



3 / Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that His appearance, birth, and activities are all transcendental, and one who understands them factually becomes immediately eligible to be transferred to the spiritual world. The Lord's appearance or birth is not like that of an ordinary man who is forced to accept a material body according to his past deeds. The Lord's appearance is explained in the Second Chapter: He appears out of His own sweet pleasure. When the time was mature for the appearance of the Lord, the constellations became very auspicious. The astrological influence of the star known as Rohinī was also predominant because this star is considered to be very auspicious. Rohinī is under the direct supervision of Brahmā. According to the astrological conclusion, besides the proper situation of the stars, there are auspicious and inauspicious moments due to the different situations of the different planetary systems. At the time of Kṛṣṇa's birth, the planetary systems were automatically adjusted so that everything became auspicious.

At that time, in all directions, east, west, south, north, everywhere, there was an atmosphere of peace and prosperity. There were auspicious stars visible in the sky, and on the surface in all towns and villages or pasturing grounds and within the minds of everyone there were signs of good fortune. The rivers were flowing full of waters, and lakes were beautifully decorated with lotus flowers. The forests were full with beautiful birds and peacocks. All the birds within the forests began to sing with sweet voices, and the peacocks began to dance along with their consorts. The wind blew very pleasantly, carrying the aroma of different flowers, and the sensation of bodily touch was very pleasing. At home, the *brāhmaṇas*, who were accustomed to offer sacrifices in the fire, found their homes very pleasant for offerings. Due to disturbances created by the demoniac kings, the sacrificial fire altar had been almost stopped in the

houses of *brāhmaṇas*, but now they could find the opportunity to start the fire peacefully. Being forbidden to offer sacrifices, the *brāhmaṇas* were very distressed in mind, intelligence and activities, but just on the point of Kṛṣṇa's appearance, automatically their minds became full of joy because they could hear loud vibrations in the sky of transcendental sounds proclaiming the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The denizens of the Gandharva and Kirinara planets began to sing, and the denizens of Siddhaloka and the planets of the Cāraṇas began to offer prayers in the service of the Personality of Godhead. In the heavenly planets, the angels along with their wives, accompanied by the Apsaras, began to dance.

The great sages and the demigods, being pleased, began to shower flowers. At the seashore, there was the sound of mild waves, and above the sea there were clouds in the sky which began to thunder very pleasingly.

When things were adjusted like this, Lord Viṣṇu, who is residing within the heart of every living entity, appeared in the darkness of night as the Supreme Personality of Godhead before Devakī, who also appeared as one of the demigoddesses. The appearance of Lord Viṣṇu at that time could be compared with the full moon in the sky as it rises on the eastern horizon. The objection may be raised that, since Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on the eighth day of the waning moon, there could be no rising of the full moon. In answer to this it may be said that Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the dynasty which is in the hierarchy of the moon; therefore, although the moon was incomplete on that night, because of the Lord's appearance in the dynasty wherein the moon is himself the original person, the moon was in an overjoyous condition, so by the grace of Kṛṣṇa he could appear just as a full moon.

In an astronomical treatise by the name *Khamānikya*, the constellations at the time of the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very nicely described. It is confirmed that the child born at that auspicious moment was the Supreme Brahman or the Absolute Truth.

Vasudeva saw that wonderful child born as a baby with four hands, holding conchshell, club, disc, and lotus flower, decorated with the mark of Śrīvatsa, wearing the jeweled necklace of *kaustubha* stone, dressed in yellow silk, appearing dazzling like a bright blackish cloud, wearing a helmet bedecked with the *vaidūrya* stone, valuable bracelets, earrings and similar other ornaments all over His body and an abundance of hair on His head. Due to the extraordinary features of the child, Vasudeva was struck with wonder. How could a newly born child be so decorated? He could therefore understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa had now appeared, and he



