### Canto Eleven - Chapter Four

Drumila Explains the Incarnations of Godhead to King Nimi

Avatāras of the Lord

### Section – I

### Drumila Describes about the Various Avataras (1-23)

### || 11.4.1 || śrī-rājovāca yāni yānīha karmāņi yair yaiḥ svacchanda-janmabhiḥ cakre karoti kartā vā haris tāni bruvantu naḥ

King Nimi said: You should tell us (tāni bruvantu naḥ) about the activities (yāni yānīha karmāṇi) which the Lord has performed in the past (yair yaiḥ harih cakre), is performing now (karoti) and will perform in the future (kartā vā) by his various births, chosen by his free will (svacchanda-janmabhiḥ), in this world (iha). In the Fourth Chapter, Drumila describes Nārāyaņa, his avatāras, qualities and pastimes.

In the last chapter (SB 11.3.48) it was said that the devotee should worship the Supreme Lord in the particular personal form of the Lord the devotee finds most attractive.

What are the various forms of the Lord?

This is a question about the avatāra forms. It was also said that one should honor the deity with prayers. (SB 11.3.53)

Which qualities and activities should be praised? This is a question about the activities of the Lord.

Thus he asks this question.

|| 11.4.2 || śrī-drumila uvāca yo vā anantasya gunān anantān anukramiṣyan sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ rajāṁsi bhūmer gaṇayet kathañcit kālena naivākhila-śakti-dhāmnaḥ

Drumila said: Any fool (yo vā bāla-buddhiḥ) wanting to enumerate fully (anukramiṣyan) the unlimited qualities of the unlimited Supreme Lord (anantasya anantān gunān) may be able after some time to count the particles of dust on the earth bhūmer (rajāmsi gaṇayet kathañcit), but can never count the qualities of the Lord (kālena na eva) who is the abode of all powers (akhila-śakti-dhāmnaḥ).

- Since the Lord's avatāras, qualities and pastimes are beyond counting, I will recount them to the best of my ability.
- One who desires to count successively the unlimited qualities of the Lord is foolish.

### || 11.4.3 ||

bhūtair yadā pañcabhir ātma-sṛṣṭaiḥ puraṁ virājaṁ viracayya tasmin svāṁśena viṣṭaḥ puruṣābhidhānam avāpa nārāyaṇa ādi-devaḥ

When the primeval Nārāyaṇa (yadā nārāyaṇa ādi-devaḥ) accepted the form of the puruṣa (puruṣābhidhānam avāpa), he created the universe (puraṁ virājaṁ viracayya) from the five elements (pañcabhir bhūtair) produced from himself (ātma-sṛṣṭaiḥ) and then entered within the universe by his own portion (tasmin svāṁśena viṣṭaḥ).

First he describes the puruṣāvatāras in two verses.

When Bhagavān accepts the form of the puruṣa as the creator of mahat-tattva, then, producing the universe by the elements, he entered into it with his expansion.

#### || 11.4.4 ||

yat-kāya eṣa bhuvana-traya-sanniveśo yasyendriyais tanu-bhṛtām ubhayendriyāņi jñānaṁ svataḥ śvasanato balam oja īhā sattvādibhiḥ sthiti-layodbhava ādi-kartā

Within the body of Mahāviṣṇu (yat-kāya) reside clusters of millions of universes composed of three planetary systems (esa bhuvana-traya-sanniveso). By the Lord's senses (yasyendriyaih), the action and knowledge senses of the jīvas arise (tanu-bhrtām ubhayendriyāņi). From his expansion antaryāmī, the knowledge of the jīvas arises (jñānam svatah). From his prana the physical and sensual strength and action of the jīvas arise (śvasanato balam oja īhā). He is the final cause (ādi-kartā) of creation, maintenance and destruction (sthitilaya-udbhava) through the three gunas (sattvādibhih).

This verse describes the qualities and activities of the purusa.

In the body of Mahāviṣṇu (yat kaye), in each of his pores, an assembly of millions and millions of universes with upper, lower and middle planets reside.

