice is about to begin.

Lakshman: Yes, Rama. (starts sacrifice. Smoke appears from offstage) Rama, look, smoke!

Rama: It must be those demons! (Rama shoots arrows and kills the demons. Only Marichi the magician survives when Rama's powerful arrows hurl him into the sea)

Vishvamitra: The sacrifice is successful, and You have vanquished the demons. May You be blessed with a beautiful wife. Let us go to Mithila, the kingdom of king Janaka, where a test for chivalry is being performed for all the princes and warriors.

SCENE FOUR

The Arena

SCENE FOUR

The Arena

King Janaka: Welcome, everyone, to the marriage contest! Whoever can lift this bow and string it can win the hand of Sita. As you must all know, Sita had no ordinary birth like us, but was given to me by the demigods. Let the best man win. Begin. (different kings try, but all fail) What is this? No one else wants to try? Where is your strength? Where is your courage and valor? You call yourselves warriors? Is there no one amongst you who can lift this great bow? It seems there is no one qualified to marry my daughter. (quiet) Well, I see we do not have any more kshatriyas left.

Lakshman: What! How dare this Janaka speak like this in front of my Lord Rama? Does he not recognize a true warrior when he sees Rama? This stupid bow of his is like a twig for Rama! Why, if Lord Rama gave me the permission, I would pick up this bow and run around the world with it! Bring it here and I'll smash it to bits in front of you all! Then we'll see what Janaka has to say!

Rama: Lakshman, please—we are only guests here.

Ravana: (laughs) You say there is no one who can lift it... well, I say there is—Ravana! (laughs) One who is blessed by Lord Shiva's blessings, one who can defy the demigods themselves. One who can drink the whole ocean, one who can conquer all the conquerors, one who can defy nature's elements—I, Ravana! (laughs) I helped Lord Shiva carry Mount Kailash. What is this mere task of lifting this tiny bow? (laughs. Tries to lift bow but fails)

Vishvamitra: Rama, I think You should put everyone out of anxiety. (Rama lifts the bow and breaks it. Parashurama enters)

Janaka: Welcome, Parashurama, we are indeed honored at your presence here today.

Parashurama: Who has dared to break the sacred bow?

Janaka: Why, what's wrong with that?

Parashurama: This is Lord Shiva's sacred bow! Whoever broke it must die by the blade of my axe!

Janaka: O great one, we did not know it was a sin to break it!

Parashurama: Whether you knew it or not, still you must pay the price and die!

Janaka: Please be merciful on us... we seek your blessings on Rama's wedding!

Parashurama: Rama, Rama, who is this Rama? I am the only one in the world to have this name, which belongs to Lord Vishnu.

Lakshman: I broke the bow.

Parashurama: So it was you!

Lakshman: That's what I just said.

Parashurama: How dare you speak to me like that! Prepare to meet your death!

Lakshman: I think you should prepare to meet yours.

Parashurama: Vishvamitra, who is this rascal who dares to raise his voice whole speaking with I, the mighty Parashurama?

Vishvamitra: He is my disciple, Lakshman, son of king Dasarath.

Parashurama: Well, you will have a dead disciple soon.

Rama: My brother is very excited. It was I who actually broke the bow.

Parashurama: You!

Rama: The contest was held for stringing the bow, and as I was stringing the bow it broke.

Parashurama: Well then, I shall kill You! (tries to lift his axe off the ground but can't) What is this? I can't lift my own axe! You must be someone special. Never has this ever happened to me before. Here, lift this bow of Vishnu. (Rama lifts and strings it) My Lord, You are Vishnu; please excuse my ignorance. Now my mission is complete. I can meditate on Your form always in my hermitage in the Himalayas. Jai Rama! Jai Rama! (Parashurama leaves. The wedding of Rama and Sita takes place amidst kirtan)

The End

The Ramayana

The Ramayana

* * * * *

CAST: Narrator, Crier, Dasarath, Manthara, Kaikeyi, Rama, Sita, Lakshman, Bharat, Surpanakha, Ravana, Marichi, Hanuman, 2 Ogresses.

