

CANTO 12 CHAPTER TWO

The Symptoms of Kali-yuga

This chapter relates that, when the bad qualities of the age of Kali will increase to an intolerable level, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will descend as Kalki to destroy those who are fixed in irreligion. After that, a new Satya-yuga will begin.

As the age of Kali progresses, all good qualities of men diminish and all impure qualities increase. Atheistic systems of so-called religion become predominant, replacing the codes of Vedic law. The kings become just like highway bandits, the people in general become dedicated to low occupations, and all the social classes become just like *śūdras*. All cows become like goats, all spiritual hermitages become like materialistic homes, and family ties extend no further than the immediate relationship of marriage.

When the age of Kali has almost ended, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will incarnate. He will appear in the village Śambhala, in the home of the exalted *brāhmaṇa* Viṣṇuśā, and will take the name Kalki. He will mount His horse Devadatta and, taking His sword in hand, will roam about the earth killing millions of bandits in the guise of kings. Then the signs of the next Satya-yuga will begin to appear. When the moon, sun and the planet Bṛhaspati enter simultaneously into one constellation and conjoin in the lunar mansion Puṣyā, Satya-yuga will begin. In the order of Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali, the cycle of four ages rotates in the society of living entities in this universe.

The chapter ends with a brief description of the future dynasties of the sun and moon coming from Vaivasvata Manu in the next Satya-yuga. Even now two saintly *kṣatriyas* are living who at the end of this Kali-yuga will reinitiate the pious dynasties of the sun-god, Vivasvān, and the moon-god, Candra. One of these kings is Devāpi, a brother of Mahārāja Śantanu, and the other is Maru, a descendant of Ikṣvāku. They are biding their time incognito in a village named Kalāpa.

TEXT 1

śrī-śuka uvāca
tataś cānu-dinaṁ dharmāḥ
satyaṁ śaucam kṣamā dayā
kālena balinā rājan
naṅkṣyaty āyur balaṁ smṛtiḥ

SYNONYMS

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śukadeva Gosvāmī said; *tataḥ*—then; *ca*—and; *anudinam*—day after day; *dharmāḥ*—religion; *satyam*—truth; *śaucam*—cleanliness; *kṣamā*—tolerance; *dayā*—mercy; *kālena*—by the force of time; *balinā*—strong; *rājan*—O King Parīkṣit; *naṅkṣyati*—will become ruined; *āyuh*—duration of life; *balam*—strength; *smṛtiḥ*—memory.

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Then, O King, religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, tolerance, mercy, duration of life, physical strength and memory will all diminish day by day because of the powerful influence of the age of Kali.

PURPORT

During the present age, Kali-yuga, practically all desirable qualities will gradually diminish, as described in this verse. For example, *dharma*, which indicates a respect for higher authority that leads one to obey religious principles, will diminish.

In the Western world, theologians have been unable to scientifically present the laws of God or, indeed, God Himself, and thus in Western intellectual history a rigid dichotomy has arisen between theology and science. In an attempt to resolve this conflict, some theologians have agreed to modify their doctrines so that they conform not only to proven scientific facts but even to pseudoscientific speculations and hypotheses, which, though unproven, are hypocritically included within the realm of “science.” On the other hand, some fanatical theologians disregard the scientific method altogether and insist on the veracity of their antiquated, sectarian dogmas.

Thus bereft of systematic Vedic theology, material science has moved into the destructive realm of gross materialism, while speculative Western philosophy

has drifted into the superficiality of relativistic ethics and inconclusive linguistic analysis. With so many of the best Western minds dedicated to materialistic analysis, naturally much of Western religious life, separated from the intellectual mainstream, is dominated by irrational fanaticism and unauthorized mystic and mystery cults. People have become so ignorant of the science of God that they often lump the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in with this odd assortment of fanciful attempts at theology and religion. Thus *dharma*, or true religion, which is strict and conscious obedience to God's law, is diminishing.

Satyam, truthfulness, is also diminishing, simply because people do not know what the truth is. Without knowing the Absolute Truth, one cannot clearly understand the real significance or purpose of life merely by amassing huge quantities of relative or hypothetical truths.

Kṣamā, tolerance or forgiveness, is diminishing as well, because there is no practical method by which people can purify themselves and thus become free of envy. Unless one is purified by chanting the holy names of the Lord in an authorized program of spiritual improvement, the mind will be overwhelmed by anger, envy and all sorts of small-mindedness. Thus *dayā*, mercy, is also decreasing. All living beings are eternally connected by their common participation in the divine existence of God. When this existential oneness is obscured through atheism and agnosticism, people are not inclined to be merciful to one another; they cannot recognize their self-interest in promoting the welfare of other living beings. In fact, people are no longer even merciful to themselves: they systematically destroy themselves through liquor, drugs, tobacco, meat-eating, sexual promiscuity and whatever other cheap gratificatory processes are available to them.

Because of all these self-destructive practices and the powerful influence of time, the average life span (*āyur*) is decreasing. Modern scientists, seeking to gain credibility among the mass of people, often publish statistics supposedly showing that science has increased the average duration of life. But these statistics do not take into account the number of people killed through the cruel practice of abortion. When we figure aborted children into the life expectancy of the total population, we find that the average duration of life has not at all increased in the age of Kali but is rather decreasing drastically.

Balam, bodily strength, is also decreasing. The Vedic literature states that five thousand years ago, in the previous age, human beings—and even animals and

plants—were larger and stronger. With the progress of the age of Kali, physical stature and strength will gradually diminish.

Certainly *smṛti*, memory, is weakening. In former ages human beings possessed superior memory, and they also did not encumber themselves with a terrible bureaucratic and technical society, as we have done. Thus essential information and abiding wisdom were preserved without recourse to writing. Of course, in the age of Kali things are dramatically different.

TEXT 2

*vittam eva kalau nṛṇām
janmācāra-guṇodayaḥ
dharma-nyāya-vyavasthāyām
kāraṇam balam eva hi*

SYNONYMS

vittam—wealth; *eva*—alone; *kalau*—in the age of Kali; *nṛṇām*—among men; *janma*—of good birth; *ācāra*—good behavior; *guṇa*—and good qualities; *udayaḥ*—the cause of manifestation; *dharma*—of religious duty; *nyāya*—and reason; *vyavasthāyām*—in the establishment; *kāraṇam*—the cause; *balam*—strength; *eva*—only; *hi*—indeed.

TRANSLATION

In Kali-yuga, wealth alone will be considered the sign of a man’s good birth, proper behavior and fine qualities. And law and justice will be applied only on the basis of one’s power.