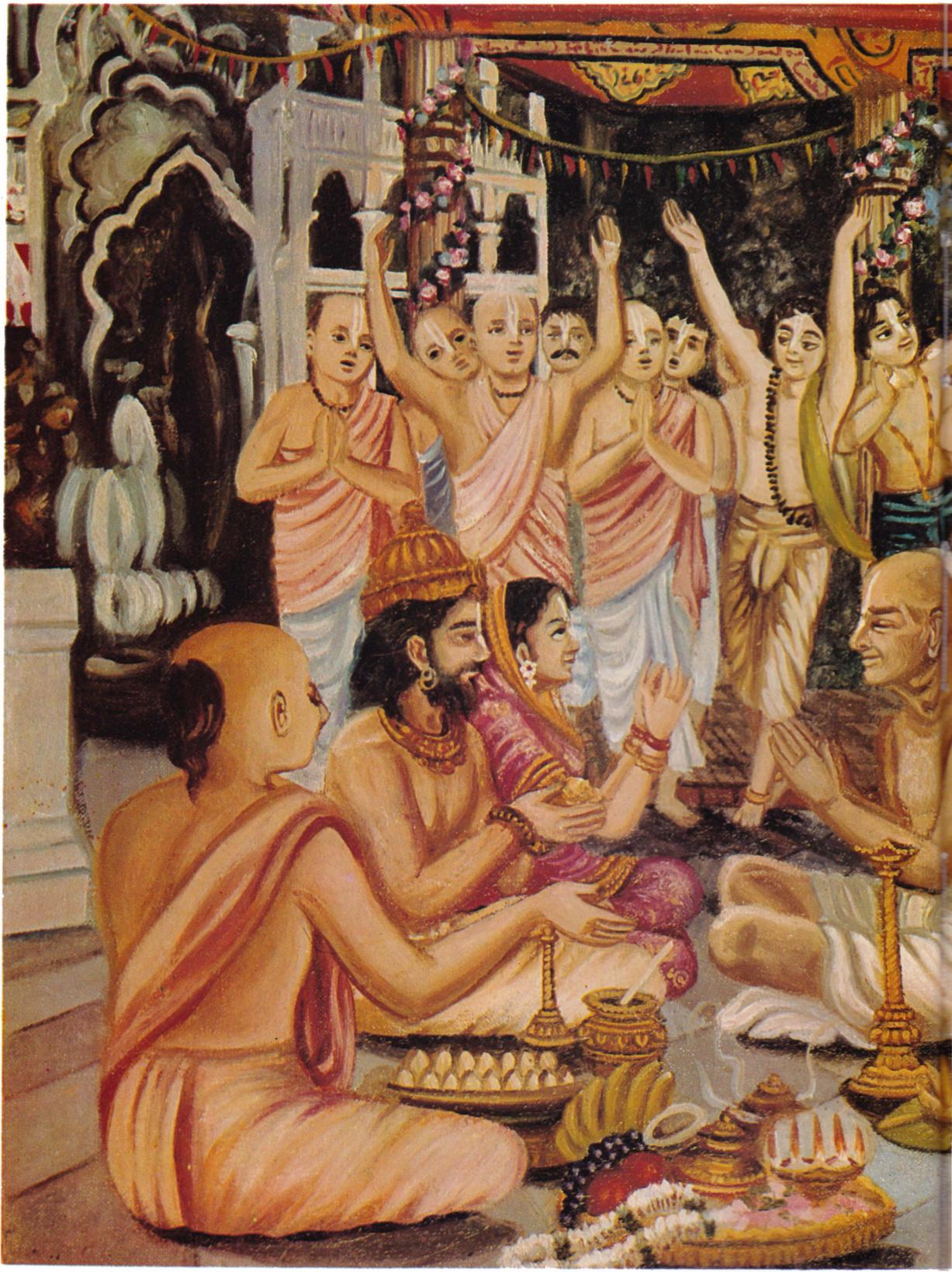
“Dear mother Devakī, within your womb is the Supreme Personality of Godhead...”
(p. 22)



“Therefore I request You to conceal this four-armed form of Your Lordship which holds the four symbols of Visnu...” (p. 29)