Narrator: Millions of years ago in the land of India, the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared as Lord Ramachandra to reveal His incomparable pastimes of destroying the demonic element and upholding the divine. Once, King Janaka of Mithila was given the mighty bow of Lord Shiva, the Destroyer. The bow was so mighty, in fact, that no one could even bend it in order to string it. King Janaka offered the hand of his beautiful daughter, Sitadevi, to the man who would come and bend the bow. Many stalwart warriors came and tried, but all failed. Lord Ramachandra, the ideal prince, brave and accomplished, devoted to His duty, and unfaltering in His truth, easily broke the bow and won the hand of the fair princess. Thus, in joyous procession He brought his newly-won bride back to His capital city of Ayodhya. For a long time, Sri Rama and Sitadevi enjoyed a contented life of continual bliss in mutual service. They exactly resembled the Supreme Lord Vishnu, and His consort, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune.

SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

(Scene takes place in King Dasarath's assembly hall. Many kings and citizens have assembled. A crier steps forward)

Crier: Ladies and Gentleman! His Majesty, Emperor Dasarath! (trumpets)

Assembly: Jai! Jai! (Royal Guard accompanies Dasarath carrying flags, shields and spears. Dasarath and Kaikeyi sit on throne. Servants began to fan them and music gradually stops. The King looks around and slowly rises to speak)

Dasarath: Dearest assembled kings, and citizen of glorious Ayodhya, my ever-faithful subjects. It has been my great fortune to have been able to spend my

years serving such good people as yourselves. But, as you must know, I myself am now an old man. This body has become worn and tired from carrying the great burden of ruling the world all these years. So, as it is enjoined in the Vedas, when one's son becomes old enough to manage his father's affairs, the father should leave his situation, whatever it may be, and devote his remaining time to worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Fortunately, I am blessed by having such a great son as Rama.

Assembly: Jai! Jai!

Dasarath: I know that he is very much loved and respected by all of you, for he is a jewel among men and foremost of those who uphold righteousness. Therefore, my son Rama will now be your worthy protector. I, Emperor Dasarath, hereby declare that tomorrow a great festival shall be held in Ayodhya in honor of the coronation of Ramachandra as your new king. Let there be feasting, opulent decorations, music, festivities and celebration! Let everyone rejoice in the coronation of Rama!

Assembly: All glories to Ramachandra! Jai! All glories to King Dasarath!

SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

(Kaikeyi's bedroom. Manthara looks out the window and then speaks to Kaikeyi)

Manthara: Why are the people singing in the streets? What is causing all of this excitement in Ayodhya, dear Queen?

Kaikeyi: Why Manthara! I am surprised that you have not yet heard. Tomorrow, Emperor Dasarath will be installing on the throne the sinless Rama, who has conquered wrath.

Manthara: Dear Kaikeyi, do you not see the peril that is staring you in the face? Your evil-minded husband has your son Bharat living in a distant kingdom with relatives, and now he is planning to install Kaushalya's son, Rama, on the throne.

Kaikeyi: Manthara, I perceive no difference between Rama and Bharat. I am well pleased to know that the Emperor is going to crown Rama as the new king.

Manthara: O deluded one! It is all part of a deep plot. Rama has cause for fear from Bharat alone, who has an equal claim to the throne. After Rama's coronation. Bharat will surely be banished from the kingdom or murdered!

Kaikeyi: What?! How?!

Manthara: And you, my dear Queen, will be cast from the dynasty and will have to spend your remaining years as a menial servant of Queen Kaushalya!

Kaikeyi: O Manthara, this news is shattering!

Manthara: Therefore, you should secure the kingdom for your son Bharat and find an excuse for banishing Rama—his born enemy!

Kaikeyi: My dear Manthara, please point out the means by which I will be able to accomplish this.

Manthara: Very well then, listen to my advice. As you well know, many years ago, when your husband, King Dasarath, was wounded in a great battle between the demigods and the demons, you, young lady, nursed him back to health. Due to your services, the king promised you two boons—to be immediately granted upon your request. Since you have not yet requested either of these boons, now is your opportunity! Tell your husband that you want your worthy son Bharat installed on the throne, and Rama banished to the Dandaka forest!

Kaikeyi: Either Rama is sent into exile and Bharat rules over the kingdom, or you shall report me dead on this very eve!!!

SCENE THREE

SCENE THREE

(Kaikeyi's bedroom. Dasarath enters)

Dasarath: Kaikeyi, why are you sulking on the floor? I promise I will drive away your sorrow as the sun dispenses mist! Please explain the cause of your anxiety!

