

Canto Five - Chapter Three

Ṛṣabhadeva's Appearance
in the Womb of Merudevī,
the Wife of King Nābhi

|| 5.3.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

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

Śukadeva said: Nābhi, son of King Āgnīdhra (**nābhih**), desiring sons (**apatya-kāmah**), worshipped the Supreme Lord (**ayajata bhagavantam yajña-puruṣam**) with great attention (**avahitātmā**) along with his wife Merudevī (**merudevyā**), who had not produced any sons (**aprajayā**).

|| 5.3.2 ||

tasya ha vāva śraddhayā viśuddha-bhāvena yajataḥ pravargyeṣu pracaratsu dravya-deśa-kāla-mantrartvig-dakṣiṇā-vidhāna-yogopapattyā duradhigamo 'pi bhagavān bhāgavata-vātsalyatayā supratīka ātmānam aparājitaṁ nija-janābhipretārtha-vidhitsuṣayā gr̥hīta-hṛdayo hṛdayaṅgamaṁ manonayanānandanāvayavābhirāmam āviścakāra.

While King Nābhi (**tasya**) was performing prescribed duties (**pravargyeṣu pracaratsu**), out of great affection for his devotee (**bhāgavata-vātsalyatayā**), in order to fulfill the desire of his devotee (**nija-jana abhipreta-arthavidhitsuṣayā**), the Lord with beautiful form (**bhagavān supratīkah**), who is hard to attain (**duradhigamah**) but attracted to his devotee (**gr̥hīta-hṛdayah**), showed King Nābhi (**āviścakāra**) his attractive, pleasing form (**hṛdayaṅgamaṁ abhirāmam avayava**) which cannot be brought under control (**aparājitaṁ**), whose limbs gave bliss to mind and eyes of Nābhi (**mano-nayana-ānandana**). He showed himself because of Nābhi's performance of bhakti-yoga (**śraddhayā viśuddha-bhāvena yoga upapattyā**) along with proper ingredients, place, time, mantras, priests, charity, and rules (**dravya-deśa-kāla-mantra-rtvig-dakṣiṇā-vidhāna**).

|| 5.3.3 ||

atha ha tam āviṣkr̥ta-bhuja-yugala-dvayam hiraṇmayam puruṣa-viśeṣam kapiśa-
kauśeyāmbara-dharam urasi vilasac-chr̥vatsa-lalāmam daravara-vanaruha-vana-
mālācchūry-amṛta-maṇi-gadādibhir upalakṣitam sphuṭa-kiraṇa-pravara-mukuṭa-
kuṇḍala-kāṭaka-kāṭi-sūtra-hāra-keyūra-nūpurādy-aṅga-bhūṣaṇa-vibhūṣitam ṛtvik-
sadasya-gr̥ha-patayo 'dhanā ivottama-dhanam upalabhya sabahu-mānam
arhaṇenāvanata-śīrṣāṇa upatasthuḥ.

The priests, the assembly and King Nābhi (**ṛtvik-sadasya-gr̥ha-patayah**), like poor persons (**adhanā iva**) who have obtained the greatest treasure (**uttama-dhanam upalabhya sa bahu-mānam**), began worshipping with great reverence (**upatasthuḥ avanata-śīrṣāṇa**) by offering suitable ingredients (**arhaṇena**) that brilliant Supreme Person (**hiraṇmayam puruṣa-viśeṣam**) with four arms (**āviṣkr̥ta-bhuja-yugala-dvayam**), wearing yellow cloth (**kapiśa-kauśeyāmbara-dharam**), marked with shining Śrīvatsa on his chest (**urasi vilasat-śrīvatsa-lalāmam**), holding the conch, lotus, club and wheel (**daravara-vanaruha-ācchūry-gadādibhir**), wearing a garland (**vana-mālā**) and the Kaustubha jewel (**amṛta-maṇi-upalakṣitam**), and ornamented (**aṅga-bhūṣaṇa-vibhūṣitam**) with a most radiant crown (**sphuṭa-kiraṇa-pravara-mukuṭa**), earrings, bracelets (**kuṇḍala-kāṭaka**), belt (**kāṭi-sūtra**), necklace, arm bands and ankle bells (**hāra-keyūra-nūpurādy**).

|| 5.3.4-5 ||

ṛtvija ūcuḥ

arhasi muhur arhattamārhaṇam asmākam anupathānām namo nama ity
etāvat sad-upaśikṣitam ko 'rhati pumān prakṛti-guṇa-vyatikara-matir anīśa
īśvarasya parasya prakṛti-puruṣayor arvāktanābhir nāma-rūpākṛtibhī rūpa-
nirūpaṇam; sakala-jana-nikāya-vṛjina-nirasana-śivatama-pravara-guṇa-
gaṇaika-deśa-kathanād ṛte.