PURPORT

In the age of Kali, a man is considered high class, middle class or low class merely according to his financial status, regardless of his knowledge, culture and behavior. In this age there are many great industrial and commercial cities with luxurious neighborhoods reserved for the wealthy. On beautiful tree-lined roads, within apparently aristocratic homes, it is not unusual to find many perverted, dishonest and sinful activities taking place. According to Vedic criteria, a man is considered high class if his behavior is enlightened, and his behavior is considered enlightened if his activities are dedicated to promoting

the happiness of all creatures. Every living being is originally happy, because in all living bodies there is an eternal spiritual spark that partakes of the divine conscious nature of God. When our original spiritual awareness is revived, we become naturally blissful and satisfied in knowledge and peace. An enlightened, or educated, man should endeavor to revive his own spiritual understanding, and he should help others experience the same sublime consciousness.

The great Western philosopher Socrates stated that if a man is enlightened he will automatically act virtuously, and Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed this fact. But in the Kali-yuga this obvious truth is disregarded, and the search for knowledge and virtue has been replaced by a vicious, animalistic competition for money. Those who prevail become the “top dogs” of modern society, and their consumer power grants them a reputation as most respectable, aristocratic and well educated.

This verse also states that in the age of Kali brute strength (*balam eva*) will determine law and “justice.” We should keep in mind that in the progressive, Vedic culture, there was no artificial dichotomy between the spiritual and the public realms. All civilized people took it for granted that God is everywhere and that His laws are binding upon all creatures. The Sanskrit word *dharma*, therefore, indicates one’s social, or public, obligation as well as one’s religious duty. Thus responsibly caring for one’s family is *dharma*, and engaging in the loving service of God is also *dharma*. This verse indicates, however, that in the age of Kali the principle of “might makes right” will hold sway.

In the first chapter of this canto we observed how this principle infiltrated India’s past. Similarly, as the Western world achieved political, economic and technological hegemony over Asian lands, bogus propaganda was disseminated to the effect that Indian, and in general all non-Western, religion, theology and philosophy are somehow primitive and unscientific—mere mythology and superstition. Fortunately this arrogant, irrational view is now dissipating, and people all over the world are beginning to appreciate the staggering wealth of spiritual philosophy and science available in the Sanskrit literature of India. In other words, many intelligent people no longer consider traditional Western religion or empirical science, which has virtually superseded religion as the official Western dogma, necessarily authoritative merely because the West has politically and economically subdued other geographic and ethnic configurations of humanity. Thus there is now hope that spiritual issues can be

contested and resolved on a philosophical level and not merely by a crude test of arms.

Next this verse points out that the rule of law will be applied unequally to the powerful and the powerless. Already in many nations justice is available only to those who can pay and fight for it. In a civilized state, every man, woman and child must have equal and rapid access to a fair system of laws. In modern times we sometimes refer to this as human rights. Certainly human rights are one of the more obvious casualties of the age of Kali.

TEXT 3

*dāmpatyē 'bhiruciḥ hetur
māyaiva vyāvahārike
strīṭve puṁstve ca hi ratir
vipratve sūtram eva hi*

SYNONYMS

dām-ṭatyē—in the relationship of husband and wife; *abhiruciḥ*—superficial attraction; *hetuḥ*—the reason; *māyā*—deceit; *eva*—indeed; *vyāvahārike*—in business; *strīṭve*—in being a woman; *puṁstve*—in being a man; *ca*—and; *hi*—indeed; *ratih*—sex; *vipratve*—in being a *brāhmaṇa*; *sūtram*—the sacred thread; *eva*—only; *hi*—indeed.

TRANSLATION

Men and women will live together merely because of superficial attraction, and success in business will depend on deceit. Womanliness and manliness will be judged according to one's expertise in sex, and a man will be known as a *brāhmaṇa* just by his wearing a thread.

PURPORT

Just as human life as a whole has a great and serious purpose—namely spiritual liberation—fundamental human institutions such as marriage and child-rearing should also be dedicated to that great objective. Unfortunately, in the present age the satisfaction of the sex impulse has become the overriding, if not the exclusive, reason for marriage.

The sexual impulse, which induces the male and female of almost every species

to combine physically, and in higher species also emotionally, is ultimately not a natural urge, because it is based on the unnatural identification of the self with the body. Life itself is a spiritual phenomenon. It is the soul that lives and gives apparent life to the biological machine called the body. Consciousness is the soul's manifest energy, and thus consciousness, awareness itself, is originally an entirely spiritual event. When life, or consciousness, is confined within a biological machine and falsely mistakes itself to be that machine, material existence occurs and sex desire arises.

God intends human life to be an opportunity for us to rectify this illusory mode of existence and return to the vast satisfaction of pure, godly existence. But because our identification with the material body is a long historical affair, it is difficult for most people to immediately break free from the demands of the materially molded mind. Therefore the Vedic scriptures prescribe sacred marriage, in which a so-called man and a so-called woman may combine in a regulated, spiritual marriage sheltered by overarching religious injunctions. In this way the candidate for self-realization who has selected family life can derive adequate satisfaction for his senses and simultaneously please the Lord within his heart by obeying religious injunctions. The Lord then purifies him of material desire.

In Kali-yuga this deep understanding has been almost lost, and, as stated in this verse, men and women combine like animals, solely on the basis of mutual attraction to bodies made of flesh, bone, membrane, blood and so on. In other words, in our modern, godless society the weak, superficial intelligence of humanity rarely penetrates beyond the gross physical covering of the eternal soul, and thus family life has in most cases lost its highest purpose and value.

A corollary point established in this verse is that in the age of Kali a woman is considered "a good woman" if she is sexually attractive and, indeed, sexually efficient. Similarly, a sexually attractive man is "a good man." The best example of this superficiality is the incredible attention twentieth-century people give to materialistic movie stars, music stars and other prominent figures in the entertainment industry. In fact, pursuing sexual experiences with various types of bodies is similar to drinking old wine from new bottles. But few people in the Kali-yuga can understand this.

Finally, this verse states that in the age of Kali a man will become known as a priest, or *brāhmaṇa*, merely by wearing ceremonial dress. In India, *brāhmaṇas* wear a sacred thread, and in other parts of world members of the priestly class

have other ornaments and symbols. But in the age of Kali the symbols alone will suffice to establish a person as a religious leader, despite his ignorance of God.

TEXT 4

*liṅgam evāśrama-khyātāv
anyonyāpatti-kāraṇam
avṛttyā nyāya-daurbalyam
pāṇḍitye cāpalam vacaḥ*

SYNONYMS

liṅgam—the external symbol; *eva*—merely; *āśrama-khyātau*—in knowing a person’s spiritual order; *anyonya*—mutual; *āpatti*—of exchange; *kāraṇam*—the cause; *avṛttyā*—by lack of livelihood; *nyāya*—in credibility; *daurbalyam*—the weakness; *pāṇḍitye*—in scholarship; *cāpalam*—tricky; *vacaḥ*—words.

TRANSLATION

A person’s spiritual position will be ascertained merely according to external symbols, and on that same basis people will change from one spiritual order to the next. A person’s propriety will be seriously questioned if he does not earn a good living. And one who is very clever at juggling words will be considered a learned scholar.