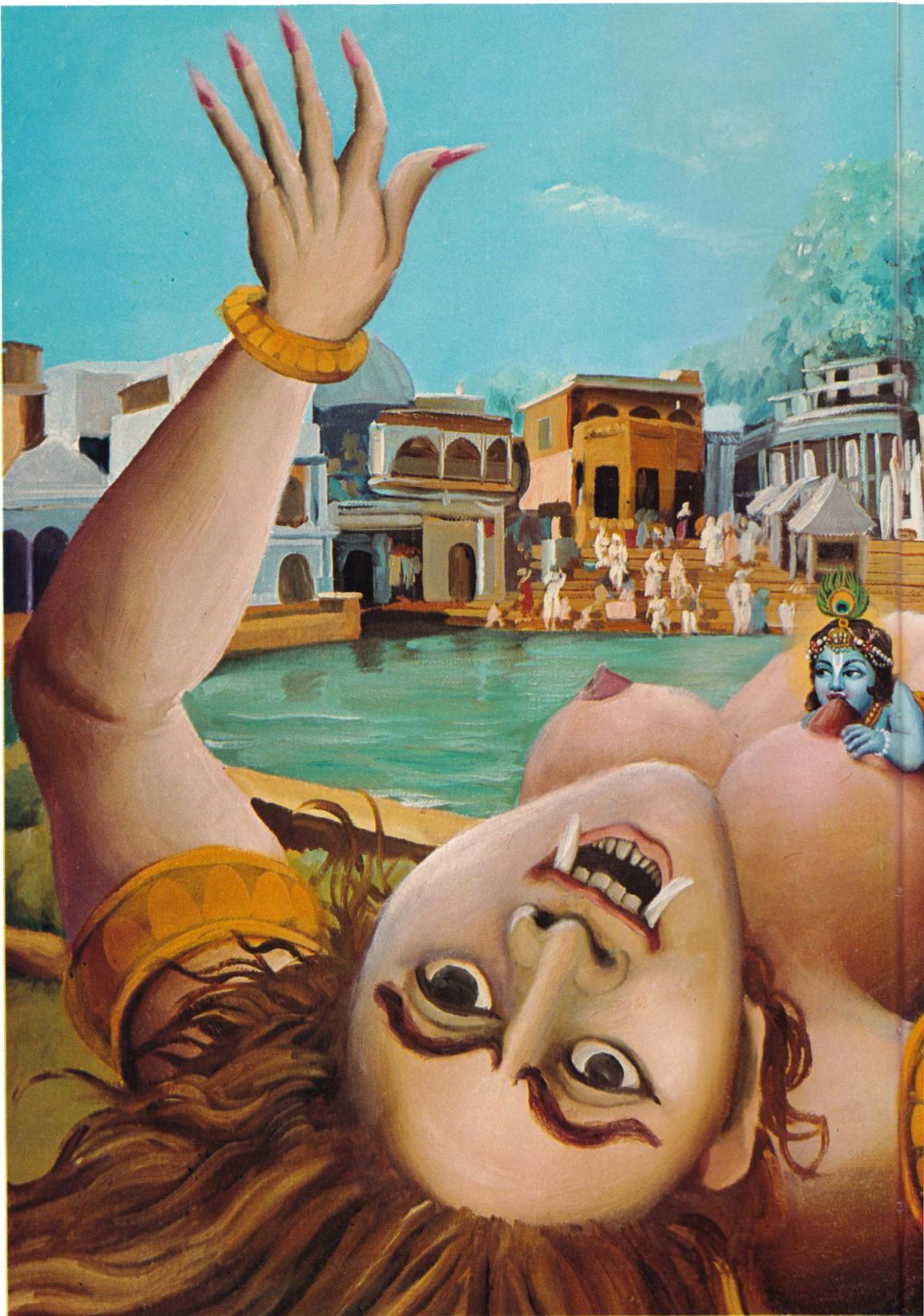


Lord Kṛṣṇa played on the lap of Devakī just like an ordinary child. (p. 30)





The joyous vibrations at Kṛṣṇa's birth ceremony could be heard in all the pasturing grounds and houses. (p. 38)





“Oh child, leave me, leave me!” (p. 46)



The night was very dark, but Vasudeva could see everything just as in the sunlight.
(p. 30)

became overpowered by the occasion. Vasudeva very humbly wondered that although he was an ordinary living entity conditioned by material nature and was externally imprisoned by Kāṁsa, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, was appearing as a child in his home, exactly in His original position. No earthly child is born with four hands decorated with ornaments and nice clothing, fully equipped with all the signs of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Over and over again, Vasudeva glanced at his child, and he considered how to celebrate this auspicious moment: "Generally, when a male child is born," he thought, "people observe the occasion with jubilant celebrations, and in my home, although I am imprisoned, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has taken birth. How many millions of millions of times should I be prepared to observe this auspicious ceremony!"

When Vasudeva, who is also called Ānakadundubhi, was looking at his newborn baby, he was so happy that he wanted to give many thousands of cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*. According to the Vedic system, whenever there is an auspicious ceremony in the *kṣatriya* king's palace, the king gives many things in charity. Cows decorated with golden ornaments are delivered to the *brāhmaṇas* and sages. Vasudeva wanted to perform a charitable ceremony to celebrate Kṛṣṇa's appearance, but because he was shackled within the walls of Kāṁsa's prison, this was not possible. Instead, within his mind he gave thousands of cows to the *brāhmaṇas*.

When Vasudeva was convinced that the newborn child was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, he bowed down with folded hands and began to offer Him prayers. At that time Vasudeva was in the transcendental position, and he became completely free from all fear of Kāṁsa. The newborn baby was also flashing His effulgence within the room in which He appeared.

