

## **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

### **Lord Vāmanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation**

This chapter describes how Lord Vāmanadeva appeared and how He went to the sacrificial arena of Mahārāja Bali, who received Him well and fulfilled His desire by offering Him benedictions.

Lord Vāmanadeva appeared in this world from the womb of Aditi completely equipped with conchshell, disc, club and lotus. His bodily hue was blackish, and He was dressed in yellow garments. Lord Viṣṇu appeared at an auspicious moment on Śravaṇa-dvādaśī when the Abhijit star had arisen. At that time, in all the three worlds (including the higher planetary system, outer space and this earth), all the demigods, the cows, the brāhmaṇas and even the seasons were happy because of God's appearance. Therefore this auspicious day is called Vijayā. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has a sac-cid-ānanda body, appeared as the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi, both of His parents were very astonished. After His appearance, the Lord assumed the form of a dwarf (Vāmana). All the great sages expressed their jubilation, and with Kaśyapa Muni before them they performed the birthday ceremony of Lord Vāmana. At the time of Lord Vāmanadeva's sacred thread ceremony, He was honored by the sun-god, Bṛhaspati, the goddess presiding over the planet earth, the deity of the heavenly planets, His mother, Lord Brahmā, Kuvera, the seven ṛṣis and others. Lord Vāmanadeva then visited the sacrificial arena on the northern side of the Narmadā River, at the field known as Bhṛgukaccha, where brāhmaṇas of the Bhṛgu dynasty were performing yajñas. Wearing a belt made of muñja straw, an upper garment of deerskin and a sacred thread and carrying in His hands a daṇḍa, an umbrella and a waterpot (kamaṇḍalu), Lord Vāmanadeva appeared in the sacrificial arena of Mahārāja Bali. Because of His transcendently effulgent presence, all the priests were diminished in their prowess, and thus they all stood from their seats and offered prayers to Lord Vāmanadeva. Even Lord Śiva accepts on his head the Ganges water generated from the toe of Lord Vāmanadeva. Therefore, after washing the Lord's feet, Bali Mahārāja immediately accepted the water from the Lord's feet on his head and felt that he and his predecessors had certainly been glorified. Then Bali Mahārāja inquired of Lord Vāmanadeva's welfare and requested the Lord to ask him for money, jewels or anything He might desire.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Lord Brahmā had thus spoken, glorifying the Supreme Lord's activities and prowess, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is never subject to death like an ordinary living being, appeared from the womb of Aditi. His four hands were decorated with a conchshell, club, lotus and disc, He was dressed in yellow garments, and His eyes appeared like the petals of a blooming lotus.

Text 2:

The body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, blackish in complexion, was free from all inebrieties. His lotus face, decorated with earrings resembling sharks, appeared very beautiful, and on His bosom was the mark of Śrīvatsa. He wore bangles on His wrists, armlets on His arms, a helmet on His head, a belt on His waist, a sacred thread across His chest, and ankle bells decorating His lotus feet.

Text 3:

An uncommonly beautiful garland of flowers decorated His bosom, and because the flowers were extremely fragrant, a large group of bees, making their natural humming sounds, invaded them for honey. When the Lord appeared, wearing the Kaustubha gem on His neck, His effulgence vanquished the darkness in the home of the Prajāpati Kaśyapa.

Text 4:

At that time, there was happiness in all directions, in the reservoirs of water like the rivers and oceans, and in the core of everyone's heart. The various seasons displayed their respective qualities, and all living entities in the upper planetary system, in outer space and on the surface of the earth were jubilant. The demigods, the cows, the brāhmaṇas and the hills and mountains were all filled with joy.

Text 5:

On the day of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī [the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Bhādra], when the moon came into the lunar mansion Śravaṇa, at the auspicious moment of Abhijit, the Lord appeared in this universe. Considering the Lord's appearance very auspicious, all the stars and planets, from the sun to Saturn, were munificently charitable.

Text 6:

O King, when the Lord appeared — on dvādaśī, the twelfth day of the moon — the sun was at the meridian, as every learned scholar knows. This dvādaśī is called Vijayā.

Text 7:

Conchshells, kettledrums, drums, paṇavas and ānakas vibrated in concert. The sound of these and various other instruments was tumultuous.

Text 8:

Being very pleased, the celestial dancing girls [Apsarās] danced in jubilation, the best of the Gandharvas sang songs, and the great sages, demigods, Manus, Pitās and fire-gods offered prayers to satisfy the Lord.

Texts 9-10:

The Siddhas, Vidyādhara, Kimpuruṣas, Kinnaras, Cāraṇas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Suparṇas, the best of serpents, and the followers of the demigods all showered flowers on Aditi's residence, covering the entire house, while glorifying and praising the Lord and dancing.

Text 11:

When Aditi saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had appeared from her own womb, having accepted a transcendental body by His own spiritual potency, she was struck with wonder and was very happy. Upon seeing the child, Prajāpati Kaśyapa exclaimed, "Jaya! Jaya!" in great happiness and wonder.