PURPORT

The previous verse stated that in the age of Kali the priestly class will be recognized by external symbols alone, and this verse extends the same principle to the other orders of society, namely the political or military class, the business or productive class, and finally the laborer or artisan class.

Modern sociologists have demonstrated that in those societies chiefly governed by the Protestant ethic, poverty is considered a sign of indolence, dirtiness, stupidity, immorality and worthlessness. In a God-conscious society, however, many persons voluntarily decide to dedicate their lives not to material acquisition but rather to the pursuit of knowledge and spirituality. Thus a preference for the simple and the austere may indicate intelligence, self-control and sensitivity to the higher purpose of life. Of course, in itself

poverty does not establish these virtues, but it may sometimes be the result of them. In the Kali-yuga, however, this possibility is often forgotten.

Intellectuality is another casualty of the bewildering age of Kali. Modern so-called philosophers and scientists have created a technical, esoteric terminology for each branch of learning, and when they give lectures people consider them learned simply because of their ability to speak that which no one else can understand. In Western culture, the Greek Sophists were among the first to systematically argue for rhetoric and “efficiency” above wisdom and purity, and sophistry certainly flourishes in the twentieth century. Modern universities have very little wisdom, though they do possess a virtual infinity of technical data. Although many modern thinkers are fundamentally ignorant of the higher, spiritual reality, they are, so to speak, “good talkers,” and most people simply don’t notice their ignorance.

TEXT 5

*anādhyataivāsādhutve
sādhutve dambha eva tu
svikāra eva codvāhe
snānam eva prasāadhanam*

SYNONYMS

anādhyatā—poverty; *eva*—simply; *asādhutve*—in one’s being unholy; *sādhutve*—in virtue, or success; *dambhaḥ*—hypocrisy; *eva*—alone; *tu*—and; *svīkāraḥ*—verbal acceptance; *eva*—alone; *ca*—and; *udvāhe*—in marriage; *snānam*—bathing with water; *eva*—alone; *prasāadhanam*—cleaning and decorating of the body.

TRANSLATION

A person will be judged unholy if he does not have money, and hypocrisy will be accepted as virtue. Marriage will be arranged simply by verbal agreement, and a person will think he is fit to appear in public if he has merely taken a bath.

PURPORT

The word *dambha* indicates a self-righteous hypocrite—someone not so much concerned with *being* saintly as with *appearing* saintly. In the age of Kali there

is a rather large number of self-righteous, hypocritical religious fanatics claiming to have the only way, the only truth and the only light. In many Muslim countries this mentality has resulted in brutal repression of religious freedom and thus destroyed the opportunity for enlightened spiritual dialectic. Fortunately, in much of the Western world there is a system of free religious expression. Even in the West, however, self-righteous hypocrites consider sincere and saintly followers of other disciplines to be heathens and devils.

Western religious fanatics are usually addicted to many bad habits, such as smoking, drinking, sex, gambling and animal slaughter. Although the followers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement strictly avoid illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and animal-killing, and although they dedicate their lives to the constant glorification of God, self-righteous hypocrites claim that such strict austerity and devotion to God are “tricks of the devil.” Thus the sinful are promoted as religious, and the saintly are decried as demonic. This pathetic incapacity to grasp the most rudimentary criteria of spirituality is a prominent symptom of Kali-yuga.

In this age, the institution of marriage will degenerate. Indeed, already a marriage certificate is sometimes cynically rejected as “a mere piece of paper.” Forgetting the spiritual purpose of marriage and misunderstanding sex to be the goal of family life, lusty men and women directly engage in sexual affairs without the troublesome formalities and responsibilities of a legal relationship. Such foolish people argue that “sex is natural.” But if sex is natural, pregnancy and childbirth are equally natural. And for the child it is certainly natural to be raised by a loving father and mother and in fact to have the same father and mother throughout his life. Psychological studies confirm that a child needs to be cared for by both his father and his mother, and thus it is obviously natural for sex to be accompanied by a permanent marriage arrangement. Hypocritical people justify unrestricted sex by saying “it is natural” but to avoid the natural consequence of sex—pregnancy—they use contraceptives, which certainly do not grow on trees. Indeed, contraceptives are not at all natural. Thus hypocrisy and foolishness abound in the age of Kali.

The verse concludes by saying that people will neglect to ornament their bodies properly in the present age. A human being should decorate his body with various religious ornaments. Vaiṣṇavas mark their bodies with *tilaka* blessed with the holy name of God. But in the age of Kali, religious and even material formalities are thoughtlessly discarded.

TEXT 6

*dūre vāry-ayanam tīrtham
lāvaṇyam keśa-dhāraṇam
udaram-bharatā svārthaḥ
satyatve dhārṣṭyam eva hi
dākṣyam kuṭumba-bharaṇam
yaśo 'rthe dharma-sevanam*

SYNONYMS

dūre—situated far away; *vāri*—of water; *ayanam*—a reservoir; *tīrtham*—holy place; *lāvaṇyam*—beauty; *keśa*—hair; *dhāraṇam*—carrying; *udaram-bharatā*—filling the belly; *sva-arthaḥ*—the goal of life; *satyatve*—in so-called truth; *dhārṣṭyam*—audacity; *eva*—simply; *hi*—indeed; *dākṣyam*—expertise; *kuṭumba-bharaṇam*—maintaining a family; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *arthe*—for the sake of; *dharma-sevanam*—observance of religious principles.

TRANSLATION

A sacred place will be taken to consist of no more than a reservoir of water located at a distance, and beauty will be thought to depend on one's hairstyle. Filling the belly will become the goal of life, and one who is audacious will be accepted as truthful. He who can maintain a family will be regarded as an expert man, and the principles of religion will be observed only for the sake of reputation.

PURPORT

In India there are many sacred places through which holy rivers flow. Foolish persons eagerly seek redemption from their sins by bathing in these rivers but do not take instruction from learned devotees of the Lord who reside in such places. One should go to a holy place seeking spiritual enlightenment and not just for ritualistic bathing.

In this age, people tirelessly arrange their hair in different styles, trying to enhance their facial beauty and sexuality. They do not know that actual beauty comes from within the heart, from the soul, and that only a person who is pure is truly attractive. As the difficulties of this age increase, filling one's belly will

be the mark of success, and one who can maintain his own family will be considered brilliant in economic affairs. Religion will be practiced, if at all, only for the sake of reputation and without any essential understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 7

*evam prajābhir duṣṭābhir
ākīrṇe kṣiti-maṇḍale
brahma-ṁṁ-kṣatra-śūdrāṇām
yo balī bhavitā nṛpaḥ*

SYNONYMS

evam—in this way; *prajābhiḥ*—with populace; *duṣṭābhiḥ*—corrupted; *ākīrṇe*—being crowded; *kṣiti-maṇḍale*—the earth globe; *brahma*—among the *brāhmaṇas*; *ṁṁ*—*vaiśyas*; *kṣatra*—*kṣatriyas*; *śūdrāṇām*—and *śūdras*; *yaḥ*—whoever; *balī*—the strongest; *bhavitā*—he will become; *nṛpaḥ*—the king.