The priests said: O most exalted Lord (**arhat tama**)! Since we are your followers (**anupathānām**), you should accept our offering of repeated respects (**asmākam muhuh namo nama ity etāvat arhaṇam arhasi**), following the instructions of the great devotees (**sad-upaśikṣitam**). The incapable man (**anīśah pumān**), whose mind is affected by the guṇas of prakṛti (**prakṛti-guṇa-vyatikara-matih**), cannot describe the form of the Supreme Lord (**kah arhati īśvarasya rūpa-nirūpaṇam**) who is beyond both prakṛti and puruṣa (**prakṛti-puruṣayoh parasya**) by limited names, colors and forms (**arvāktanābhir nāma-rūpa-ākṛtibhīh**), except by describing (**kathanād ṛte**) a portion of your auspicious qualities (**śivatama-pravara-guṇa-gaṇa eka-deśa**) which even then destroy the sins of all people (**sakala-jana-nikāya-vṛjina-nirasana**).

॥ 5.3.6 ॥

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

O Lord (**parama**)! You are satisfied (**kila parituṣyasi**) by worship (**saparyayā**) using prayers uttered with choked voice (**śabala-samśabda**) composed by your devotees with attachment (**parijana anurāga-viracita**), and using (**sambhṛtayā**) water (**salila**), tulasī buds (**sita-kisalaya-tulasikā**), dūrvā grass (**dūrva**) and buds (**aṅkuraih**).

॥ 5.3.7 ॥

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

We see that (**upalabhāmahe**) you do not have any use (**bhavatah na samucitam artham**) for our elaborate worship (**anayāpi uru-bhāra-bharayā ijjayā**).

|| 3.9. ||

nātiprasīdati tathopacitopacārair
ārādhitaḥ sura-gaṇair hr̥di baddha-kāmaiḥ
yat sarva-bhūta-dayayāsad-alabhyayaiko
nānā-janeṣv avahitaḥ suhr̥d antar-ātmā

You (**ekah**), the friend of the devotees (**suhr̥d**) and neutral soul within all beings (**antar-ātmā**), are not as pleased (**na atiprasīdati**) by being worshipped (**ārādhitaḥ**) with many items (**upacita upacāraih**) by the devatās (**sura-gaṇaih**) whose hearts are filled with material desires (**hr̥di baddha-kāmaiḥ**) as you, alert to various people (**nānā-janeṣv avahitaḥ**), are pleased with devotees because they show mercy to all beings (**yathā sarva-bhūta-dayayā**). But this mercy is not attainable by the non-devotees (**asad-alabhyayā**).

|| 5.3.8 ||

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

O Lord (**nātha**)! You, who (**ātmana eva**) directly have a form composed of unlimited human goals (**añjasā aśeṣa-puruṣārtha-svarūpasya**), the highest bliss (**bobhūyamāna**), a form which continues without break at all times (**avyatirekeṇa anusavanam**), should satisfy us (**abhisamrādhana-mātram bhavitum arhati**), who have desires for benedictions (**etad āśiṣah āśāsānānām**).

|| 6.11.25 ||

na nāka-prṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam
na sārva-bhaumam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kāṅkṣe

O my Lord, source of all opportunities (**samañjasa**)! I do not desire to enjoy in Dhruvaloka (**na kāṅkṣe nāka-prṣṭham**), the heavenly planets or the planet where Lord Brahmā resides (**na ca pārameṣṭhyam**), nor do I want to be the supreme ruler of all the earthly planets (**na sārva-bhaumam**) or the lower planetary systems (**na rasādhipatyam**). I do not desire to be master of the powers of mystic yoga (**na yoga-siddhīr**), nor do I want liberation (**apunar-bhavam vā**). Burning in separation from you, these things will not satisfy me (**tvā virahayya**).

|| 5.3.9 ||

tad yathā bālīśānām svayam ātmanaḥ śreyaḥ param aviduṣām
parama-parama-puruṣa prakarṣa-karuṇayā sva-mahimānaṁ
cāpavargākhyam upakalpayiṣyan svayaṁ nāpacita evetaravad
ihopalakṣitaḥ.

Therefore (**tad**), just as a wise person appears before ignorant people (**yathā bālīśānām aviduṣām śreyaḥ param svayam**), you, the person superior to all great persons (**ātmanaḥ parama-parama-puruṣa**), out of your causeless mercy (**prakarṣa-karuṇayā**), to give (**upakalpayiṣyan**) liberation in the form of realization of your glories (**sva-mahimānaṁ apavarga ākhyam**) and all other benedictions as well (**ca**), have appeared here (**iha upalakṣitaḥ**), though not worshipped properly by us (**svayaṁ nāpacita**). You have appeared like a person curious to see the sacrifice (**itaravad**).

|| 5.3.10 ||

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

O most worshipping Lord (**arhat tama**)! That you, the best giver of benedictions (**bhavān varada rṣabhah**), appeared as the object of our vision (**nija-puruṣa īkṣaṇa-viṣaya āsīt**) in the King's sacrifice (**rājarṣer barhiṣi**) was our benediction (**atha eva varah**).

|| 5.3.11 ||

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

O Lord whose qualities are recited repeatedly by the sages (munīnām anavarata-pariguṇita guṇa-gaṇa kathanā)! Your qualities (guṇa-gaṇa) which bring about the highest bliss (parama-maṅgala āyana) are the subject of discussion for sages who have burned by all contamination (vidhūta-aśeṣa-malānām) by the fire of knowledge and detachment (asaṅga-niśita-jñāna anala), and who find enjoyment in you (ātmārāmāṇām) through their individual moods of love directed to you (bhavat-svabhāvānām).