Vasudeva then began to offer his prayers. "My dear Lord, I can understand who You are. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of all living entities and the Absolute Truth. You have appeared in Your own eternal form which is directly perceived by us. I understand that because I am afraid of Kāṁsa, You have appeared just to deliver me from that fear. You do not belong to this material world; You are the same person who brings about the cosmic manifestation simply by glancing over material nature."

One may argue that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who creates the whole cosmic manifestation simply by His glance, cannot come within the womb of Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva. To eradicate this argument, Vasudeva said, "My dear Lord, it is not a very wonderful thing that You

appear within the womb of Devakī because the creation was also made in that way. You were lying in the Causal Ocean as Mahā-Viṣṇu, and by Your breathing process, innumerable universes came into existence. Then You entered into each of the universes as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Then again You expanded Yourself as Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and entered into the hearts of all living entities and entered even within the atoms. Therefore Your entrance in the womb of Devakī is understandable in the same way. You appear to have entered, but You are simultaneously all-pervading. We can understand Your entrance and nonentrance from material examples. The total material energy remains intact even after being divided into sixteen elements. The material body is nothing but the combination of the five gross elements—namely earth, water, fire, air and ether. Whenever there is a material body, it appears that such elements are newly created, but actually the elements are always existing outside of the body. Similarly, although You appear as a child in the womb of Devakī, You are also existing outside. You are always in Your abode, but still You can simultaneously expand Yourself into millions of forms.

“One has to understand Your appearance with great intelligence because the material energy is also emanating from You. You are the original source of the material energy, just as the sun is the source of the sunshine. The sunshine cannot cover the sun globe, nor can the material energy—being an emanation from You—cover You. You appear to be in the three modes of material energy, but actually the three modes of material energy cannot cover You. This is understood by the highly intellectual philosophers. In other words, although You appear to be within the material energy, You are never covered by it.”

We hear from the Vedic version that the Supreme Brahman exhibits His effulgence, and therefore everything becomes illuminated. We can understand from *Brahma-saṁhitā* that the *brahmajyoti*, or the Brahman effulgence, emanates from the body of the Supreme Lord. And from the Brahman effulgence, all creation takes place. It is further stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Lord is also the support of the Brahman effulgence. Originally He is the root cause of everything. But persons who are less intelligent think that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes within this material world, He accepts the material qualities. Such conclusions are not very mature, but are made by the less intelligent.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is directly and indirectly existing everywhere; He is outside this material creation, and He is also within it. He is within this material creation not only as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu; He is also within the atom. Existence is due to His presence. Nothing can be

separated from His existence. In the Vedic injunction we find that the Supreme Soul or the root cause of everything has to be searched out because nothing exists independent of the Supreme Soul. Therefore the material manifestation is also a transformation of His potency. Both inert matter and the living force—soul—are emanations from Him. Only the foolish conclude that when the Supreme Lord appears He accepts the conditions of matter. Even if He appears to have accepted the material body, He is still not subjected to any material condition. Kṛṣṇa has therefore appeared and defeated all imperfect conclusions about the appearance and disappearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“My Lord, Your appearance, existence and disappearance are beyond the influence of the material qualities. Because Your Lordship is the controller of everything and the resting place of the Supreme Brahman, there is nothing inconceivable or contradictory in You. As You have said, material nature works under Your superintendence. It is just like government officers working under the orders of the chief executive. The influence of subordinate activities cannot affect You. The Supreme Brahman and all phenomena are existing within You, and all the activities of material nature are controlled by Your Lordship.

“You are called *śuklam*. *Śuklam* or ‘whiteness’ is the symbolic representation of the Absolute Truth because it is unaffected by the material qualities. Lord Brahmā is called *rakta*, or red, because Brahmā represents the qualities of passion for creation. Darkness is entrusted to Lord Śiva because he annihilates the cosmos. The creation, annihilation and maintenance of this cosmic manifestation is conducted by Your potencies, yet You are always unaffected by those qualities. As confirmed in the *Vedas*, *Harir hi nirguṇaḥ sāksat*: the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always free from all material qualities. It is also said that the qualities of passion and ignorance are nonexistent in the person of the Supreme Lord.

“My Lord, You are the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead, the supreme great, maintaining the order of this cosmic manifestation. And in spite of Your being the supreme controller, You have so kindly appeared in my home. The purpose of Your appearance is to kill the followers of the demonic rulers of the world who are in the dress of royal princes but are actually demons. I am sure that You will kill all of them and their followers and soldiers.

