

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

CHAPTER 3, VOLUME 5

THE HISTORY OF Nābhi - THE BHAGAVAN INCARNATING AS THE KING Rṣabhadeva AS THE SON OF Nābhi AND HIS WIFE Merudevī.

PREFACE

This chapter is of profound value and contains some of the highest principles. In the form of prayers by the saint priests who perform Yajna on behalf of their king Nābhi the Vedic principles have been highlighted. King Nābhi, the ruler of Jambūdvīpa and the son of King āgnīdhraḥ, in the company of his wife Merudevi and very many saint priests worship the Bhagavan, Sri Maha Vishnu, in order to seek his benediction for a son for him. What follows as the submissions of those saint priests to Sri Maha Vishnu, Who appears before them, are of great value and meaning.

The saint priests and the king desire to have a son for the king equal to the qualities and characteristics of Sri Maha Vishnu Himself. As there cannot be anyone equalling Him, He Himself manifests as the son of Nābhi.

The repeated assertion by Sri Maha Vishnu Himself that He shall always stand for righteousness and uphold the words of the saint priests (who are the representatives of the Vedic principles) is the highlight of this chapter.

Stanza 1

śrī-śuka uvāca

*nābhir apatya-kāmo 'prajayā merudevyā bhagavantam yajña-puruṣam
avahitātmāyajata.*

*(śrī-śuka uvāca) Shri Sukha Brahma Rishi said to King
Pareekshit:*

*(nābhiḥ) Nābhi, the son of āgnīdhraḥ, (apatya-kāmaḥ)
desiring to have children, (ayajata) worshipped
(bhagavantam yajña-puruṣam) the Lord of the Yajnas, (Lord
Maha Vishnu) (avahitātmā) with focussed attention
(aprajayā merudevyā) in the company of Merudevi, who did not
have any children.*

Stanza 2

*tasya ha vāva śraddhayā viśuddha-bhāvena yajataḥ pravargyeṣu pracaratsu
dravya-deśa-kāla-mantrartvig-dakṣiṇā-vidhāna-yogopapattyā duradhigamo
'pi bhagavān bhāgavata-vātsalyatayā supratīka ātmānam aparājitam nija-
janābhipretārtha-vidhimsayā grhīta-hṛdayo hṛdayaṅgamaṁ mano-
nayanānandanāvayavābhirāmam āviścakāra.*

*(tasya ha vāva śraddhayā viśuddha-bhāvena yajataḥ) As Nābhi was
performing his worship with focussed attention and purity of
heart,*

*(pravargyeṣu pracaratsu) and while the ritualistic ceremony
known as Pravargya was going on,*

*(api) though (bhagavān) Bhagavan Sri Hari (duradhigamaḥ)
can never be reached/obtained*

*(dravya-deśa-kāla-mantrartvig-dakṣiṇā-vidhāna-yogopapattyā) by
propitiation through these seven kinds of mediums like the
offering materials, place, time, hymns, priests conducting
ceremonies, gifts to priests, and observance of rituals,*

(bhāgavata-vātsalyatayā) because of His compassion towards his devotees, (gr̥hīta-hṛdayaḥ) and with His kind heartedness (nija-janābhipretārtha-vidhitsayā) to fulfil the desires of his devotee the King Nābhi,

(supratīkaḥ) with His beautiful form, (aparājitam) Which was very independent (hṛdayaṅgamam) and pleasing to the heart,

(mano-nayanānandanāvayavābhirāmam) Which was so enchanting to the eyes,

(ātmānam āviścakāra) manifested His own form to Nābhi.

Stanza 3

atha ha tam āviśkr̥ta-bhuja-yugala-dvayaṁ hiraṇmayam puruṣa-viśeṣam kapiśa-kaus̥eyāmbara-dharam urasi vilasac-chr̥vatsa-lalāmam daravara-vanaruha-vana-mālācchūry-amṛta-maṇi-gadādibhir upalakṣitam sphuṭa-kirana-pravara-mukuta-kunḍala-kataka-kaṭi-sūtra-hāra-keyūra-nūpurādy-aṅga-bhūṣaṇa-vibhūṣitam ṛtvik-sadasya-gr̥ha-patayo 'dhanā ivottama-dhanam upalabhya sabahu-mānam arhaṇenāvanata-śīrṣāṇa upatasthuh.