Text 12:

The Lord appeared in His original form, with ornaments and weapons in His hands. Although this ever-existing form is not visible in the material world, He nonetheless appeared in this form. Then, in the presence of His father and mother, He assumed the form of Vāmana, a brāhmaṇa-dwarf, a brahmacārī, just like a theatrical actor.

Text 13:

When the great sages saw the Lord as the brahmacārī-dwarf Vāmana, they were certainly very pleased. Thus they placed before them Kaśyapa Muni, the Prajāpati, and performed all the ritualistic ceremonies, such as the birthday ceremony.

Text 14:

At the sacred thread ceremony of Vāmanadeva, the sun-god personally uttered the Gāyatrī mantra, Bṛhaspati offered the sacred thread, and Kaśyapa Muni offered a straw belt.

Text 15:

Mother earth gave Him a deerskin, and the demigod of the moon, who is the king of the forest, gave Him a brahma-daṇḍa [the rod of a brahmacārī]. His mother, Aditi, gave Him cloth for underwear, and the deity presiding over the heavenly kingdom offered Him an umbrella.

Text 16:

O King, Lord Brahmā offered a waterpot to the inexhaustible Supreme Personality of Godhead, the seven sages offered Him kuśa grass, and mother Sarasvatī gave Him a string of Rudrākṣa beads.

Text 17:

When Vāmanadeva had thus been given the sacred thread, Kuvera, King of the Yakṣas, gave Him a pot for begging alms, and mother Bhagavatī, the wife of Lord Śiva and most chaste mother of the entire universe, gave Him His first alms.

Text 18:

Having thus been welcomed by everyone, Lord Vāmanadeva, the best of the brahmacārīs, exhibited His Brahman effulgence. Thus He surpassed in beauty that entire assembly, which was filled with great saintly brāhmaṇas.

Text 19:

After Lord Śrī Vāmanadeva set a sacrificial fire, He offered worship and performed a fire sacrifice on the sacrificial field.

Text 20:

When the Lord heard that Bali Mahārāja was performing aśvamedha sacrifices under the patronage of brāhmaṇas belonging to the Bhṛgu dynasty, the Supreme Lord, who is full in every respect, proceeded there to show His mercy to Bali Mahārāja. By His weight, He pushed down the earth with every step.

Text 21:

While engaged in performing the sacrifice in the field known as Bhṛgukaccha, on the northern bank of the Narmadā River, the brahminical priests, the descendants of Bhṛgu, saw Vāmanadeva to be like the sun rising nearby.

Text 22:

O King, because of Vāmanadeva's bright effulgence, the priests, along with Bali Mahārāja and all the members of the assembly, were robbed of their splendor. Thus they began to ask one another whether the sun-god himself, Sanat-kumāra or the fire-god had personally come to see the sacrificial ceremony.

Text 23:

While the priests of the Bhṛgu dynasty and their disciples talked and argued in various ways, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāmanadeva, holding in His hands the rod, the umbrella and a waterpot full of water, entered the arena of the aśvamedha sacrifice.

Texts 24-25:

Appearing as a brāhmaṇa boy, wearing a belt of straw, a sacred thread, an upper garment of deerskin, and matted locks of hair, Lord Vāmanadeva entered the arena of sacrifice. His brilliant effulgence diminished the brilliance of all the priests and their disciples, who thus stood from their seats and welcomed the Lord properly by offering obeisances.

Text 26:

Bali Mahārāja, jubilant at seeing Lord Vāmanadeva, whose beautiful limbs contributed equally to the beauty of His entire body, offered Him a seat with great satisfaction.

Text 27:

Thus offering a proper reception to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always beautiful to the liberated souls, Bali Mahārāja worshiped Him by washing His lotus feet.

Text 28:

Lord Śiva, the best of demigods, who carries on his forehead the emblem of the moon, receives on his head with great devotion the Ganges water emanating from the toe of Viṣṇu. Being aware of religious

principles, Bali Mahārāja knew this. Consequently, following in the footsteps of Lord Śiva, he also placed on his head the water that had washed the Lord's lotus feet.

Text 29:

Bali Mahārāja then said to Lord Vāmanadeva: O brāhmaṇa, I offer You my hearty welcome and my respectful obeisances. Please let us know what we may do for You. We think of You as the personified austerity of the great brāhmaṇa-sages.

Text 30:

O my Lord, because You have kindly arrived at our home, all my forefathers are satisfied, our family and entire dynasty have been sanctified, and the sacrifice we are performing is now complete because of Your presence.

Text 31:

O son of a brāhmaṇa, today the fire of sacrifice is ablaze according to the injunction of the śāstra, and I have been freed from all the sinful reactions of my life by the water that has washed Your lotus feet. O my Lord, by the touch of Your small lotus feet the entire surface of the world has been sanctified.

Text 32:

O son of a brāhmaṇa, it appears that You have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You want You may take from me. O best of those who are worshipable. You may take from me a cow, gold, a furnished house, palatable food and drink, the daughter of a brāhmaṇa for Your wife, prosperous villages, horses, elephants, chariots or whatever You desire.