Kaikeyi: First you must make a solemn vow to fulfill my cherished desire.

Dasarath: I agree.

Kaikeyi: Do you remember the war between the demons and demigods?

Dasarath: Yes, of course!

Kaikeyi: You were wounded and I nursed you to life, and you gave me two boons, which I ask for now—let my son Bharat be crowned king, and banish Rama to spend fourteen years of exile in the Dandaka forest.

Dasarath: Is this a dream or have I lost my mind? How could you ask for such a thing? Rama is dearer to me than life itself. Please have pity on me and do not ask for this.

Kaikeyi: You must honor your word. To do right is a man's supreme duty. I have indicated what is to be done.

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(Dasarath and Kaikeyi are sitting alone on a couch. King is saddened. In comes Rama)

Rama: Father, I offer my respectful obeisances unto you.

Dasarath: O Rama! (Rama looks puzzled due to the sad expression of Dasarath and, after paying respects to Kaikeyi, addresses her)

Rama: My lady, I hope that no offense has been committed by Me against My father. Why is father angry with Me? Is there some dilemma which is causing this anguish?

Kaikeyi: The King is neither angry, nor is there some anguish troubling him, O Rama. But there is something in his mind which he is not disclosing to You for fear of giving You pain. Having given his word of honor to grant me two boons, which he promised to me many years ago, this illustrious monarch repents in the same way as any other common man. However, since one of the wishes falls upon You, I am not certain whether You are prepared to take it to heart.

Rama: You should not speak such words to Me, O glorious lady! At My father's request, I am prepared to leap into a fire. Commanded by him, I will even swallow poison! Speak out what you have to say. I shall do that which is promised by My father.

Kaikeyi: Very well, then, hear my boons. On this very day, my son Bharat shall be installed as king, and you, Rama, shall be banished from the kingdom to the Dandaka forest, where You will live in exile for fourteen years. Now, if You wish to prove Yourself, then be faithful to the words of Your father.

Rama: I do not desire to live in the world as a slave to material gain. Know Me to be devoted to immaculate righteousness like the sages! Whatever is agreeable to My worshipable father—that I will accomplish. I shall now leave for the Dandaka forest without questioning his command. (Rama exits. Kaikeyi smiles slyly)

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

(Sita's Bedroom. Rama enters)

Sita: All Glories unto You, my Lord. Has something ill befallen You, my dear Lord? You look as though you are carrying a great burden of grief. How has this come over You on Your coronation day?

Rama: O gentle Sita, there shall be no coronation, for My father is sending Me into exile to the forest.

Sita: Into exile?!

Rama: Yes. So I have come to see you and bid farewell.

Sita: Oh, no!

Rama: Please, do not lament. I must now make My abode in the forest of Dandaka for fourteen years, while My brother Bharat reigns as king. This has all been arranged by Kaikeyi, who obtained two boons from My father. Since it is the will of my father, I must go.

Sita: O, Beloved, if You depart this very day for the forest, I shall walk ahead of You and crush under my feet the blades of grass and thorns that lie in the way. I shall feel no sorrow in passing even a thousand years in the forest with You. Please, my dear mighty-armed Lord, I pray for You to take me with You!

Rama: But, Sita, think seriously of all the hardships and great tribulations which exist in forest life. The paths are rugged, and there are great, ferocious animals. By day and by night hunger stabs at you. You will have no bed to sleep upon—simply dry leaves. The forest is truly full of great suffering. No, Sita. Dandaka is not a proper place for you.

Sita: The disadvantages which You speak of, O Rama, are actually blessings in disguise. I am Your counterpart and cannot live without You. Please, I must go with You!

Rama: Very well, O princess of Mithila. But you must give away all of your valuable ornaments and fine jewels. Hurry! Make no delay.

Lakshman: My noble brother, I have overheard Your conversation. You must also take me with You to Dandaka forest. I implore You! It will be impossible for me to live in this world without Your association.

Rama: No, faithful Lakshman. If you wish to do good to Me, then remain in Ayodhya and help to maintain the kingdom.

Lakshman: Leave the kingdom to Bharat to maintain! I will go before You and Your wife, and serve as Your guide.