By the Lord's senses, the knowledge and actions senses of the collective and individual jīvas arise.

From antaryāmī, his expansion, the knowledge of the jīvas arises.

From the Lord's prāṇa, the bodily strength (balam), sensual strength (ojaḥ) and activities of the jīvas arises.

He is the real cause of the activities of creation, maintenance and destruction through the three gunas.

#### || 11.4.5 ||

ādāv abhūc chata-dhṛtī rajasāsya sarge viṣṇuḥ sthitau kratu-patir dvija-dharma-setuḥ rudro 'pyayāya tamasā puruṣaḥ sa ādya ity udbhava-sthiti-layāḥ satatam prajāsu

In the beginning (ādāu), the puruṣa appeared (sah ādyah puruṣaḥ abhūt) as Brahmā (śata-dhṛtī) through rajoguṇa (rajasā) for creation (asya sarge), as Viṣṇu (viṣṇuḥ), the lord of sacrifice (kratu-patir), and protector of dharma of the brāhmaṇas (dvija-dharma-setuḥ), for maintenance (sthitau), and as Śiva (rudrah) through tamo-guṇa (tamasā) for destruction (apyayāya). In this way (ity) creation, maintenance and destruction of the living entities (prajāsu udbhava-sthitilayāḥ) takes place at all times (satataṁ). The gunāvatāras are described.

The purusa appeared as Brahmā (śata-dhṛtiḥ) for activities of creation by rajoguṇa, as Viṣṇu, the protector of the dharma of the brāhmaṇas, for maintenance and as Śiva for destruction.

Iti means "in this way."

|| 11.4.6 || dharmasya dakṣa-duhitary ajaniṣṭa mūrtyāṁ nārāyaṇo nara ṛṣi-pravaraḥ praśāntaḥ naiṣkarmya-lakṣaṇam uvāca cacāra karma yo 'dyāpi cāsta ṛṣi-varya-niṣevitāṅghriḥ

Nara-Nārāyaņa (nārāyaņo nara), the best of sages (ṛṣipravaraḥ), fully in control of their senses (praśāntaḥ), were born to Dharma (ajaniṣṭa dharmasya) in the womb of Mūrti, the daughter of Dakṣa (mūrtyām dakṣa-duhitary). They taught and performed actions (uvāca cacāra karma) with complete detachment (naiṣkarmya-lakṣaṇam) and, worshipped by the best of sages (ṛṣi-varya-niṣevitāṅghriḥ), remain alive even today (yah adyāpi ca āste). The best of sages known as Nara and Nārāyaṇa were born of Dharma in the daughter of Dakṣa named Mūrti.

They spoke and performed actions without material desire.

#### ∥ 11.4.7 ∥

indro viśańkya mama dhāma jighṛkṣatīti kāmaṁ nyayuṅkta sa-gaṇaṁ sa badary-upākhyam gatvāpsaro-gaṇa-vasanta-sumanda-vātaiḥ strī-prekṣaṇeṣubhir avidhyad atan-mahi-jñaḥ

Indra became fearful (indro viśańkya), thinking that Nara-Nārāyaṇa Ŗṣi would seize his heavenly kingdom (mama dhāma jighṛkṣati iti). Thus Indra sent Cupid (kāmaṁ nyayuṅkta), who, with his associates (sah sa-gaṇaṁ), went to the Lord's residence in Badarikāśrama (gatvā badary-upākhyam). Cupid, not knowing the power of the Lord (atan-mahi-jñaḥ), released (avidhyad) arrows of glances from beautiful women (apsarogaṇa strī-prekṣaṇa iṣubhir), along with the charming breezes of spring (vasanta-sumanda-vātaiḥ). Cupid (saḥ), not knowing the Lord's greatness, going to Badarikāśrama with Apsarās, released arrows of women's glances.