TRANSLATION

As the earth thus becomes crowded with a corrupt population, whoever among any of the social classes shows himself to be the strongest will gain political power.

TEXT 8

*prajā hi lubdhai rājanyair
nirghṛṇair dasyu-dharmabhiḥ
ācchinna-dāra-draviṇā
yāsyanti giri-kānanam*

SYNONYMS

prajāḥ—the citizens; *hi*—indeed; *lubdhaiḥ*—avaricious; *rājanyaiḥ*—by the royal order; *nirghṛṇaiḥ*—merciless; *dasyu*—of ordinary thieves; *dharmabhiḥ*—acting according to the nature; *ācchinna*—taken away; *dāra*—their wives; *draviṇāḥ*—and property; *yāsyanti*—they will go; *giri*—to the mountains; *kānanam*—and forests.

TRANSLATION

Losing their wives and properties to such avaricious and merciless rulers, who will behave no better than ordinary thieves, the citizens will flee to the mountains and forests.

TEXT 9

*śāka-mūlāmiṣa-kṣaudra-
phala-puṣpāṣṭi-bhojanāḥ
anāvṛṣṭyā vinañkṣyanti
durbhikṣa-kara-pīditāḥ*

SYNONYMS

śāka—leaves; *mūla*—roots; *āmiṣa*—meat; *kṣaudra*—wild honey; *phala*—fruits; *puṣpa*—flowers; *āṣṭi*—and seeds; *bhojanāḥ*—eating; *anāvṛṣṭyā*—because of drought; *vinañkṣyanti*—they will become ruined; *durbhikṣa*—by famine; *kara*—and taxation; *pīditāḥ*—tormented.

TRANSLATION

Harassed by famine and excessive taxes, people will resort to eating leaves, roots, flesh, wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Struck by drought, they will become completely ruined.

PURPORT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam authoritatively describes the future of our planet. Just as a leaf disconnected from a plant or tree dries up, withers and disintegrates, when human society is disconnected from the Supreme Lord it withers up and disintegrates in violence and chaos. Despite our computers and rockets, if the Supreme Lord does not send rain we shall all starve.

TEXT 10

*śīta-vātātapa-prāvṛḍ-
himair anyonyataḥ prajāḥ
kṣut-trḍbhyām vyādhībhiś caiva
santapsyante ca cintayā*

SYNONYMS

śīta—by cold; *vāta*—wind; *ātapa*—the heat of the sun; *prāvṛt*—torrential rain; *himaiḥ*—and snow; *anyonyataḥ*—by quarrel; *prajāḥ*—the citizens; *kṣut*—by hunger; *tr̥ḍbhyām*—and thirst; *vyādhibhiḥ*—by diseases; *ca*—also; *eva*—indeed; *santapsyante*—they will suffer great distress; *ca*—and; *cintayā*—by anxiety.

TRANSLATION

The citizens will suffer greatly from cold, wind, heat, rain and snow. They will be further tormented by quarrels, hunger, thirst, disease and severe anxiety.

TEXT 11

triṁśad vimśati varṣāṇi
paramāyuhḥ kalau nṛṇām

SYNONYMS

triṁśat—thirty; *vimśati*—plus twenty; *varṣāṇi*—years; *parama-āyuhḥ*—the maximum duration of life; *kalau*—in Kali-yuga; *nṛṇām*—of men.

TRANSLATION

The maximum duration of life for human beings in Kali-yuga will become fifty years.

TEXTS 12–16

kṣīyamāṇeṣu deheṣu
dehinām kali-doṣataḥ
varṇāśramavatām dharme
naṣṭe veda-ṭathe nṛṇām

pāṣaṇḍa-ṭracure dharme
dasyu-ṭṛāyeṣu rājasu
cauryānṛta-vṛthā-himsā-
nānā-vṛttiṣu vai nṛṣu

śūdra-ṭṛāyeṣu varṇeṣu
cchāga-ṭṛāyāsu dhenuṣu
gṛha-ṭṛāyeṣv āśrameṣu
yauna-ṭṛāyeṣu bandhuṣu

aṇu-prāyāsv oṣadhīṣu
śamī-prāyeṣu sthāsnuṣu
vidyut-prāyeṣu megheṣu
śūnya-prāyeṣu sadmasu

ittham kalau gata-prāye
janeṣu khara-dharmiṣu
dharma-trāṇāya sattvena
bhagavān avatariṣyati

SYNONYMS

kṣīyamāṇeṣu—having become smaller; *deheṣu*—the bodies; *dehinām*—of all living entities; *kali-doṣataḥ*—by the contamination of the age of Kali; *varṇa-āśrama-vatām*—of the members of *varṇāśrama* society; *dharme*—when their religious principles; *naṣṭe*—have been destroyed; *veda-pathe*—the path of the Vedas; *nṛṇām*—for all men; *pāṣaṇḍa-pracure*—mostly atheism; *dharme*—religion; *dasyu-prāyeṣu*—mostly thieves; *rājasu*—the kings; *caurya*—banditry; *anṛta*—lying; *vṛthā-himsā*—useless slaughter; *nānā*—various; *vṛttiṣu*—their occupations; *vai*—indeed; *nṛṣu*—when men; *śūdra-prāyeṣu*—mostly low-class *śūdras*; *varṇeṣu*—the so-called social orders; *chāga-prāyāsu*—no better than goats; *dhenuṣu*—the cows; *gṛha-prāyeṣu*—just like materialistic homes; *āśrameṣu*—the spiritual hermitages; *yauna-prāyeṣu*—extending no further than marriage; *bandhuṣu*—family ties; *aṇu-prāyāsu*—mostly very small; *oṣadhīṣu*—plants and herbs; *śamī-prāyeṣu*—just like *śamī* trees; *sthāsnuṣu*—all the trees; *vidyut-prāyeṣu*—always manifesting lightning; *megheṣu*—the clouds; *śūnya-prāyeṣu*—devoid of religious life; *sadmasu*—the homes; *ittham*—thus; *kalau*—when the age of Kali; *gata-prāye*—is almost finished; *janeṣu*—the people; *khara-dharmiṣu*—when they have assumed the characteristics of asses; *dharma-trāṇāya*—for the deliverance of religion; *sattvena*—in the pure mode of goodness; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *avatariṣyati*—will descend.

TRANSLATION

By the time the age of Kali ends, the bodies of all creatures will be greatly reduced in size, and the religious principles of followers of *varṇāśrama* will be

ruined. The path of the *Vedas* will be completely forgotten in human society, and so-called religion will be mostly atheistic. The kings will mostly be thieves, the occupations of men will be stealing, lying and needless violence, and all the social classes will be reduced to the lowest level of *sūdras*. Cows will be like goats, spiritual hermitages will be no different from mundane houses, and family ties will extend no further than the immediate bonds of marriage. Most plants and herbs will be tiny, and all trees will appear like dwarf *śamī* trees. Clouds will be full of lightning, homes will be devoid of piety, and all human beings will have become like asses. At that time, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will appear on the earth. Acting with the power of pure spiritual goodness, He will rescue eternal religion.