(upalabhya) Having thus got the benefit of seeing before him (tam puruṣa-viśeṣam) that Purusha (Sri Maha Vishnu),

(ṛtvik-sadasya-gr̥ha-patayaḥ) the situation of the King Nābhi was such that he along with those saint priests, the members participating in the Yajna and the householders present had as if found out (uttama-dhanam) immense treasure of wealth before them (ahanā iva) who had no wealth in their possession otherwise till now.

(avanata-śīrṣāṇa upatasthuh) They prayed before Sri Maha Vishnu by bowing their heads (sabahu-mānam arhaṇena) and offering respectfully the prescribed worship.

(*atha ha āviṣkṛta-bhuja-yugala-dvayaṁ*) Sri Maha Vishnu thus appeared before them having four arms --

(*kapiśa-kauseyāmbara-dharam*) wearing saffron coloured clothes;

(*urasi vilasac-chrīvatsa-lalāmaṁ*) having the mark of Srivatsam (the place on which Shri Lakshmi resides) on His chest;

(*daravara-vanaruha-vana-mālācchūry-amṛta-maṇi-gadādibhir upalakṣitam*) holding in his hands the conch shell, the lotus flower, the disc Sudarsana, the club and also wearing the garland of forest flowers and adoring with Kaustubha gem;

(*phuṭa-kiraṇa-pravara-mukuta-kunḍala-kaṭaka-kaṭi-sūtra-hāra-keyūra-nūpurādy-aṅga-bhūṣaṇa-vibhūṣitam*) endowed with the brightly shining head ornaments studded with pearls, earrings, bracelets, waist belt, necklace, armlets and ankle bells all decorated with precious gems;

(*hiraṇmayam*) and radiating brightness all over.

Stanza 4

ṛtvija ūcuḥ

arhasi muhur arhattamārhaṇam asmākam anupathānām namo nama ity etāvāt sad-upaśikṣitam ko 'rhati pumān prakṛti-guṇa-vyatikara-matir anīśa īśvarasya parasya prakṛti-puruṣayor arvāktanābhir nāma-rūpākṛtibhī rūpanirūpaṇam;

Stanza 5

sakala-jana-nikāya-vrjina-nirasana-śivatama-pravara-guṇa-gaṇaika-deśa-kathanād ṛte.

(*ṛtvija ūcuḥ*) The saint priests paid their obeisances to Sri Maha Vishnu:

(*arhattamaḥ*) Hey the One Who is worthy of worship! You are complete in all the prosperities and knowledge all by

Yourselves. (ārhaṇam muhuḥ arhasi) Still You are kind enough to accept the offerings of worship made (anupathānām asmākam) by people like us, who are your followers and who always depend upon You.

(etāvat) We can only say (namo namaḥ iti) “prayers unto You, prayers unto You”. (sad-upaśikṣitam) In fact we have been taught only this much by people who are aware of the inherent principle about You.

(parasya) Why we are saying this is because You are the One Who surpasses (prakṛti-puruṣayoḥ) this material nature and the cause factor of the material nature. (īśvarasya) Thus, You are the Supreme Being totally independent for ever.

(anīśaḥ pumān) Therefore, can any single person, who is totally helpless, (prakṛti-guṇa-vyatikara-matiḥ) whose mind is deeply rooted within this world, which has got transformed due to various material factors, (arhati) determine (rūpa-nirūpaṇam) and confirm about Your (nāma-rūpākṛtibhiḥ) name, form, shape etc., from within the names (arvāktanābhiḥ) which have all got originated in this material world?