#### || 11.4.8 ||

vijñāya śakra-kṛtam akramam ādi-devaḥ prāha prahasya gata-vismaya ejamānān mā bhair vibho madana māruta deva-vadhvo gṛhņīta no balim aśūnyam imaṁ kurudhvam

The primeval Lord (ādi-devaḥ), understanding the offense committed by Indra (vijñāya śakra-kṛtam akramam) and without pride (gata-vismaya), spoke laughingly as follows to Cupid and his followers (prāha prahasya), who were trembling before him (ejamānān): "Do not fear (mā bhaih), O mighty Cupid (vibho madana), O wind-god (māruta) and wives of the devatās (deva-vadhvo)! Please accept this gift I am offering you (gṛhṇīta no balim), and kindly sanctify my hermitage by your presence (aśūnyam imam kurudhvam)." Akramam means offense.

He was without pride, not thinking "Oh! I am fully in control of my senses."

Cupid was trembling in fear of being cursed.

"O capable Cupid! O women of the devatās! Do not fear. Please accept as our welcome to guests the articles of worship and vegetable meals made of leaves.

"But we have everything we need."

Without your accepting our hospitality, this hermitage is empty.

#### || 11.4.9 ||

ittham bruvaty abhaya-de nara-deva devāķ sa-vrīḍa-namra-śirasaḥ sa-ghṛṇam tam ūcuḥ naitad vibho tvayi pare 'vikṛte vicitram svārāma-dhīra-nikarānata-pāda-padme

My dear King Nimi (nara-deva), when Nara-Nārāyaņa thus spoke (ittham bruvaty), eradicating the fear of the devatās (abhaya-de), the devatas (devāh) bowed their heads with shame (sa-vrīda-namra-śirasah) and addressed the Lord as follows, to invoke his compassion (sa-ghṛṇaṁ tam ūcuḥ): O Lord (vibho)! Nothing is surprising for you (na etad tvayi vicitram), the supreme, unchanging person (pare avikrte), at whose lotus feet (pāda-padme) a multitude of sages who enjoy within themselves and have control of their senses (svārāma-dhīra-nikara) bow down (**ānata**).

- O King! When Nārāyaṇa, giver of fearlessness, spoke in this way, Cupid and the others spoke.
- Nothing is surprising for you, the supreme person without change. Svārāmāh means ātmārāmas.

#### || 11.4.10 ||

tvām sevatām sura-kṛtā bahavo 'ntarāyāḥ svauko vilanghya paramam vrajatām padam te nānyasya barhiṣi balīn dadataḥ sva-bhāgān dhatte padam tvam avitā yadi vighna-mūrdhni

The devatās place many obstacles (sura-kṛtā bahavo antarāyāḥ) on the path of those who worship you (tvāṁ sevatāṁ) and surpass Svarga (svah-okah vilaṅghya) and attain Vaikuṇṭha (te paramaṁ padaṁ vrajatāṁ), but those who offer the devatās their assigned shares in sacrificial performances (barhiṣi balīn dadataḥ sva-bhāgān) encounter no such obstacles (na anyasya). But because you are the protector of your devotee (yadi tvam dhatte avitā), he is able to step over the head of whatever obstacle the devatās place before him (padaṁ vighna-mūrdhni). What to speak of you, even your devotees do not care for us, by your mercy. We have created many obstacles for them.

Why do the devatās create obstacles?

The devotees surpass Svarga and attain Vaikuntha. This means the devatās are envious of the devotees.

Others, the performers of karma, do not have obstacles. Why? They have given the proper share of sacrifice to Indra and others, like farmers giving to the king.

"Will my devotees fall because of your obstacles?" No.

Certainly (yadi), because you are the Lord of the devatās and the protector of the devotee, the devotee puts his foot on the head of the obstacles.

So there is no worry that the devotees fear any obstacle.