PURPORT

Significantly, these verses point out that most so-called religions in this age will be atheistic (*pāsaṅḍa-pracure dharme*). In confirmation of the *Bhāgavatam*'s prediction, the United States Supreme Court has recently ruled that to be considered a religion a system of belief need not recognize a supreme being. Also, many atheistic, voidistic belief systems, often imported from the Orient, have attracted the attention of modern atheistic scientists, who expound on the similarities between Eastern and Western voidism in fashionable, esoteric books.

These verses vividly describe many unsavory symptoms of the age of Kali. Ultimately, at the end of this age, Lord Kṛṣṇa will descend as Kalki and remove the thoroughly demonic persons from the face of the earth.

TEXT 17

*carācara-guror viṣṇor
īśvarasyākhilātmanaḥ
dharma-trāṇāya sādhūnām
janma karmāpanuttaye*

SYNONYMS

cara-acara—of all moving and nonmoving living beings; *guroḥ*—of the spiritual master; *viṣṇoḥ*—the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu; *īśvarasya*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *akhila*—of all; *ātmanaḥ*—of the Supreme Soul;

dharma-trāṇāya—for the protection of religion; *sādhūnām*—of saintly men; *janma*—the birth; *karma*—of their fruitive activities; *apanuttaye*—for the cessation.

TRANSLATION

Lord Viṣṇu—the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the spiritual master of all moving and nonmoving living beings, and the Supreme Soul of all—takes birth to protect the principles of religion and to relieve His saintly devotees from the reactions of material work.

TEXT 18

*śambhala-grāma-mukhyasya
brāhmaṇasya mahātmanaḥ
bhavane viṣṇuayaśasaḥ
kalkiḥ prādurbhaviṣyati*

SYNONYMS

śambhala-grāma—in the village Śambhala; *mukhyasya*—of the chief citizen; *brāhmaṇasya*—of the *brāhmaṇa*; *mahā-ātmanaḥ*—the great soul; *bhavane*—in the home; *viṣṇuayaśasaḥ*—of Viṣṇuayaśā; *kalkiḥ*—Lord Kalki; *prādurbhaviṣyati*—will appear.

TRANSLATION

Lord Kalki will appear in the home of the most eminent *brāhmaṇa* of Śambhala village, the great soul Viṣṇuayaśā.

TEXTS 19–20

*aśvam āśu-gam āruhya
devadattam jagat-patiḥ
asināsādhu-damanam
aṣṭaiśvarya-guṇānvitaḥ
vicarann āśunā kṣauṇyām
hayenāpratima-dyutiḥ
nṛpa-liṅga-cchado dasyūn
koṭiśo nihaniṣyati*

SYNONYMS

aśvam—His horse; *āśu-gam*—swift-traveling; *āruhya*—mounting; *devadattam*—named Devadatta; *jagat-patiḥ*—the Lord of the universe; *asinā*—with His sword; *asādhū-damanam*—(the horse who) subdues the unholy; *aṣṭa*—with eight; *aiśvarya*—mystic opulences; *guṇa*—and transcendental qualities of the Personality of Godhead; *anvitaḥ*—endowed; *vicaran*—traveling about; *āśunā*—swift; *kṣaunṛyām*—upon the earth; *hayena*—by His horse; *apratima*—unrivaled; *dyutiḥ*—whose effulgence; *nṛpa-liṅga*—with the dress of kings; *chadaḥ*—disguising themselves; *dasyūn*—thieves; *koṭīśaḥ*—by the millions; *nihaniṣyati*—He will slaughter.

TRANSLATION

Lord Kalki, the Lord of the universe, will mount His swift horse Devadatta and, sword in hand, travel over the earth exhibiting His eight mystic opulences and eight special qualities of Godhead. Displaying His unequalled effulgence and riding with great speed, He will kill by the millions those thieves who have dared dress as kings.

PURPORT

These verses describe the thrilling pastimes of Lord Kalki. Anyone would be attracted by the sight of a powerful, beautiful man riding on a wonderful horse at lightning speed, chastising and devastating cruel, demonic people with the sword in His hand.

Of course, fanatical materialists may argue that this picture of Lord Kalki is a mere anthropomorphic creation of the human mind—a mythological deity created by people who need to believe in some superior being. But this argument is not logical, nor does it prove anything. It is merely the opinion of certain people. We need water, but that does not mean man creates water. We also need food, oxygen and many other things that we do not create. Since our general experience is that our needs correspond to available objects existing in the external world, that we appear to need a Supreme Lord would tend to indicate that in fact there is a Supreme Lord. In other words, nature endows us with a sense of need for things that actually exist and that are in fact necessary for our well-being. Similarly, we experience a need for God because we are in

fact part of God and cannot live without Him. At the end of Kali-yuga this same God will appear as the mighty Kalki *avatāra* and beat the pollution out of the demons.

TEXT 21

*atha teṣāṃ bhaviṣyanti
manāṃsi viśadāni vai
vāsudevāṅga-rāgāti-
puṇya-gandhānila-sprśām
paura-jānapadānām vai
hateṣv akhila-dasyuṣu*

SYNONYMS

atha—then; *teṣāṃ*—of them; *bhaviṣyanti*—will become; *manāṃsi*—the minds; *viśadāni*—clear; *vai*—indeed; *vāsudeva*—of Lord Vāsudeva; *aṅga*—of the body; *rāga*—from the cosmetic decorations; *ati-puṇya*—most sacred; *gandha*—having the fragrance; *anila*—by the wind; *sprśām*—of those who have been touched; *paura*—of the city-dwellers; *jana-padānām*—and the residents of the smaller towns and villages; *vai*—indeed; *hateṣu*—when they have been killed; *akhila*—all; *dasyuṣu*—the rascal kings.

TRANSLATION

After all the impostor kings have been killed, the residents of the cities and towns will feel the breezes carrying the most sacred fragrance of the sandalwood paste and other decorations of Lord Vāsudeva, and their minds will thereby become transcendently pure.

PURPORT

Nothing can surpass the sublime experience of being dramatically rescued by a great hero who happens to be the Supreme Lord. The death of the demons at the end of Kali-yuga is accompanied by fragrant spiritual breezes, and thus the atmosphere becomes most enchanting.

TEXT 22

*teṣāṃ prajā-visargaś ca
sthaviṣṭhaḥ sambhaviṣyati*

*vāsudeve bhagavati
sattva-mūrtau hṛdi sthite*

SYNONYMS

teṣām—of them; *prajā*—of progeny; *visargaḥ*—the creation; *ca*—and; *sthaviṣṭhaḥ*—abundant; *sambhaviṣyati*—will be; *vāsudeve*—Lord Vāsudeva; *bhagavati*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *sattva-mūrtau*—in His transcendental form of pure goodness; *hṛdi*—in their hearts; *sthite*—when He is situated.