(sakala-jana-nikāya-vrjina-nirasana-śivatama-pravara-guṇa-gaṇaika-deśa-kathanād rte.) We do not have, therefore, any capability at all to say anything other than few words about Your qualities known to us and which are very pious, very great, and which have the power of removing the sins of all the living beings.

Note : The names, forms, shapes etc. are linked to the nature. As far as that Supreme Being is concerned He surpasses everything including this material nature. The human beings inhabiting in this material world, whose thinking and actions are confined within this material world can only perceive things belonging to this world be it names, forms or whatever. No one can, therefore,

understand or describe with words about Him as He is beyond the description of words. These words have originated subsequently. He was there and shall always be there as ever existing Principle without any beginning or end. Because of these reasons, no one is capable of praising Him with words, as such words are insufficient, have limitations and also the people doing so have limited perception.

So, the saint priests are saying that they are absolutely incapable of paying any obeisances to Him. Since His true form cannot be conceived or perceived by anyone, they can only offer some prayers and nothing more.

Stanza 6

parijanānurāga-viracita-śabala-saṁśabda-salila-sita-kisalaya-tulasikā-dūrvāṅkurair api sambhṛtayā saparyayā kila parama parituṣyasi.

*(parama parituṣyasi kila) Hey the Omnipotent and Omnipresent!
You are always very much satisfied (sambhṛtayā saparyayā)
with the offerings made by Your devotees, (parijanānurāga-
viracita-śabala-saṁśabda-salila-sita-kisalaya-tulasikā-dūrvāṅkurair api)
with their hearts filled with total devotion towards You,
through their faltering words (because of their love) even if
the offerings are just water, new leaves, the tender newly
grown grass, and tulasi.*

Stanza 7

*athānayāpi na bhavata ijjayoru-bhāra-bharayā samucitam artham
ihopalabhāmahe.*

(atha, uru-bhāra-bharayā) Looking from another angle,

(iha na upalabhāmahe) we do not find here (anayā ijjayā api) even this Yajna, which has been organised and performed after collecting various materials, (samucitam artham) is of any particular use (bhavataḥ) to You at all.

Note : The saint priests are saying that any big paraphernalia of conducting any worship or big Yajnas with plenty of materials shall have no bearing on Him, if the worship is not done with pure heart and total devotion. At the same time, even if the worship is very simple by offering just tulsi leaves etc., He shall be so pleased with it if it is done with devotion and pure heart.

Stanza 8

ātmana evānusavanam añjasāvyatirekeṇa bobhūyamānāśeṣa-puruṣārthasvarūpasya kintu nāthāśiṣa āśāsānānām etad abhisamrādhana-mātram bhavitum arhati.

(bobhūyamānāśeṣa-puruṣārthasvarūpasya) For the purpose of all the aims of life, You alone are the dependable source as all the prosperities appear in You in the increasing order (ātmana evānusavanam) permanently, naturally and at all times (añjasā avyatirekeṇa) and without any change as well in real terms.

(kintu) When people like us offer worship to You in this manner (through Yajna), what benefits do You derive from them?

(nātha āśiṣaḥ āśāsānānām) Because we seek your blessings to fulfil certain desires, (etad abhisamrādhana-mātram bhavitum arhati) the materials offered in the worship are only our humble presentation before You in expression of our gratitude towards You.

Stanza 9

*tad yathā bālīśānām svayam ātmanah śreyah param aviduṣām parama-
parama-puruṣa prakarṣa-karuṇayā sva-mahimānam cāpavargākhyam
upakalpayaṣyan svayam nāpacita evetaravad ihopalakṣitaḥ.*

**(parama-parama-puruṣah) Hey the Ultimate Supreme Being and
the form of eternal bliss!**

**(tat yathā) That being so, (prakarṣa-karuṇayā) You are very
compassionate (bālīśānām) towards the ignorant people like
us,**