Rama: You are truly devoted to virtue, Lakshman. Therefore, you are worthy of accompanying Me.

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

(Queen Kaikeyi is sitting alone on a couch after Dasarath's death. Two guards are present. Two ministers are thoughtfully mumbling in the background. One minister looks through the window and notices Bharat's entourage approaching)

Minister: Dear queen, your son Bharat has just arrived from Kekaya! (Bharat enters palace and pays obeisances to his mother)

Bharat: All glories, noble mother!

Kaikeyi: Dearest Bharat, please tell me how many nights have elapsed since you began your return journey to Ayodhya?

Bharat: But a fortnight! Mother, everything is as it should be; but I do not see my father, neither here nor in any of his chambers. Though I have come here longing to see him, I cannot find him anywhere. Please tell me where he may be.

Kaikeyi: Your father, dear Bharat, has met the same fate as is destined for all created beings.

Bharat: What? You mean...

Kaikeyi: Yes, Your father is dead, my son. (Bharat faints, then slowly rises)

Bharat: But how? Why... why did he meet his death?

Kaikeyi: When I heard that your father was planning to install Ramachandra as the new king of Ayodhya, I decided to ask your father to grant me two boons which were promised to me many years ago when I nursed him back to health following a fierce battle between the demigods and the demons. He said that he would keep his promise to fulfill my desire. So I told him to banish Ramachandra to the forest for fourteen years and to install you as the new king instead. Your dear brother Lakshman, as well as Sita, have accompanied Rama into exile. Your father, due to separation from his beloved son, became overwhelmed with grief and met his death. Now the throne is yours, Bharat! Do not yield to sadness or grief, my son, but be of strong heart. Now the kingdom of Ayodhya is dependant upon you! I only desire the best for you. That is why I have arranged for this.

Bharat: (jumps to his feet screaming) No! You are my enemy in the disguise of a mother! My father has been consigned to death by you! O woman who perceives evil even when there is none—you have the audacity to banish my brother Rama to the forest with Sita and Lakshman?! Proceed you therefore to hell after death! O mother! I cannot allow you to do this sinful and wicked thing!

Kaikeyi: But... Bharat!

Bharat: Enough! (to ministers) Prepare for my father's funeral rites immediately. And send word to my commanders to assemble the army. (to Kaikeyi) Immediately

after the funeral ceremonies, I am leaving for the forest to bring back Ramachandra from exile. He shall rightfully be the king; and it is I who shall go into exile! And you, wicked Kaikeyi, shall suffer the lot for which you are destined. (mournful sitar music)

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

(In the forest)

Rama: Behold, my sweet Sita, the beautiful river Mandakini, with its banks full of fragrant flowers and inhabited by graceful swans!

Sita: It is as though the heavenly lake of Kuvera has been transported to the earth!

Rama: Being here with you, Princess of Mithila, I no longer desire Ayodhya nor its sovereignty.

Lakshman: Rama, I have just seen our brother Bharat, approaching through the forest!

Rama: Bharat? Coming here?!

Lakshman: Yes, he is advancing with a great army of elephants and soldiers. Our young brother, O mighty-armed Rama, has come to seek You out and destroy You, for he fears that when the fourteen years of Your exile have ended, then You will return to Ayodhya and steal his throne! Take up Your bows and arrows and prepare to fight!

Rama: No, Lakshman! Put down your bow. Let us in patience wait for Bharat himself to state his reason for coming. Our brother is not capable of offending me, not even within his mind. Of this, I am certain. (Bharat enters, falling at Rama's feet)

Bharat: O my glorious brother!

Rama: Where, I wonder has our father gone, O sinless Bharat? Why have you come to the forest, leaving him alone? So long as he is alive, you should not have come here under any circumstances.

Bharat: Our father, that great and mighty warrior, O Rama, not being able to bear the pain of separation from You, has left this mortal world!

Rama: O Bharat! No!

Bharat: Therefore, I beg of You, dear brother, return to Ayodhya and rule as its rightful king! And I shall take Your place in this forest, in order to fulfill Your vow!

Rama: O noble brother, our father, having thus departed for the spiritual world, how shall we disobey him now? To follow the instructions of one's father is the prime duty of every man! I must remain here until the fourteen years have ended. Let not grief overpower you, Bharat, but return now to Ayodhya and rule over her people, as you have been enjoined by father, a master of his will.