“I understand that You have appeared to kill the uncivilized Kāṁsa and his followers. But knowing that You were to appear to kill him and his followers, he has already killed so many of Your predecessors, elder brothers. Now he is simply awaiting the news of Your birth. As soon as he hears about

it, he will immediately appear with all kinds of weapons to kill You.”

After this prayer of Vasudeva, Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa, offered her prayers. She was very frightened because of her brother’s atrocities. Devakī said “My dear Lord, Your eternal forms, like Nārāyaṇa, Lord Rāma, Śeṣa, Varāha, Nr̥siṁha, Vāmana, Baladeva, and millions of similar incarnations emanating from Viṣṇu, are described in the Vedic literature as original. You are original because all Your forms as incarnations are outside of this material creation. Your form was existing before this cosmic manifestation was created. Your forms are eternal and all-pervading. They are self-effulgent, changeless and uncontaminated by the material qualities. Such eternal forms are ever-cognizant and full of bliss; they are situated in transcendental goodness and are always engaged in different pastimes. You are not limited to a particular form only; all such transcendental eternal forms are self-sufficient. I can understand that You are the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu.

“After many millions of years, when Lord Brahmā comes to the end of his life, the annihilation of the cosmic manifestation takes place. At that time the five elements—namely earth, water, fire, air and ether—enter into the *mahat-tattva*. The *mahat-tattva* again enters, by the force of time, into the nonmanifested total material energy; the total material energy enters into the energetic *pradhāna*, and the *pradhāna* enters into You. Therefore after the annihilation of the whole cosmic manifestation, You alone remain with Your transcendental name, form, quality and paraphernalia.

“My Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You because You are the director of the unmanifested total energy, and the ultimate reservoir of the material nature. My Lord, the whole cosmic manifestation is under the influence of time, beginning from the moment up to the duration of the year. All act under Your direction. You are the original director of everything and the reservoir of all potent energies.

“Therefore my Lord, I request You to save me from the cruel hands of the son of Ugrasena, Kaṁsa. I am praying to Your Lordship to please rescue me from this fearful condition because You are always ready to give protection to Your servitors.” The Lord has confirmed this statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by assuring Arjuna, “You may declare to the world, My devotee shall never be vanquished.”

While thus praying to the Lord for rescue, mother Devakī expressed her motherly affection: “I understand that this transcendental form is generally perceived in meditation by the great sages, but I am still afraid because as soon as Kaṁsa understands that You have appeared, he might harm You. So I request that for the time being You become invisible to our

material eyes." In other words, she requested the Lord to assume the form of an ordinary child. "My only cause of fear from my brother Kāṁsa is due to Your appearance. My Lord Madhusūdana, Kāṁsa may know that You are already born. Therefore I request You to conceal this four-armed form of Your Lordship which holds the four symbols of Viṣṇu—namely the conchshell, the disc, the club and the lotus flower. My dear Lord, at the end of the annihilation of the cosmic manifestation, You put the whole universe within Your abdomen; still by Your unalloyed mercy You have appeared in my womb. I am surprised that You imitate the activities of ordinary human beings just to please Your devotee."

On hearing the prayers of Devakī, the Lord replied, "My dear mother, in the millennium of Svāyambhuva Manu, My father Vasudeva was living as one of the *Prajāpatis*, and his name at that time was Sutapā, and you were his wife named Pr̥ṣṇi. At that time, when Lord Brahmā was desiring to increase the population, he requested you to generate offspring. You controlled your senses and performed severe austerities. By practicing the breathing exercise of the *yoga* system, both you and your husband could tolerate all the influences of the material laws: the rainy season, the onslaught of the wind, and the scorching heat of the sunshine. You also executed all religious principles. In this way you were able to cleanse your heart and control the influence of material law. In executing your austerity, you used to eat only the leaves of the trees which fell to the ground. Then with steady mind and controlled sex drive, you worshiped Me, desiring some wonderful benediction from Me. Both of you practiced severe austerities for 12,000 years, by the calculation of the demigods. During that time, your mind was always absorbed in Me. When you were executing devotional service and always thinking of Me within your heart, I was very much pleased with you. O sinless mother, your heart is therefore always pure. At that time also I appeared before you in this form just to fulfill your desire, and I asked you to ask whatever you desired. At that time you wished to have Me born as your son. Although you saw Me personally, instead of asking for your complete liberation from the material bondage, under the influence of My energy, you asked Me to become your son."