**(svayam param aviduṣām) who are totally unaware of
(ātmanah śreyah) where our own welfare lies,
(svayam upakalpayaṣyan) and having understood all by Yourself
and to bestow us (sva-mahimānam ca) our desires and also to
ensure deliverance for us,**

(iha upalakṣitaḥ) You are kind enough to manifest before us,

(itaravat) as if You are an ordinary person,

**(nāpacitaḥ eva) even though we have not done any special
worship to You.**

Stanza 10

*athāyam eva varo hy arhattama yarhi barhiṣi rājarṣer varadarṣabho bhavān
nija-puruṣekṣaṇa-viṣaya āsīt.*

**(arhattama) Hey the One Who is worthy of worship! (atha)
This apart, (varadarṣabhaḥ bhavān) When You, being the
greatest Who can grant benedictions,
(yarhi āsīt hi) have manifested Yourself (rājarṣeḥ barhiṣi) in this
Yajna arena of the king Nābhi,
(nija-puruṣekṣaṇa-viṣayah) enabling Your devotees to have the
vision of You,
(ayam eva varah) that itself is the benediction for all of us.**

Stanza 11

*asaṅga-niśita-jñānānala-vidhūtāśeṣa-malānām bhavat-svabhāvānām
ātmārāmāṇām munīnām anavarata-pariguṇita-guṇa-gaṇa parama-
maṅgalāyana-guṇa-gaṇa-kathano 'si.*

*(anavarata-pariguṇita-guṇa-gaṇa) You are the One Who is being
praised and glorified with the pious deeds of Yours
continuously and repeatedly by such great saints
(asaṅga-niśita-jñānānala-vidhūtāśeṣa-malānām) who*

*have discarded all their dirt from their minds because of the
powerful fire of Jgana (pure knowledge) they possess arising
in them due to their total detachment from the material
world,*

*(bhavat-svabhāvānām) who have exactly the same
characteristics as You possess,*

*(ātmārāmāṇām munīnām) and who remain contented in their
own form within their hearts.*

*(parama-maṅgalāyana-guṇa-gaṇa-kathanāḥ asi) You are the only One
Who deserve to be worshipped and propagated through the
pious stories about Your qualities.*

Note : Through the above stanza the saint priests are expressing that they are not seeking any benediction from Him. They are explaining the reasons for the same.

They are saying that whatever the benedictions that might be granted shall be the ones which will confine within this material world. Therefore, the very fact that they could see Him, Whose blessings are capable of mitigating the miseries of this material world, that itself is His greatest blessing.

Because of the above reason alone, the greatest saints leave aside all the material attractions of this world and concentrate on

worshipping Him constantly and continuously. By doing so, they do not get affected by the material attractions through their pure knowledge about Him which is just like the powerful fire. This removes ignorance and leads the one towards the supreme bliss. That is why such saints are able to enjoy themselves within themselves alone because they are very clear and absolute about the fact that they are one with that Ultimate Reality/the Supreme Being that is Him. In fact there comes a stage where such saints are no different from Him in all respects. They never like to leave this stage of bliss at any time in their lives.

Therefore, the saint priests are reiterating that He had already blessed them by showing Himself up at that place.

Stanza 12

*atha kathañcit skhalana-kṣut-patana-jṛmbhaṇa-duravasthānādiṣu vivaśānām
naḥ smaraṇāya jvara-maraṇa-daśāyām api sakala-kaśmala-nirasanāni tava
guṇa-kṛta-nāmadheyāni vacana-gocarāṇi bhavantu.*

*(atha kathañcit) However, in some manner or the other,
(vivaśānām naḥ smaraṇāya) for the remembrance of the helpless
people like us, (tava guṇa-kṛta-nāmadheyāni) Your pious names
highlighting all the good qualities of Yours,
(sakala-kaśmala-nirasanāni) which names are capable of
removing all the sins/ignorance, (vacana-gocarāṇi bhavantu)
must come out naturally from within us through our words
(skhalana-kṣut-patana-jṛmbhaṇa-duravasthānādiṣu) at least in such
situations when we lose our balance by keeping wrong steps,
when we feel hungry, when we fall down, when we yawn due
to tiredness, when we face any danger,
(jvara-maraṇa-daśāyām api) and also at such occasions when we
are afflicted with fever, nearing death etc.*

Note : The saint priests, through the above words, are saying that though they could get the benefit of seeing Him right before them,

they do not want to forget Him after His departure from there. They pray before Him that His pious names should always be in their memory and those names must come out through their words in some manner or the other constantly, particularly at the time of difficulties and death.