Bharat: Very well, dearest Rama. Yet, please, I implore you to sanctify these sandals, for I shall place them on the royal throne and await Your return from exile. (Rama steps into the sandals) All glories unto you, my noble and virtuous brother. You are the jewel of the twice-born. (they embrace)

Rama: O great king of Ayodhya, I bid you farewell! (Bharat and entourage exit)

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

(An ugly demoness approaches Rama)

Surpanakha: O delight among men, who are You? Why have You come to this terrible forest, which is infested by most horrible things?

Rama: O charming lady, My name is Rama. This is My younger brother, Lakshman, and My lovely consort, Sita.

Surpanakha: I am a very powerful personality, sister of the mighty Ravana, the King of the man-eating demons of Lanka! O best of men, be my own husband! We will be perfect partners... our beauty being equal!

Rama: But I am already married, and the rivalry between two wives would be unbearable. My younger brother, however, does not as yet have a consort. He is your match in every way.

Surpanakha: Lakshman, my beauty makes me worthy of you. Come, let us roam the forests and the caves and we will enjoy ourselves and each other.

Lakshman: But why should you, O heavenly maiden, be the wife of a slave such as I? I am but a menial servant of my noble brother. Be His wife; don't let Him discourage you.

Surpanakha: Do you dare slight me for this hideous hag? I will devour her! (she attacks Sita, Lakshman prevents it)

Rama: Wait, Lakshman, we can't slay a woman. Mutilate this demon as a light punishment for her crimes. (Lakshman lops off her nose, she exits screaming)

SCENE NINE

SCENE NINE

(Ravana's throne room. Ravana sits on his throne amidst dancing, fighting, jesters and drunken activity. All are startled by the hurried entrance of the screaming Surpanakha)

Surpanakha: What a fool you are! Being strongly attached to licentiousness and vulgar, unbridled, sense enjoyment, O Ravana, you do not perceive the danger that has cropped up in your own kingdom!

Ravana: Danger?!

Surpanakha: Your brothers and their army of 14,000 demons of terrible deeds have been slain single-handedly by Ramachandra!

Ravana: What?!

Surpanakha: Now the sages are once again performing sacrifices in Dandaka forest, thanks to Him!

Ravana: O my sister of captivating beauty, who is this Ramachandra and who has deformed you?

Surpanakha: He is the son of Dasarath, and He rivals the god of love in appearance. So quick with the bow is He, that I could not perceive when He set an arrow to the bow and when He released it, for in 15 hours, Rama singlehandedly killed 14,000 demons. I myself was mutilated but spared!!! His younger brother, Lakshman, is heroic, talented and strong like Rama. And I have never seen on the face of the earth a goddess, Gandharva woman, or Kinnara woman whose beauty can rival that of Rama's wife, Sita! Whoever embraces Sita is sure to live more happily than even Indra! She is certainly a worthy consort for you, O Ravana, but you must act quickly! (Surpanakha exits)

Ravana: Guard, bring Marichi! (Marichi the magician enters and bows) You shall assume the form of a golden deer, proceed to the Dandaka forest, the hermitage of Ramachandra, in view of His consort, Sita. Beholding you in the form of a deer, Sita will undoubtedly ask Rama and Lakshman to capture you. Then, while they are in pursuit of you, I shall steal Sita away! Forlorn, due to the loss of his wife, I shall surely annihilate this Ramachandra. What do you think, Maricha?

Marichi: My lord, contending with Rama is like entering a blazing fire. Because of His prowess, you will never be successful in stealing Sita away. If you wish to enjoy long life and happiness, give up this suicidal plan.

Ravana: O low-born Marichi, spare me your ill-conceived advice! While millions of demigods stand in complete awe and fear of me, you have the audacity to claim that this one wretched prince, Ramachandra, is capable of causing my destruction?! If you do not obey my command, Marichi, then the jaws of death await you this very hour!

Marichi: Consider me dead at the very sight of Rama... and yourself... and your family members... dead, as you take away Sita! I am your well-wisher, O Ravana! Please heed my counsel!

Ravana: Silence!!! I have told you what to do! Now go!!!