#### || 11.4.11 ||

kṣut-tṛṭ-tri-kāla-guṇa-māruta-jaihva-śaiśnyān asmān apāra-jaladhīn atitīrya kecit krodhasya yānti viphalasya vaśaṁ pade gor majjanti duścara-tapaś ca vṛthotsṛjanti

Some men (kecit) practice severe penances to cross beyond our influence (asmān atitīrya), which is like an immeasurable ocean (apāra-jaladhīn) with hunger, thirst, heat, cold rain brought about by the passing of time (kṣut-tṛṭ-tri-kāla-guṇa), sensuous wind and the urges of the tongue and sex organs (māruta-jaihva-śaiśnyān). Nevertheless such persons fall under the control of useless anger (viphalasya krodhasya vaśam yānti) and drown in the water of a cow's hoof print (majjanti goh pade). Thus they destroy the benefit of their difficult austerities and can neither enjoy nor attain liberation (duścara-tapaś ca vṛthā utsṛjanti).

Those how perform austerities but do not worship you have two destinations. They become controlled by us, or by anger.

Under our control, they pursue enjoyment of their desires.

That is stated in this verse.

Some persons surpass us, who are like a limitless ocean, bestowing hunger, thirst, heat, cold and rain arising from the qualities of past, present and future, and as well the wind of Malaya Hills which gives pleasure to the skin, and bestowing pleasure of the tongue and genital.

But they drown in the water of a cow's hoof print.

Just as a person who is drowning and out of control gives up a treasure he has placed on his head, they destroy their difficult austerities by cursing in anger, and thus that austerity becomes useless for liberation or enjoyment.

### || 11.4.12 ||

iti pragṛṇatāṁ teṣāṁ striyo 'ty-adbhuta-darśanāḥ darśayām āsa śuśrūṣāṁ sv-arcitāḥ kurvatīr vibhuḥ

While the devatās were thus praising the Supreme Lord (iti pragṛṇatāṁ teṣāṁ), the all-powerful Lord (vibhu) suddenly manifested before their eyes (darśayām āsa) many women, who were astonishingly gorgeous (striyo aty-adbhuta-darśanāḥ), decorated with fine clothes and ornaments (su-arcitāḥ) and all faithfully engaging in the Lord's service (śuśrūṣāṁ kurvatīh).

- Not impressed by their praises, he showed the forms of women, produced by his yoga, who were serving him.
- He showed the devatās this to curb their pride in their own beauty.

|| 11.4.13 || te devānucarā dṛṣṭvā striyaḥ śrīr iva rūpiņīḥ gandhena mumuhus tāsāṁ rūpaudārya-hata-śriyaḥ

When the followers of the devatās (te devānucarā) gazed upon the beauty of the women (striyaḥ śrīr iva rūpiņīḥ) they became bewildered by their fragrance (tāsāṁ gandhena mumuhuh). The wealth of their splendid beauty was defeated (rūpaudārya-hata-śriyaḥ).

|| 11.4.14 || tān āha deva-deveśaḥ praṇatān prahasann iva āsām ekatamāṁ vṛṅdhvaṁ sa-varṇāṁ svarga-bhūṣaṇām

The Lord of lords (deva-deveśaḥ) then smiled slightly (prahasann iva) and told (āha) the representatives of heavens, who were bowing down before him (tān praṇatān), "Please choose one of these women (āsām ekatamām vṛṅdhvam), whomever you find suitable for you (sa-varṇām). She will become the ornament of the heavenly planets (svarga-bhūṣaṇām)."

- The Lord, smiling on seeing their defeat, concealed his smile out of great seriousness.
- "But we are so fallen compared to those women."
- She is equal to you in nature.
- She will be an ornament in Svarga.

|| 11.4.15 || om ity ādeśam ādāya natvā taṁ sura-vandinaḥ urvaśīm apsaraḥ-śreṣṭhāṁ puraskṛtya divaṁ yayuḥ

Following the Lord's order (om ity ādeśam ādāya), after offering him obeisances (taṁ natvā), the servants of the devatās (sura-vandinaḥ) selected Urvaśī, the best of the Apsarās (urvaśīm apsaraḥ-śreṣṭhāṁ). Placing her in front of them out of respect (puraskṛtya), they returned to the heavenly planets (divaṁ yayuḥ).