The priests are making it clear that for pure devotees their food is the pious names of that Supreme Being, Sri Maha Vishnu. Therefore, they must always remember His name at all times.

Stanza 13

*kiñcāyaṁ rājarṣir apatya-kāmaḥ prajāṁ bhavādr̥ṣīm āśāsāna īśvaram āśiṣāṁ
svargāpavargayoḥ api bhavantam upadhāvati prajāyāṁ artha-pratyayo
dhanadam ivādhanah phalīkaraṇam.*

(*kiñca*) Not only this, (*iva*) just as (*adhanah phalīkaraṇam*) a poor man, for the sake of a little quantity of husk, (*dhanadam*) worships Kubera (the divine being who owns immense wealth),

(*ayaṁ rājarṣiḥ*) this saintly king Nābhi, (*apatya-kāmaḥ*) who is very much desirous of having a son (*prajāṁ artha-pratyayaḥ*) through whom he can achieve all his aims of life, (*āśāsānaḥ*) is expressing his wish before You to bless him with a son (*bhavādr̥ṣīm prajāṁ*) who shall be like You with regard to all his qualities.

(*upadhāvati*) He is surrendering unto You and asking You only this much (*īśvaram bhavantam*) though You are that all powerful Supreme Being (*āśiṣāṁ*) who can very easily grant all the material comforts and wealth in this world (*svargāpavargayoḥ api*) as well as liberation to the heavenly world.

Note : The saint priests are saying that the king is having a desire to have a son who shall possess all the qualities of the Supreme Being. Though, according to the priests, this request is very small,

the king feels that by begetting such a son he shall achieve all the aims of his life. Hence they request Him to grant this wish for their king.

Stanza 14

*ko vā iha te 'parājito 'parājitayā māyayānavasita-padavyānāvṛta-matir
viṣaya-viṣa-rayānāvṛta-prakṛtir anupāsita-mahac-caraṇaḥ.*

(aparājitaḥ kaḥ vai) Are there any persons who have not got defeated by the illusions (iha) of this worldly life (te māyayā) because of the powers of Your Maya Shakti, (aparājitayā) which is insurmountable for anyone, (anupāsita-mahac-caraṇaḥ) if such persons have not done any service at the feet of the saintly persons?

(anāvṛta-matiḥ) Are there any persons whose thinking have not been enveloped (anavasita-padavyā) by such illusions of Maya Shakti leading them away from the right aim of life?

(viṣaya-viṣa-rayānāvṛta-prakṛtiḥ kaḥ) Are there any persons whose character has not been afflicted by the poisonous thoughts about the material desires alone?

Note : *The saint priests are putting forward that this request of the king to have a son equal to Him in all respects is not at all inappropriate nor it is surprising. That is because, even Lord Brahma gets influenced by the powers of the illusions of His Maya Shakti. Whose brains do not get corrupted by the illusions of this world, when the person does not know from where this power of Maya Shakti has come about? If one does not get the fortune to serve at the feet of the great knowledgeable saints (meaning thereby if one has not taken appropriate lessons from such knowledgeable saints after approaching them and serving them), such a person shall always be under the influence of this power of illusions.*

Therefore, the request of the king is justified as he wants to have a son who shall surpass these powers of illusions and such a son can be none else other than a person who shall have all the characteristics that You are having.