SCENE TEN

SCENE TEN

(The forest. Dance of the Golden Deer scene)

Sita: O, what a beautiful deer! Rama! Rama! Lakshman! Rama!

Rama: What is it, Sita?

Sita: My Lord, look yonder at that beautiful deer!

Lakshman: I conclude it to be none other than that demon, Maricha. Many kings have been killed by that sinful demon, who is capable of assuming any form at will!

Sita: O Rama, this charming deer captivates my mind. Please bring it to me, O mighty-armed one. I have never seen another deer equal in splendor or beauty to this one.

Rama: If this deer is as you say, Lakshman, then it must be killed, because it is an illusion created by a demon! Protected by armor, O Lakshman, remain here, guarding Sita, until I return.

Lakshman: Yes, Rama. (Rama leaves. Lakshman sits and begins to clean his bow. A cry for help is heard in the distance. It sounds like Rama's voice)

Sita: Lakshman! That cry! Go and find out if it was the voice of Rama! Neither my life breath nor my heart is functioning properly. You must rescue your brother! (Lakshman continues to clean his bow) Why do you not rush to His rescue?!

Lakshman: Your husband, O Princess, cannot be conquered by ogres, demigods or demons. Of this, there is no doubt. Therefore, let your heart be at ease and your agony be shed. That was not the voice of Rama, but a trick of that demon. When Rama has killed the deer, He will return. You have been placed in my charge, and I shall not leave you alone.

Sita: You are an enemy of your brother in the guise of a friend! I think that you have tried to get me alone, so that you could enjoy me! Bereft of Rama, I shall drown myself, or enter the blazing fire, but I shall never forsake my husband, Rama!

Lakshman: Alright, I will draw a circle of protection around you here. You'll be protected by a special mantra as long as you do not cross over the circle. I'll go. (Lakshman leaves reluctantly. Ravana approaches in the dress of a poor brahmana)

Ravana: O lady, possessing the splendor of silver and gold and lotuses in the guise of eyes. Are you the goddess of fortune, or a celestial nymph? O charming lady of sweet smiles and lovely eyes, you steal away my heart as a river washes away its banks with its current.

Sita: Dear brahmana, please be seated. I will bring you some food and drink. You must be very hungry.

Ravana: Indeed. Who are you, good lady?

Sita: I am the daughter of Janaka, king of Mithila, and the consort of Sri Ramachandra.

Ravana: A king's daughter? Living in the forest?

Sita: Yes. My husband, Sri Ramachandra, on the very day He was to be crowned the king of Ayodhya, was banished to this forest by His stepmother, Kaikeyi.

Ravana: Oh! (by his mannerisms he induces her to leave the circle)

Sita: But, tell me dear brahmana, why are you wandering in the forest alone? Who are you?!

Ravana: I am the celebrated ruler of hordes of demons, Ravana by name, by whom all people and demigods have been struck with terror! O charming Sita, having seen you, I no longer find delight in my own wives. You shall now become the foremost queen among all the excellent women stolen by me!!!

Sita: Coveting the consort of Sri Rama is like trying to grasp the light of the sun, or crossing the sea with a slab of stone tied to your neck! So long as Rama holds a bow and arrow in His hands, I shall not be had by the likes of you!!!

Ravana: I said you shall come with me!!! (Ravana grabs Sita by the hair and drags her away)

SCENE ELEVEN

SCENE ELEVEN

(Rama and Lakshman return to their camp)

Rama: Sita! Sita, where are you? Lakshman, she's gone! How could you have left her unprotected?

Lakshman: I didn't want to, but when she heard Your cry for help, she begged me to go to Your aid!

Rama: That was not My voice, but the voice of Maricha the magician... You know I can defend Myself!

Lakshman: But then she said the most appalling... she accused me of... of...

Rama: Now she is lost!

Lakshman: Rama, do not despair. She must be close by. I will find her. I will search everywhere.

Rama: Sita, where are you? Sita! If you are hiding behind a tree to tease me, I beg of you—no more joking! Perhaps she is walking on the bank of the river. No, she never likes to walk alone. Perhaps she has gone to gather wild flowers... but how would that be possible, since she would be afraid to go without Me? O sun, witness of all that happens on this earth, what has happened to Sita? O wind, nothing is unknown to you—tell me, I beg of you, has Sita been kidnapped... and is she now dead? O Sita, my lovely one, where have you gone?