TRANSLATION

When Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears in their hearts in His transcendental form of goodness, the remaining citizens will abundantly repopulate the earth.

TEXT 23

*yadāvatīrṇo bhagavān
kalkir dharmā-patir hariḥ
kṛtam bhaviṣyati tadā
prajā-sūtiś ca sāttvikī*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *avatīrṇaḥ*—incarnates; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Lord; *kalkiḥ*—Kalki; *dharmā-patiḥ*—the master of religion; *hariḥ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *kṛtam*—Satya-yuga; *bhaviṣyati*—will begin; *tadā*—then; *prajā-sūtiḥ*—the creation of progeny; *ca*—and; *sāttvikī*—in the mode of goodness.

TRANSLATION

When the Supreme Lord has appeared on earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Satya-yuga will begin, and human society will bring forth progeny in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 24

*yadā candraś ca sūryaś ca
tathā tiṣya-brhaspatī*

*eka-rāśau sameṣyanti
bhaviṣyati tadā kṛtam*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *candraḥ*—the moon; *ca*—and; *sūryaḥ*—the sun; *ca*—and; *tathā*—also; *tiṣya*—the asterism Tiṣyā (more commonly known as Puṣyā, extending from 3° 20′ to 16° 40′ Cancer); *bṛhaspatī*—and the planet Jupiter; *eka-rāśau*—in the same constellation (Cancer); *sameṣyanti*—will enter simultaneously; *bhaviṣyati*—will be; *tadā*—then; *kṛtam*—Satya-yuga.

TRANSLATION

When the moon, the sun and Bṛhaspatī are together in the constellation Karkāṭa, and all three enter simultaneously into the lunar mansion Puṣyā—at that exact moment the age of Satya, or Kṛta, will begin.

TEXT 25

*ye 'tītā vartamānā ye
bhaviṣyanti ca pāṛthivāḥ
te ta uddeśataḥ proktā
vaṁśīyāḥ soma-sūryayoḥ*

SYNONYMS

ye—those who; *atītāḥ*—past; *vartamānāḥ*—present; *ye*—who; *bhaviṣyanti*—will be in the future; *ca*—and; *pāṛthivāḥ*—kings of the earth; *te te*—all of them; *uddeśataḥ*—by brief mention; *proktāḥ*—described; *vaṁśīyāḥ*—the members of the dynasties; *soma-sūryayoḥ*—of the sun-god and the moon-god.

TRANSLATION

Thus I have described all the kings—past, present and future—who belong to the dynasties of the sun and the moon.

TEXT 26

*ārabhya bhavato janma
yāvan nandābhiṣecanam
etad varṣa-sahasraṁ tu*

śataṁ pañcadaśottaram

SYNONYMS

ārabhya—beginning from; *bhavataḥ*—of your good self (Parīkṣit); *janma*—the birth; *yāvat*—up until; *nanda*—of King Nanda, the son of Mahānandi; *abhiṣecanam*—the coronation; *etat*—this; *varṣa*—years; *sahasram*—one thousand; *tu*—and; *śatam*—one hundred; *pañca-daśa-uttaram*—plus fifty.

TRANSLATION

From your birth up to the coronation of King Nanda, 1,150 years will pass.

PURPORT

Although Śukadeva Gosvāmī previously described approximately fifteen hundred years of royal dynasties, it is understood that some overlapping occurred between kings. Therefore the present chronological calculation should be taken as authoritative.

TEXTS 27–28

*saptarṣiṇām tu yau pūrvau
dṛśyete uditau divi
tayos tu madhye nakṣatram
dṛśyate yat samam niśi*

*tenaiva ṛṣayo yuktās
tiṣṭhanty abda-śataṁ nṛṇām
te tvadīye dvijāḥ kāla
adhunā cāśritā maghāḥ*

SYNONYMS

sapta-ṛṣiṇām—of the constellation of the seven sages (the constellation known to Westerners as *Ursa Major*); *tu*—and; *yau*—which two stars; *pūrvau*—first; *dṛśyete*—are seen; *uditau*—risen; *divi*—in the sky; *tayoḥ*—of the two (named Pulaha and Kratu); *tu*—and; *madhye*—between; *nakṣatram*—the lunar mansion; *dṛśyate*—is seen; *yat*—which; *samam*—on the same line of celestial longitude, as their midpoint; *niśi*—in the night sky; *tena*—with that lunar

mansion; *eva*—indeed; *ṛṣayaḥ*—the seven sages; *yuktāḥ*—are connected; *tiṣṭhanti*—they remain; *abda-śatam*—one hundred years; *nṛṇām*—of human beings; *te*—these seven sages; *tvadīye*—in your; *dvijāḥ*—the elevated *brāhmaṇas*; *kāle*—in the time; *adhunā*—now; *ca*—and; *āśritāḥ*—are situated; *maghāḥ*—in the asterism Maghā.

TRANSLATION

Of the seven stars forming the constellation of the seven sages, Pulaha and Kratu are the first to rise in the night sky. If a line running north and south were drawn through their midpoint, whichever of the lunar mansions this line passes through is said to be the ruling asterism of the constellation for that time. The Seven Sages will remain connected with that particular lunar mansion for one hundred human years. Currently, during your lifetime, they are situated in the *nakṣatra* called Maghā.

TEXT 29

*viṣṇor bhagavato bhānuḥ
kṛṣṇākhyo 'sau divam gataḥ
tadāviśat kalir lokam
pāpe yad ramate janaḥ*

SYNONYMS

viṣṇoḥ—of Viṣṇu; *bhagavataḥ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhānuḥ*—the sun; *kṛṣṇa-ākhyāḥ*—known as Kṛṣṇa; *asau*—He; *divam*—to the spiritual sky; *gataḥ*—having returned; *tadā*—then; *aviśat*—entered; *kalīḥ*—the age of Kali; *lokam*—this world; *pāpe*—in sin; *yad*—in which age; *ramate*—take pleasure; *janaḥ*—the people.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, is brilliant like the sun and is known as Kṛṣṇa. When He returned to the spiritual sky, Kali entered this world, and people then began to take pleasure in sinful activities.

TEXT 30

*yāvat sa pāda-padmābhyām
spṛśan āste ramā-patiḥ*

*tāvat kalir vai pṛthivīm
parākrantum na cāśakat*

SYNONYMS

yāvat—as long as; *saḥ*—He, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pāda-padmābhyām*—with His lotus feet; *spṛśan*—touching; *āste*—remained; *ramā-patiḥ*—the husband of the goddess of fortune; *tāvat*—for that long; *kalih*—the age of Kali; *vai*—indeed; *pṛthivīm*—the earth; *parākrantum*—to overcome; *na*—not; *ca*—and; *aśakat*—was able.