In other words, the Lord selected His mother and father—namely Pr̥ṣṇi and Sutapā—specifically to appear in the material world. Whenever the Lord comes as a human being, He must have someone as a mother and father, so He selected Pr̥ṣṇi and Sutapā perpetually as His mother and father. And on account of this, both Pr̥ṣṇi and Sutapā could not ask the Lord for liberation. Liberation is not so important as the transcendental

loving service of the Lord. The Lord could have awarded Pr̄ṣni and Sutapā immediate liberation, but He preferred to keep them within this material world for His different appearances, as will be explained in the following verses. On receiving the benediction from the Lord to become His father and mother, both Pr̄ṣni and Sutapā returned from the activities of austerity and lived as husband and wife in order to beget a child who was the Supreme Lord Himself.

In due course of time Pr̄ṣni became pregnant and gave birth to the child. The Lord spoke to Devakī and Vasudeva: "At that time My name was Pr̄śnigarbha. In the next millennium also you took birth as Aditi and Kaśyapa, and I became your child of the name Upendra. At that time My form was just like a dwarf, and for this reason I was known as Vāmanadeva. I gave you the benediction that I would take birth as your son three times. The first time I was known as Pr̄śnigarbha, born of Pr̄ṣni and Sutapā, the next birth I was Upendra born of Aditi and Kaśyapa, and now for the third time I am born as Kṛṣṇa from you, Devakī and Vasudeva. I appeared in this Viṣṇu form just to convince you that I am the same Supreme Personality of Godhead again taken birth. I could have appeared just like an ordinary child, but in that way you would not believe that I, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, have taken birth in your womb. My dear father and mother, you have therefore raised Me many times as your child, with great affection and love, and I am therefore very pleased and obliged to you. And I assure you that this time you shall go back to home, back to Godhead, on account of your perfection in your mission. I know you are very concerned about Me and afraid of Kamsa. Therefore I order you to take me immediately to Gokula and replace Me with the daughter who has just been born to Yaśodā."

Having spoken thus in the presence of His father and mother, the Lord turned Himself into an ordinary child and remained silent.

Being ordered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva attempted to take his son from the delivery room, and exactly at that time, a daughter was born of Nanda and Yaśodā. She was *Yogamāyā*, the internal potency of the Lord. By the influence of this internal potency, *Yogamāyā*, all the residents of Kamsa's palace, especially the doorkeepers, were overwhelmed with deep sleep, and all the palace doors opened, although they were barred and shackled with iron chains. The night was very dark, but as soon as Vasudeva took Kṛṣṇa on his lap and went out, he could see everything just as in the sunlight.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that Kṛṣṇa is just like sunlight, and wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the illusory energy, which is compared to darkness,

cannot remain. When Vasudeva was carrying Kṛṣṇa, the darkness of the night disappeared. All the prison doors automatically opened. At the same time there was a thunder in the sky and severe rainfall. While Vasudeva was carrying his son Kṛṣṇa in the falling rain, Lord Śeṣa in the shape of a serpent spread his hood over the head of Vasudeva so that he would not be hampered by the rainfall. Vasudeva came onto the bank of the Yamunā and saw that the water of the Yamunā was roaring with waves and that the whole span was full of foam. Still, in that furious feature, the river gave passage to Vasudeva to cross, just as the great Indian Ocean gave a path to Lord Rāma when He was bridging over the gulf. In this way Vasudeva crossed the River Yamunā. On the other side, he went to the place of Nanda Mahārāja situated in Gokula, where he saw that all the cowherd men were fast asleep. He took the opportunity of silently entering into the house of Yaśodā, and without difficulty he replaced his son, taking away the baby girl newly born in the house of Yaśodā. Then, after entering the house very silently and exchanging the boy with the girl, he again returned to the prison of Kamsa and silently put the girl on the lap of Devakī. He again clamped the shackles on himself so that Kamsa could not recognize that so many things had happened.

Mother Yaśodā understood that a child was born of her, but because she was very tired from the labor of childbirth, she was fast asleep. When she awoke, she could not remember whether she had given birth to a male or female child.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Third Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, "Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa."



4 / Kāṁsa Begins His Persecutions

After Vasudeva adjusted all the doors and gates, the gatekeepers awoke and heard the newborn child crying. Kāṁsa was waiting to hear the news of the child's birth, and the gatekeepers immediately approached him and informed him that the child was born. At that time, Kāṁsa got up from his bed very quickly and exclaimed, "Now the cruel death of my life is born!" Kāṁsa became perplexed now that his death was approaching, and his hair stood on end. Immediately he proceeded toward the place where the child was born.