Look here, these flowers! I remember gathering them for her and she was wearing them in her hair. And look here, these are footprints which are the evidence of a great struggle. These are Sita's and these others are those of some huge monster... and now my worst fears are undoubtedly true. I am usually gentle and merciful and known to desire the welfare of all, but these mild qualities shall be overshadowed today by an anger which knows no bounds. For Sita's sake, I shall rid the world of all wicked demons. Let the Gods in Heaven witness the power of these arrows. If I do not recover Sita this very day—unharmful and in all her natural beauty—I will destroy the entire universe!

SCENE TWELVE

SCENE TWELVE

(Rama and Lakshman travel through the forest)

Rama: Lakshman, at last, here is Lake Pampa.

Lakshman: It's beautiful!

Rama: The beauty of this place increases the pangs of My love for Sita. Oh, I fear we shall never find her!

Lakshman: O beloved brother, take courage. Be happy and do not grieve. You have always told me that the sky is darkest just before the dawn. O Best of Men, good will conquer evil, and we will be victorious in the end.

Hanuman: O valiant strangers, who are you, who have the air of lions or warriors who are full of heroism, full of majesty and beauty, like unto Gods? I am an ambassador from the king of the great monkeys, who desires to know your purpose in coming to this land. My name is Hanuman.

Rama: O Lakshman, please answer this excellent ambassador. He is so eloquent, courteous and warm-hearted, I am amazed. A king who employs such gifted ministers is certain to succeed in all his undertakings.

Lakshman: O excellent Hanuman, I am Lakshman and this is my glorious brother, Lord Ramachandra. We have been told of the greatness of the monkeys, and are at this moment seeking the aid of your king.

Rama: O Hanuman, My wife has been stolen by an evil demon, and I am seeking aid in helping to find her. Can you help?

Hanuman: My Lord, I am Your servant... How may I serve You?

SCENE THIRTEEN

SCENE THIRTEEN

(A garden in Lanka. Sita is guarded by two ogresses. Hanuman enters the garden and hides in a tree)

Ravana: O large-eyed lady! You are concealing your bodily beauty from me, as though you were afraid of me. I long for you! O timid one, it is proper conduct for we demons to approach the wives of others! Do not be swayed by grief.

Sita: Withdraw your mind from me and be satisfied with your own consorts! You do not deserve me any more than a sinner deserves heaven! Being the virtuous wife of Rama, I cannot be your lawful consort! (she turns her back on Ravana)

Ravana: (angrily) If you do not share my bed in one month's time, my cooks will prepare you for my morning meal! Ogresses, force this woman to submit to my will! (he exits. Sita is then verbally tormented by the ogresses to marry Ravana)

Sita: No! No! No!

Ogress 1: At the sight of this woman, a great longing has sprang up in my heart, that I should feast on her liver and spleen, her breasts and her heart.

Ogress 2: Let us hack her into pieces and divide them amongst ourselves. Let wine be brought to enjoy with this human flesh.

Sita: (wailing) O Rama! (she runs away)

Hanuman: (singing) Raghupati Raghava Raja Rama, Patita-Pavana Sita-Rama (Sita joyously hurries to the foot of the tree)

Sita: Who are you?

Hanuman: (giving her Rama's ring) My name is Hanuman, son of the wind-god, Vayu.

Sita: Why, this is Rama's ring! How fares my beloved Lord? Why does He not come to rescue me?

Hanuman: Rama and Lakshman are both very well. Not knowing your whereabouts, Rama does not come to you. But know for certain, my lady, that He is sparing no pains to rescue you.

Sita: You must tell Rama that I have only one month to live, after which Ravana will kill me.

Hanuman: Yes, my lady. I will tell.. (Ravana comes in with soldiers)

Ravana: Aha! After him! (Hanuman jumps down from the tree. He defeats one soldier, then another and leaps back into the tree)

Soldier 1: (to Ravana) I'll use the binding weapon! (he releases it and Hanuman falls to the ground helplessly. Soldier 1 and Ravana laugh. They pick Hanuman up)

Ravana: A messenger from Rama, eh? We'll set his tail on fire and parade him through the streets! (they guffaw and set his tail on fire. Hanuman then pushes them aside and spins round and round. They try to grab him but cannot because of the fire. Hanuman escapes) Capture him, you fool! He's burning down my city!!!