Stanza 15

*yad u ha vāva tava punar adabhra-kartar iha samāhūtas tatrārtha-dhiyām
mandānām nas tad yad deva-helanaṁ deva-devārhasi sām्यena sarvān
prativodhum aviduṣām.*

**(adabhra-kartaḥ) Hey the Lord Who can perform any and all
deeds! (deva-deva) Hey the Lord of all the Lords!**

**(punaḥ) Further, (iha samāhūtaḥ) by our invoking You here
through our worship (yat uha vāva) for the fulfilment of this
simple request (for the king to have a son like that Supreme
Being),**

**(tatra artha-dhiyām) which we consider as the greatest
achievement in our lives,**

**(aviduṣām mandānām naḥ) if we, who are ignorant and
unintelligent,**

**(yat deva-helanaṁ tat) have shown any kind of disrespect to
You,**

**(prativodhum arhasi) we all request You to specially condone all
of us (sarvān prati tava sām्यena) as You look at everything with a
balanced view.**

Note : Here the saint priests are addressing that Supreme Being as the One Who is the cause factor of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of this universe. They are also addressing Him as the Lord of all the Lords, meaning He is the Ultimate Reality.

Addressing Him in this manner has a relevance here. The request of the priests is for a very silly favour of granting the wish of their king to have a son. When that Supreme Being is the One Who is the

creator of this entire universe, their request, in comparison to His deeds, is really silly.

The saint priests' only aim was to have a son for their king and that was their main aim of life including that of the king. They are putting before Him that they are very unintelligent and ignorant. On the other hand, that Supreme Being sees all persons, both intelligent and unintelligent, with equanimity. That being so they seek pardon from Him in case they have shown any disrespect to Him by invoking Him at this place by doing the worship of Yajna.

Stanza 16

śrī-śuka uvāca

*iti nigadenābhiṣṭūyamāno bhagavān animiṣarṣabho varṣa-
dharābhivāditābhivandita-caraṇaḥ sadayam idam āha.*

**(śrī-śuka uvāca) Sri Suka Brahma Rishi said to King
Pareekshit:**

**(abhiṣṭūyamānaḥ) That Supreme Being, Sri Maha Vishnu, was
thus praised and worshipped (nigadena) through the words of
prose by those priests (iti) in this manner.**

**(animiṣarṣabhaḥ bhagavān) Sri Maha Vishnu, the Lord of all the
Lords, (varṣa-dharābhivāditābhivandita-caraṇaḥ) Who was thus
worshipped by the saint priests, who were also shown due
respect by king Nābhi, the ruler of the land of Bharat, which
formed part of Jambūdvīpa, (sadayam idam āha)
compassionately said to them as follows.**

Stanza 17

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*aho batāham ṛṣayo bhavadbhir avitatha-gīrbhir varam asulabham abhiyācito
yad amuṣyātmajo mayā sadṛṣo bhūyād iti mamāham evābhirūpaḥ kaivalyād*

athāpi brahma-vādo na mṛṣā bhavitum arhati mamaiva hi mukhaṁ yad dvija-deva-kulam.

(śrī-bhagavān uvāca) Sri Bhagavan Maha Vishnu said to the saint priests as follows:

**(aho bata ṛṣayaḥ) Hey the saints! What a wonder !
(avitatha-gīrbhiḥ bhavadbhiḥ) As you always pursue the truth,
(aham abhiyācitaḥ) you have put your request before Me
(asulabham varam) for a very rare benediction from Me
(amuṣya bhūyāt iti) that your king must beget
(mayā sadṛśaḥ ātmajaḥ) a son equalling my qualities in all respects.**

**(yat) However, (kaivalyāt) due to non duality
(mama aham eva abhirūpaḥ) there cannot be any other like me
as I am the only One equalling Me in all respects.**

(athāpi) Despite that being so, (brahma-vādaḥ) your (the priests) words (mṛṣā bhavitum na arhati) should never go in vain under any circumstances.

(yat) The reason for it is that (dvija-deva-kulam) the entire group of high priests (who have immense knowledge about Vedic principles) (mama eva mukhaṁ hi) represent My own face (mouth).