TRANSLATION

As long as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, touched the earth with His lotus feet, Kali was powerless to subdue this planet.

PURPORT

Although even during the time of Lord Kṛṣṇa's presence on earth Kali had entered the earth to a slight extent through the impious activities of Duryodhana and his allies, Lord Kṛṣṇa consistently suppressed Kali's influence. Kali could not flourish until Lord Kṛṣṇa had left the earth.

TEXT 31

*yadā devarṣayaḥ sapta
maghāsu vicaranti hi
tadā pravṛttas tu kalir
dvādaśābda-śatātmakaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *deva-ṛṣayaḥ sapta*—the seven sages among the demigods; *maghāsu*—in the lunar mansion Maghā; *vicaranti*—are traveling; *hi*—indeed; *tadā*—then; *pravṛttaḥ*—begins; *tu*—and; *kalih*—the age of Kali; *dvādaśa*—twelve; *abda-śata*—centuries [These twelve hundred years of the demigods equal 432,000 earth years]; *ātmakaḥ*—consisting of.

TRANSLATION

When the constellation of the seven sages is passing through the lunar mansion Maghā, the age of Kali begins. It comprises twelve hundred years of the demigods.

TEXT 32

*yadā maghābhyo yāsyanti
pūrvāṣāḍhām maharṣayaḥ
tadā nandāt prabhṛty eṣa
kalir vṛddhim gamiṣyati*

SYNONYMS

yadā—when; *maghābhyāḥ*—from Maghā; *yāsyanti*—they will go; *pūrvā-āṣāḍhām*—to the next lunar mansion, Pūrvāṣāḍhā; *mahā-ṛṣayaḥ*—the seven great sages; *tadā*—then; *nandāt*—beginning from Nanda; *prabhṛti*—and his descendants; *eṣaḥ*—this; *kaliḥ*—age of Kali; *vṛddhim*—maturity; *gamiṣyati*—will attain.

TRANSLATION

When the great sages of the Saptarṣi constellation pass from Maghā to Pūrvāṣāḍhā, Kali will have his full strength, beginning from King Nanda and his dynasty.

TEXT 33

*yasmin kṛṣṇo divam yātas
tasminn eva tadāhani
pratīpannam kali-yugam
iti prāhuḥ purā-vidaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yasmin—on which; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *divam*—to the spiritual world; *yātaḥ*—gone; *tasmin*—on that; *eva*—same; *tadā*—then; *ahani*—day; *pratīpannam*—obtained; *kali-yugam*—the age of Kali; *iti*—thus; *prāhuḥ*—they say; *purā*—of the past; *vidaḥ*—the experts.

TRANSLATION

Those who scientifically understand the past declare that on the very day that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa departed for the spiritual world, the influence of the age of Kali began.

PURPORT

Although technically Kali-yuga was to begin during the time of Lord Kṛṣṇa's presence on earth, this fallen age had to wait meekly for the departure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 34

*divyābdānām sahasrānte
caturthe tu punaḥ kṛtam
bhaviṣyati tadā nṛṇām
mana ātma-prakāśakam*

SYNONYMS

divya—of the demigods; *abdānām*—years; *sahasra*—of one thousand; *ante*—at the end; *caturthe*—in the fourth age, Kali; *tu*—and; *punaḥ*—again; *kṛtam*—the Satya-yuga; *bhaviṣyati*—will be; *tadā*—then; *nṛṇām*—of men; *manaḥ*—the minds; *ātma-prakāśakam*—self-luminous.

TRANSLATION

After the one thousand celestial years of Kali-yuga, the Satya-yuga will manifest again. At that time the minds of all men will become self-effulgent.

TEXT 35

*ity eṣa mānavo vaṁśo
yathā saṅkhyāyate bhuvī
tathā viṭ-śūdra-viprāṇām
tās tā jñeyā yuge yuge*

SYNONYMS

iti—thus (in the cantos of this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam); *eṣaḥ*—this; *mānavah*—descending from Vaivasvata Manu; *vaṁśaḥ*—the dynasty; *yathā*—as; *saṅkhyāyate*—it is enumerated; *bhuvī*—upon the earth; *tathā*—in the same

way; *viṭ*—of the *vaiśyas*; *śūdra*—*śūdras*; *viprāṇām*—and *brāhmaṇas*; *tāḥ tāḥ*—the situations of each; *jñeyāḥ*—are to be understood; *yuge yuge*—in each age.

TRANSLATION

Thus I have described the royal dynasty of Manu, as it is known on this earth. One can similarly study the history of the *vaiśyas*, *śūdras* and *brāhmaṇas* living in the various ages.

PURPORT

Just as the dynasty of kings includes exalted and insignificant, virtuous and wicked monarchs, varieties of human character are found in the intellectual, commercial and laboring orders of society.

TEXT 36

eteṣāṃ nāma-liṅgānām
puruṣāṅām mahātmanām
kathā-mātrāvaśiṣṭānām
kīrtir eva sthitā bhuvī

SYNONYMS

eteṣāṃ—of these; *nāma*—their names; *liṅgānām*—which are the only means of remembering them; *puruṣāṅām*—of the personalities; *mahā-ātmanām*—who were great souls; *kathā*—the stories; *mātra*—merely; *avaśiṣṭānām*—whose remaining portion; *kīrtiḥ*—the glories; *eva*—only; *sthitā*—are present; *bhuvī*—on the earth.

TRANSLATION

These personalities, who were great souls, are now known only by their names. They exist only in accounts from the past, and only their fame remains on the earth.

PURPORT

Although one may consider oneself to be a great, powerful leader, he will

ultimately end up as a name in a long list of names. In other words, it is useless to be attached to power and position in the material world.

TEXT 37

*devāpiḥ śāntanor bhrātā
maruś cekṣvāku-vaṁśa-jaḥ
kalāpa-grāma āsāte
mahā-yoga-balānvitau*

SYNONYMS

devāpiḥ—Devāpi; *śāntanoḥ*—of Mahārāja Śāntanu; *bhrātā*—the brother; *maruḥ*—Maru; *ca*—and; *ikṣvāku-vaṁśa-jaḥ*—born in the dynasty of Ikṣvāku; *kalāpa-grāme*—in the village Kalāpa; *āsāte*—the two of them are living; *mahā*—great; *yoga-bala*—with mystic power; *anvitau*—endowed.

TRANSLATION

Devāpi, the brother of Mahārāja Śāntanu, and Maru, the descendant of Ikṣvāku, both possess great mystic strength and are living even now in the village of Kalāpa.

TEXT 38

*tāv ihaitya kaler ante
vāsudevānuśikṣitau
varṇāśrama-yutaṁ dharmam
pūrva-vat prathayiṣyataḥ*

SYNONYMS

tau—they (Maru and Devāpi); *iha*—to human society; *etya*—returning; *kaleḥ*—of the age of Kali; *ante*—at the end; *vāsudeva*—by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva; *anuśikṣitau*—instructed; *varṇa-āśrama*—the divine system of occupational and spiritual orders of society; *yutam*—comprising; *dharmam*—the code of eternal religion; *pūrva-vat*—just as previously; *prathayiṣyataḥ*—they will promulgate.