SCENE FOURTEEN

SCENE FOURTEEN

(Rama's camp by the ocean. Hanuman returns)

Hanuman: My Lord! I have seen Sita!

Rama: Where is she? And how is she? What are her feelings toward Me? Tell Me everything!

Hanuman: Ravana is holding her captive on the island of Lanka, across the sea. In spite of being tortured by hideous creatures, she always thinks of You with devoted love. But because she has continually refused Ravana's advances, he has condemned her to die in only one month!

Rama: Hanuman, you are the best of all servants; I am forever in your debt. One month... we haven't much time.

Hanuman: My Lord, Ravana is anxious for combat. Not only is he very powerful, but he is surrounded by millions of troops.

Lakshman: Lanka will be difficult to attack.

Hanuman: Not so... I have already torn down the walls and set the city on fire!

Rama: Jai, Hanuman!

Hanuman: There's only one problem... we have to find some means of crossing the ocean to get to Lanka!

Rama: O Ocean, domain of Varuna, you will grant me a passage or be slain by Me! Bring rocks and trees. We will build a bridge! This very day we shall attack and vanquish the city of Ravana!

SCENE FIFTEEN

SCENE FIFTEEN

(The Battlefield. Lakshman is wounded)

Rama: O my brother! Fallen on the ground, due to the prowess of Ravana, is the gallant Lakshman! My fighting strength is failing as I behold this mighty hero, drenched in his own blood!!!

Hanuman: Do not despair, Rama. I will bring a special herb from the Himalayas. It will surely restore Lakshman's health!

Rama: Dear Hanuman, make no delay. If Lakshman meets his death, then of what use is life or happiness to Me? Of what use to Me is the recovery of Sita... if I lose My brother, friend, and comrade in arms? How would I ever tell our mothers? O Lakshman, I will follow you to the planet of death, as you have always followed Me!!! (Hanuman leaves and then returns with the entire mountain)

Hanuman: I have it... the healing herb! (administers it)

Rama: Behold! Lakshman has returned from the other world!

Hanuman: My Lord, all is not well, yet! Look, it is Ravana, the king of the host of demons!!!

Rama: Hanuman, get out of the way, I will personally dispatch this villain to the ranks of Yamaraja!

Ravana: My dear Ramachandra... at last we meet! But where is your darling little Sita now? In the house of a better man!!!

Rama: O Ravana! You are most abominable of the cannibals! Indeed, you are non-different from their stool! You resemble a dog, for a dog steals food in the absence of the householder! In my absence, you kidnapped My wife, Sita! Therefore, as all sinful men are punished, I shall also punish you!!! (big fight scene. Finally Rama kills Ravana)

SCENE SIXTEEN

SCENE SIXTEEN

(Sita is seated on the floor, with head hung down. Hanuman ushers in Rama and Lakshman. Hanuman runs to Sita and happily points out Rama. Sita joyously rises, and she and Rama begin to slowly walk toward each other. She is smiling while Rama looks grave. Rama stops a few feet away from Sita, who then stops also)

Rama: As you are standing before Me, suspicion has arisen within my heart with regard to your character. Consequently, you are extremely disagreeable to Me like a light to one who is suffering from sore eyes. What man of spirit, born in a noble family, would take back, with an eager mind, a woman who has dwelt in the house of another man?! (Sita falls to her knees in tears)

Sita: I am not as You take me to be, O Mighty-armed One! Restore Your confidence in me! My devotion as well as my chastity have been ignored by You! (Rama turns his head to the side) O Lakshman! Build me a fire, the only cure for this calamity! I no longer desire to live!!! (Lakshman builds a fire and Sita enters it. After 15 seconds she comes out intact)

Lakshman: Sita's entrance into the fire and her re-emergence unharmed show her to be sinless and pure, my Brother.

Rama: Yes. It was necessary for Sita to undergo this purificatory ordeal in the eyes of the people, since she had lived for a long time in the house of Ravana. If I had accepted Sita without proving her chastity, the world would have slandered me. I too, know Sita to be undivided in her affection to me. Now the time has come for us all to return to Ayodha!!! (Kirtan. All pose a few minutes in Deity-like positions)

The End