Note : The brahmins (the reference to the saint priests here), who are erudite in Vedic principles, whose hearts are pure and devoted to the Bhagavan, are considered as the very face of Sri Maha Vishnu. They are the pure knowledge personified. Therefore, if the words of the saint priests go in vain, it will amount the words of the Bhagavan going in vain. Sri Maha Vishnu Himself says that these saint priests are the followers of the truth (meaning thereby they follow strictly the Vedic principles, which again are the representative form of the Bhagavan Himself). So, in either way, it is the bounden duty of the Bhagavan to ensure that the words of

the saint priests are honoured. If this does not happen, the declared statement that these saint priests represent the face of Sri Maha Vishnu shall have no meaning. The words of Sri Maha Vishnu have to be taken in this total context.

The explanations about what kind of saint priests were they can be seen in the meaning to stanza No.20 below.

Stanza 18

tata āgnīdhṛīye 'mśa-kalayāvatarīsyāmy ātma-tulyam anupalabhamānaḥ.

(tata) Therefore, (ātma-tulyam anupalabhamānaḥ) as I am not in a position to see anyone equalling Me in all respects, (amśa-kalayāvatarīsyāmi) I shall Myself manifest as an expansion of My own potency (āgnīdhṛīye) in Nābhi, the son of āgnīdhraḥ.

Stanza 19

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti niśāmayantyā merudevyāḥ patim abhidhāyāntardadhe bhagavān.

(śrī-śuka uvāca) Sri Suka Brahma Rishi said to King Pareekshit:

(merudevyāḥ niśāmayantyāḥ) As Merudevi was listening to this entire conversation, (bhagavān āntardadhe) Bhagavan Sri Maha Vishnu disappeared from there (iti patim abhidhāya) after he had explained everything to her husband.

Stanza 20

barhiṣi tasminn eva viṣṇudatta bhagavān paramarṣibhiḥ prasādito nābheḥ priya-cikīrṣayā tad-avarodhāyane merudevyāṁ dharmān darśayitu-kāmo vāta-raśanānām śramaṇānām ṛṣiṇām ūrdhva-manthinām śuklayā tanuvāvatatāra.

(viṣṇudatta) Hey King Pareekshit! (prasāditaḥ bhagavān) That Bhagavan Sri Maha Vishnu, Who was worshipped thus (tasmin eva barhiṣi) in that Yajna (paramarṣibhiḥ) by those great saints (the priests), (nābheḥ priya-cikīrṣayā) with His intention to fulfil the desire of the king Nābhi, (śuklayā tanuvā) manifested with His pure form of Sattva characteristic (tad-avarodhāyane merudevyām) in Merudevi, the wife of Nābhi.

(avatatāra) The Bhagavan manifested as the son of Nābhi (dharmān darśayitu-kāmaḥ) with the clear intention of showing to the world that He shall always highlight the righteous deeds of those saints (vāta-raśanānām) who do not care about the way they dress up, (ūrdhva-manthinām) who have the highest level of knowledge about self realization, (śramaṇānām ṛṣīṇām) who engage themselves in undertaking great penance (performing all deeds as dedication to the Bhagavan), and who have reached the excellence of knowledge through their yogic powers.

Note : Through the above stanza it has been shown that Sri Maha Vishnu always sets an example to the world in matters of adhering to the righteous principles.

The saints (who were priests in the Yajna of the king Nābhi) have won over their sense organs, have absolutely no pride or competition with anyone, and always pursue the right path because of their pious deeds over a period of their various births.

If the deeds and the genuine desires of such saints are not acceded to the words of the Vedas shall not be believed by anyone. Therefore, Sri Maha Vishnu takes it upon Himself to ensure that the words of such saints come true. That is because He Himself is the embodiment of those Vedas and he represents the righteousness.

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***This concludes the third chapter of Volume 5 of Srimad
Bhagavatam***

Hari Om