TRANSLATION

At the end of the age of Kali, these two kings, having received instruction directly from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, will return to human society and reestablish the eternal religion of man, characterized by the divisions of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, just as it was before.

PURPORT

According to this and the previous verse, the two great kings who will reestablish human culture after the end of Kali-yuga have already descended to the earth, where they are patiently waiting to render their devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu.

TEXT 39

*kṛtaṁ tretā dvāparaṁ ca
kaliś ceti catur-yugam
anena krama-yogena
bhuvī prāṇīṣu vartate*

SYNONYMS

kṛtam—Satya-yuga; *tretā*—Tretā-yuga; *dvāparam*—Dvāpara-yuga; *ca*—and; *kaliḥ*—Kali-yuga; *ca*—and; *iti*—thus; *catur-yugam*—the cycle of four ages; *anena*—by this; *krama*—sequential; *yogena*—pattern; *bhuvī*—in this world; *prāṇīṣu*—among living beings; *vartate*—goes on continuously.

TRANSLATION

The cycle of four ages—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali—continues perpetually among living beings on this earth, repeating the same general sequence of events.

TEXT 40

*rājann ete mayā proktā
nara-devās tathāpare
bhūmau mamatvaṁ kṛtvānte
hitvemām nidhanaṁ gatāḥ*

SYNONYMS

rājan—O King Parīkṣit; *ete*—these; *mayā*—by me; *proktāḥ*—described; *nara-devāḥ*—kings; *tathā*—and; *āpare*—other human beings; *bhūmau*—upon the earth; *mamatvam*—possessiveness; *kṛtvā*—exerting; *ante*—in the end; *hitvā*—giving up; *imām*—this world; *nidhanam*—destruction; *gatāḥ*—met.

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, all these kings I have described, as well as all other human beings, come to this earth and stake their claims, but ultimately they all must give up this world and meet their destruction.

TEXT 41

kṛmi-vid-bhasma-samjñānte
rāja-nāmno 'pi yasya ca
bhūta-dhruk tat-kṛte svārtham
kim veda nirayo yataḥ

SYNONYMS

kṛmi—of worms; *viṭ*—stool; *bhasma*—and ashes; *samjñā*—the designation; *ante*—in the end; *rāja-nāmnaḥ*—going by the name “king”; *api*—even though; *yasya*—of which (body); *ca*—and; *bhūta*—of living beings; *dhruk*—an enemy; *tat-kṛte*—for the sake of that body; *sva-artham*—his own best interest; *kim*—what; *veda*—does he know; *nirayaḥ*—punishment in hell; *yataḥ*—because of which.

TRANSLATION

Even though a person’s body may now have the designation “king,” in the end its name will be “worms,” “stool” or “ashes.” What can a person who injures other living beings for the sake of his body know about his own self-interest, since his activities are simply leading him to hell?

PURPORT

After death, the body may be buried and eaten by worms, or it may be thrown in the street or forest to be eaten by animals who will pass out its remnants as stool, or it may be burned and converted into ashes. Therefore one should not

pave his way to hell by using his temporary body to injure the bodies of other living beings. In this verse the word *bhūta* includes nonhuman life forms, who are also creatures of God. One should give up all envious violence and learn to see God in everything by the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

TEXT 42

*katham seyam akhaṇḍā bhūḥ
pūrvair me puruṣair dhṛtā
mat-putrasya ca pautrasya
mat-pūrvā vaṁśa-jasya vā*

SYNONYMS

katham—how; *sā iyam*—this same; *akhaṇḍā*—unbounded; *bhūḥ*—earth; *pūrvaiḥ*—by the predecessors; *me*—my; *puruṣaiḥ*—by the personalities; *dhṛtā*—held in control; *mat-putrasya*—of my son; *ca*—and; *pautrasya*—of the grandson; *mat-pūrvā*—now under my sway; *vaṁśa-jasya*—of the descendant; *vā*—or.

TRANSLATION

[The materialistic king thinks:] “This unbounded earth was held by my predecessors and is now under my sovereignty. How can I arrange for it to remain in the hands of my sons, grandsons and other descendants?”

PURPORT

This is an example of foolish possessiveness.

TEXT 43

*tejo-'b-anna-mayaṁ kāyaṁ
gṛhītvātmatayābudhāḥ
mahīm mamatayā cobhau
hitvānte 'darśanaṁ gatāḥ*

SYNONYMS

tejaḥ—fire; *ap*—water; *anna*—and earth; *mayam*—composed of; *kāyam*—this body; *gṛhītvā*—accepting; *ātmatayā*—with the sense of “I”; *abudhāḥ*—the

unintelligent; *mahīm*—this earth; *mamatayā*—with the sense of “my”; *ca*—and; *ubhau*—both; *hitvā*—giving up; *ante*—ultimately; *adarśanam*—disappearance; *gatāḥ*—they have obtained.

TRANSLATION

Although the foolish accept the body made of earth, water and fire as “me” and this earth as “mine,” in every case they have ultimately abandoned both their body and the earth and passed away into oblivion.

PURPORT

Although the soul is eternal, our so-called family tradition and earthly fame will certainly pass into oblivion.

TEXT 44

*ye ye bhū-patayo rājan
bhuñjate bhuvam ojasā
kālena te kṛtāḥ sarve
kathā-mātrāḥ kathāsu ca*

SYNONYMS

ye ye—whatever; *bhū-patayaḥ*—kings; *rājan*—O King Parīkṣit; *bhuñjate*—enjoy; *bhuvam*—the world; *ojasā*—with their power; *kālena*—by the force of time; *te*—they; *kṛtāḥ*—have been made; *sarve*—all; *kathā-mātrāḥ*—mere accounts; *kathāsu*—in various histories; *ca*—and.

TRANSLATION

My dear King Parīkṣit, all these kings who tried to enjoy the earth by their strength were reduced by the force of time to nothing more than historical accounts.

PURPORT

The word *rājan*, “O King,” is significant in this verse. Parīkṣit Mahārāja was preparing to give up his body and go back home, back to Godhead, and

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, his most merciful spiritual master, devastated any possible attachment that he might have to the position of king by showing the ultimate insignificance of such a position. By the causeless mercy of the spiritual master one is prepared to go back home, back to Godhead. The spiritual master teaches one to relax one's strong grip on material illusion and leave the kingdom of *māyā* behind. Although Śukadeva Gosvāmī speaks very bluntly within this chapter about the so-called glory of the material world, he is exhibiting the causeless mercy of the spiritual master, who takes his surrendered disciple back to the kingdom of Godhead, Vaikuṅṭha.

Thus end the purports of the humble servants of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to the Twelfth Canto, Second Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Symptoms of Kali-yuga."