Devakī, on seeing her brother approaching, prayed in a very meek attitude to Kāṁsa: "My dear brother, please do not kill this female child. I promise that this child will be the wife of your son; therefore don't kill her. You are not to be killed by any female child. That was the omen. You are to be killed by a male child, so please do not kill her. My dear brother, you have killed so many of my children who were just born, shining as the sun. That is not your fault. You have been advised by demoniac friends to kill my children. But now I beg you to excuse this girl. Let her live as my daughter."

Kāṁsa was so cruel that he did not listen to the beautiful prayers of his sister Devakī. He forcibly grabbed the newborn child to rebuke his sister and attempted to dash her on the stone mercilessly. This is a graphic example of a cruel brother who could sacrifice all relationships for the sake of personal gratification. But immediately the child slipped out of his hands, went up in the sky and appeared with eight arms as the younger sister of Viṣṇu. She was decorated with a nice dress and flower garlands and ornaments; in her eight hands she held a bow, lancet, arrows, bell, conchshell, disc, club and shield.

Seeing the appearance of the child (who was actually the goddess Durgā), all the demigods from different planets like Siddhaloka, Cāraṇa-

loka, Gandharvaloka, Apsaraloka, Kinnaraloka, and Uragaloka presented her articles and began to offer their respective prayers. From above, the goddess addressed Kamsa: "You rascal, how can you kill me? The child who will kill you is already born before me somewhere within this world. Don't be so cruel to your poor sister." After this appearance, the goddess Durgā became known by various names in various parts of the world.

After hearing these words, Kamsa became very much overwhelmed with fear. Out of pity, he immediately released Vasudeva and Devakī from the bondage of their shackles and very politely began to address them. He said, "My dear sister and brother-in-law, I have acted just like a demon in killing my own nephews. I have given up all consideration of our intimate relationship. I do not know what will be the result of these acts of mine. Probably I shall be sent to the hell where killers of the *brāhmaṇas* go. I am surprised, however, that the celestial prophecy has not come true. False propaganda is not found only in the human society. Now it appears that even the celestial denizens speak lies. Because I believed in the words of the celestial denizens, I have committed so many sins by killing the children of my sister. My dear Vasudeva and Devakī, you are both very great souls. I have nothing to instruct you, but still I request that you not be sorry for the death of your children. Every one of us is under the control of superior power, and that superior power does not allow us to remain together. We are bound to be separated from our friends and relatives in due course of time. But we must know for certain that even after the disappearance of the different material bodies, the soul remains intact eternally. For example, there are many pots made of earthly clay, and they are prepared and also broken. But in spite of this, the earth remains as it is perpetually. Similarly, the bodies of the soul under different conditions are made and destroyed, but the spirit soul remains eternally. So there is nothing to lament over. Everyone should understand that this material body is different from the spirit soul, and so long as one does not come to that understanding, he is sure to accept the processes of transmigration from one body to another. My dear sister Devakī, you are so gentle and kind. Please excuse me—don't be aggrieved by the death of your children, which I have caused. Actually this was not done by me because all these are predestined activities. One has to act according to the predestined plan, even unwillingly. People misunderstand that with the end of the body, the self dies, or they think that one can kill another living entity. All these misconceptions oblige one to accept the conditions of material existence. In other words, as long as one is not firmly convinced of the eternality of the soul, one is subjected to the tribulation of being killer and

killed. My dear sister [D] and brother-in-law Vasudeva, kindly excuse the atrocities I have committed against you. I am very poor-hearted, and you are so great-hearted, so take compassion upon me and excuse me."

While Kāṁsa was speaking to his brother-in-law and sister, tears flowed from his eyes and he fell down at their feet. Believing the words of Durgā-devī, whom he had tried to kill, Kāṁsa immediately released his brother-in-law and sister. He personally unlocked the iron shackles and very sympathetically showed his friendship, just like a family member.

When Devakī saw her brother so repentent, she also became pacified and forgot all his atrocious activities against her children. Vasudeva also, forgetting all past incidents, spoke smilingly with his brother-in-law. Vasudeva told Kāṁsa, "My dear fortunate brother-in-law, what you are saying about the material body and the soul is correct. Every living entity is born ignorant, understanding this material body to be his self. This conception of life is due to ignorance, and on the basis of this ignorance we create enmity or friendship. Lamentation, jubilation, fearfulness, envy, greed, illusion and madness are different features of our material concept of life. A person influenced like this engages in enmity due only to the material body. Being engaged in such activities, we forget our eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Vasudeva took the opportunity of Kāṁsa's benevolence and informed him that his atheistic activities were also due to this misconception of life—namely taking the material body to be the self. When Vasudeva talked with Kāṁsa in such an illuminating way, Kāṁsa became very pleased, and his guilt for killing his nephews subdued. With the permission of his sister Devakī and brother-in-law Vasudeva, he returned to his home with a relieved mind.