|| 11.4.16 || indrāyānamya sadasi śṛṇvatāṁ tri-divaukasām ūcur nārāyaṇa-balaṁ śakras tatrāsa vismitaḥ

The servants of the devatās, bowing to Indra in the assembly (indrāya ānamya sadasi), described the power of Nārāyaņa (ūcur nārāyaņa-balam) while the residents listened (śrņvatām tri-divaukasām). Indra became astonished by this (śakras tatra vismitaḥāsa).

Indra became afraid, thinking, "I have committed an offense."

#### || 11.4.17 ||

hamsa-svarūpy avadad acyuta ātma-yogam dattah kumāra rṣabho bhagavān pitā nah viṣṇuh śivāya jagatām kalayāvatirṇas tenāhṛtā madhu-bhidā śrutayo hayāsye

The infallible Supreme Lord (acyuta viṣṇuḥ) has descended into this world (āvatirṇah) by his various partial incarnations (kalayā) such as Hamsa (hamsa-svarūpy), Dattātreya, the four Kumāras (dattaḥ kumāra) and our own father, the mighty Ŗṣabhadeva (ṛṣabho naḥ bhagavān pitā) to teach about ātmā (avadad ātma-yogam) for the benefit of the universe (śivāya jagatām). As Hayagrīva (hayāsye) he killed the demon Madhu (tena madhu-bhidā) and thus rescued the Vedas (śrutayo āhṛtā). He has appeared as Hamsa, Dattātreya, the Kumāras and Rṣabha. Viṣṇu, appearing in his portions, spoke ātma-yoga.

As Hayagrīva, he killed Madhu and recovered the Vedas.

|| 11.4.18 ||

gupto 'pyaye manur ilauṣadhayaś ca mātsye kraude hato diti-ja uddharatāmbhasaḥ kṣmām kaurme dhṛto 'drir amṛtonmathane sva-pṛṣṭhe grāhāt prapannam ibha-rājam amuñcad ārtam

As a fish (mātsye), the Lord protected (guptah) Satyavrata Manu, the earth and her valuable herbs (manur ilā auṣadhayaś ca) during the period of destruction (apyaye). As a boar (krauḍe), the Lord killed Hiraṇyākṣa, the son of Diti (hato diti-ja), while delivering the earth (kṣmām uddharata) from the universal waters (ambhasaḥ). And as a tortoise (kaurme), he lifted Mandara Mountain on his back (dhṛto adrir sva-pṛṣṭhe) while nectar was churned from the ocean (amṛta unmathane). The Lord saved (amuñcad) the surrendered king of the elephants, Gajendra (prapannam ibha-rājam), who was suffering from the crocodile (grāhāt ārtam). Apyaye means "during the destructive flood."

Manuh means Satyavrata.

He protected Manu, the earth and the plants.

Kraude means "as Varāha." He delivered Gajendra.

#### || 11.4.19 ||

samstunvato nipatitāñ chramaņān rṣīmś ca śakram ca vrtra-vadhatas tamasi praviṣṭam deva-striyo 'sura-grhe pihitā anāthā jaghne 'surendram abhayāya satām nrsimhe

The Lord also delivered (implied) the tiny ascetic sages called the Vālakhilyas (samstunvato śramaņān rsīmś ca) when they fell into the water in a cow's hoof print and Indra was laughing at them (nipatitāñ). The Lord then saved Indra (śakram ca) when Indra was covered by darkness (tamasi pravistam) due to killing Vrtrāsura (vrtra-vadhatah). When the wives of the devatās (deva-striyo) were trapped in the palace of the demons (asura-grhe pihitā) without any shelter (anāthā), the Lord saved them (implied). In his incarnation as Nrsimha (nrsimhe), the Lord killed Hiranyakasipu, the king of demons (jaghne asurendram), to free the saintly devotees from fear (satām abhayāya).