But the next day Kāṁsa called all his counsellors together and narrated to them all the incidents that had happened the night before. All the counsellors of Kāṁsa were demons and eternal enemies of the demigods, so they became depressed upon hearing their master speak of the night's events. And although they were not very much experienced or learned, they began to give instructions to Kāṁsa as follows: "Dear sir, let us now make arrangements to kill all children who were born within the last ten days in all towns, countries, villages and pasturing grounds. Let us execute this plan indiscriminately. We think that the demigods cannot do anything against us if we perform these atrocities. They are always afraid of fighting with us, and even if they wish to check our activities, they will not dare to do so. Because of the immeasurable strength of your bow, they fear you. Indeed, we have practical experience that whenever you stood to fight

with them and began to shower your arrows on them, they immediately began to flee in all directions just to save their lives. Many of the demigods were unable to fight with you, and they immediately surrendered themselves unto you by opening their turbans and the flag on their heads. With folded hands they begged you to spare them and said, 'My lord, we are all afraid of your strength. Please release us from this dangerous fight.' We have also seen many times that you would never kill such surrendered fighters when they were all fearful, their bows, arrows and chariots broken, forgetful of their military activities and unable to fight with you. So actually we have nothing to fear from these demigods. They are very proud of being great fighters in peacetime outside of the warfield, but actually they cannot show any talent or military power on the warfield. Although Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Siva and Lord Brahmā are always ready to help the demigods headed by Indra, we have no reason to be afraid of them. As far as Lord Viṣṇu is concerned, He has already hidden Himself within the hearts of all living entities, and He cannot come out. As far as Lord Śiva is concerned, he has renounced all activities; he has already entered into the forest. And Lord Brahmā is always engaged in different types of austerities and meditation. And what to speak of Indra—he is a straw in comparison to your strength. Therefore we have nothing to fear from all these demigods. But we must not neglect them because the demigods are our determined enemies. We must be careful to protect ourselves. To root them out from their very existence, we should just engage ourselves in your service and be always ready for your command."

The demons continued to say: "If there is some disease in the body which is neglected, it becomes incurable. Similarly, when one is not careful about restraining the senses and lets them loose, it is very difficult to control them at all. Therefore, we must always be very careful of the demigods before they get too strong to be subdued. The foundation of strength of the demigods is Lord Viṣṇu, because the ultimate goal of all religious principles is to satisfy Him. The Vedic injunctions, the *brāhmaṇas*, the cows, austerities, sacrifices, performances of charity and distribution of wealth are all for the satisfaction of Lord Viṣṇu. So let us immediately begin by killing all the *brāhmaṇas* who are in charge of the Vedic knowledge and the great sages who are in charge of sacrificial ritualistic performances. Let us kill all the cows which are the source of butter which is so necessary for performing sacrifices. Please give us your permission to kill all these creatures."

Actually the limbs of the transcendental body of Lord Viṣṇu are the *brāhmaṇas*, the cows, Vedic knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, sense and

mind control, faithfulness, charity, tolerance and performance of sacrifices. Lord Viṣṇu is situated in everyone's heart and is the leader of all demigods, including Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā. "We think that to kill Lord Viṣṇu is to persecute the great sages and *brāhmaṇas*," said the ministers.

Thus being advised by the demonic ministers, Kamsa, who was from the very beginning the greatest rascal, decided to persecute the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, being entrapped by the shackles of all-devouring, eternal time. He ordered the demons to harass all kinds of saintly persons, and then he entered his house. The adherents of Kamsa were all influenced by the modes of passion as well as illusioned by the modes of ignorance, and their only business was to create enmity with saintly persons. Such activities can only reduce the duration of life. The demons accelerated the process and invited their deaths as soon as possible. The result of persecuting saintly persons is not only untimely death. The act is so offensive that the actor also gradually loses his beauty, his fame and his religious principles, and his promotion to higher planets is also checked. Driven by various kinds of mental concoctions, the demons diminish all kinds of welfare. An offense at the lotus feet of the devotees and *brāhmaṇas* is a greater offense than that committed at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus a godless civilization becomes the source of all calamities.

Thus ends the Bhaktivedanta purport of the Fourth Chapter of Kṛṣṇa, "Kamsa Begins His Persecutions."