The Lord rescued the Vālakhilya sages who were praising him, and who had fallen in the water of a cow's hoof print, while Indra laughed.

He rescued Indra who was covered with darkness from killing a brāhmaņa.

He rescued the wives of the devatās who were imprisoned.

These acts were performed in various avatāra forms.

|| 11.4.20 ||

devāsure yudhi ca daitya-patīn surārthe hatvāntaresu bhuvanāny adadhāt kalābhiķ bhūtvātha vāmana imām aharad baleķ ksmām yācñā-cchalena samadād aditeķ sutebhyaķ

The Supreme Lord, in the wars between the demons and devatās (devāsure yudhi ca), killed the leaders of the demons (daityapatin hatva) to favor the devatas (surarthe). He protected the universe (bhuvanāny adadhāt) through his Manvantara avatāra (kalābhih) forms during the reigns of each Manu (antareșu). The Lord appeared as Vāmana (bhūtvā atha vāmana) and took the earth away from Bali Mahārāja (imām kṣmām aharad) on the plea of begging three steps of land (yācñā-cchalena). The Lord then returned the entire world to the sons of Aditi (samadād aditeh sutebhyah).

The Lord protected the worlds during all the Manvantaras by his Manvantara avatāra forms.

|| 11.4.21 ||

niḥkṣatriyām akṛta gāṁ ca triḥ-sapta-kṛtvo rāmas tu haihaya-kulāpyaya-bhārgavāgniḥ so 'bdhiṁ babandha daśa-vaktram ahan sa-laṅkaṁ sītā-patir jayati loka-mala-ghna-kīṛtiḥ

Paraśurāma (rāmah) appeared in the family of Bhrgu (bhārgava) as a fire that burned to ashes the dynasty of Haihaya (haihayakulāpyaya agnih) and rid the earth of all ksatriyas (nihksatriyām akrta gām) twenty-one times (trih-sapta-krtvo). The same Lord appeared as Rāmacandra, the husband of Sītādevī (sītā-patih), subdued the ocean (abdhim babandha) and killed the ten-headed Rāvaņa (daśa-vaktram ahan), along with all the soldiers of Lankā (sa-lankam). May that Rāma, whose glories destroy the contamination of the world (sah lokamala-ghna-kīrtih), be always victorious (jayati)!

Salankam means "with all the warriors residing in Lankā."

Since Rāma has already passed when Nārada spoke, the present tense is used with jayati to indicate special respect.

#### || 11.4.22 ||

bhūmer bharāvataraņāya yaduṣv ajanmā jātaḥ kariṣyati surair api duṣkarāṇi vādair vimohayati yajña-kṛto 'tad-arhān śūdrān kalau kṣiti-bhujo nyahaniṣyad ante

To diminish the burden of the earth (bhūmer bharāvataraņāya), the unborn Lord (ajanmā) will be born in the Yadu dynasty (yaduşu jātaḥ) and perform feats (kariṣyati) impossible even for the devatās (surair api duṣkarāṇi). Propounding speculative philosophy (vādair), the Lord, as Buddha, will bewilder (vimohayati) the unworthy performers of Vedic sacrifices (atadarhān yajña-kṛto). And as Kalki, the Lord will kill (nyahaniṣyad) all the low-class men posing as rulers (śūdrān kṣiti-bhujah) at the end of the age of Kali (kalau ante). Buddha will bewilder the performers of sacrifice by his philosophy.

Kalki will kill the śūdras acting as kings.

|| 11.4.23 || evam-vidhāni janmāni karmāņi ca jagat-pateḥ bhūrīņi bhūri-yaśaso varņitāni mahā-bhuja

O mighty-armed King (mahā-bhuja)! There are innumerable appearances and activities (bhūrīņi janmāni karmāņi) of the Lord of the universe (jagat-pateḥ) similar to those I have already mentioned (evam-vidhāni varņitāni). The glories of the Supreme Lord are unlimited (bhūri-yaśasah).