॥ 5.3.12 ॥

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

May we somehow or other chant (**atha kathañcit vacana-gocarāṇi bhavantu**) your names describing your qualities (**tava guṇa-kṛta-nāmadheyāni**), which destroy all sins (**sakala-kaśmala-nirasanāni**) at the time of death (**jvara-maraṇa-daśāyām**), in order to help us remember you (**naḥ smaraṇāya**), who are unable to remember you (**vivaśānām**) while stumbling, suffering hunger, falling down, yawning, or suffering calamity (**skhalana-kṣut-patana-jṛmbhaṇa-duravasthāna ādiṣu**)!

॥ 5.3.13 ॥

kiñcāyaṃ rājarṣir apatya-kāmaḥ prajāṃ bhavādr̥śīm āśāsāna
īśvaram āśiṣāṃ svargāpavargayor api bhavantam upadhāvati
prajāyāṃ artha-pratyayo dhanadam ivādhanah phalīkaraṇam.

However (**kiñca**), this King (**ayam rājarṣih**), desiring a son (**apatya-kāmaḥ**), is worshipping you (**bhavantam īśvaram upadhāvati**), who can give all benedictions such as Svarga or liberation (**āśiṣāṃ svarga apavargayoh api**), since he desires to have a son exactly like You (**bhavādr̥śīm prajāṃ āśāsāna**). He is like a poor man pursuing a wealthy man for a few empty husks (**dhanadam adhanah phalīkaraṇam iva**).

|| 5.3.14 ||

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

You are free of māyā (**aparājitaḥ**), but is there a person (**kaḥ vā iha**) who does not worship the great devotees (**anupāsita-mahac-caraṇaḥ**) whose intelligence is not covered (**anāvṛta-matiḥ**) by unconquerable and indiscernible māyā (**aparājitayā anavasita-padavyā māyayā**), and whose nature is not covered (**anāvṛta-prakṛtiḥ**) by the force of material poison (**viṣaya-viṣa-ṛaya**)?

॥ 5.3.15 ॥

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

O performer of many actions (**adabhra-kartar**)! Lord of lords (**deva-deva**)! You should tolerate the offense (**deva-helanam prativodhum arhasi**) of persons like us who are foolish (**nah mandānām**) and full of material desires (**artha-dhiyām**) and who have called you to this sacrifice (**iha samāhūtah**), since you are equal to all (**yad u ha sarvān sāmyena**).

Verse	Story Line
4-5	<p>Priests to The Supreme Lord: Though we cannot glorify You properly because of our materially contaminated minds, kindly accept our offerings since we are your followers. Though our glorification is incomplete, even such an incomplete glorification can destroy all sins. That is Your magnanimity.</p>
6-7	<p>You are easily satisfied by the simple devotional worship of Your devotees, but you do not have any use for our elaborate worship which is devoid of devotion</p>
8	<p>Why don't I have any use for the elaborate worship?: This is because, Your form is the personification of the 4 Purusa-arthas and the highest bliss. Therefore, You should satisfy us.</p>
9	<p>If I don't have any use for Your worship, then why have I appeared? You have appeared out of Your causeless mercy to give liberation in the form of realization of your glories. Or perhaps, You have appeared like a person curious to see the sacrifice.</p>

10- Ok. Whatever may be the reason for My appearance, ask for a
11 **benediction**: Your appearance in the sacrifice is in itself the greatest
benediction as You are the subject of discussion of the pure hearted
sages, and not materially motivated people like us.

12 **But still we will ask for a benediction**: Give us the benediction to
constantly chant your names by which we can remember You. We are
unable to remember you while stumbling, suffering hunger, falling
down, yawning, or suffering calamity!

13 Though You are capable of bestowing liberation, the foolish king is
worshipping You with a desire to have a son like You. He is like a
poor man pursuing a wealthy man for empty husks.

14 But, this is not his fault. Who in this world is not covered by Your
maya except for those who worship the great devotees? This King has
not had this opportunity

15 Please tolerate the offense of foolish and materialistic persons like us.

|| 5.3.16 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti nigadenābhiṣṭūyamāno bhagavān animiṣarsabho varṣa-
dharābhivāditābhivandita-caraṇaḥ sadayam idam āha.

Śukadeva said: The Supreme Lord (**bhagavān**), protector of the devatās (**animiṣa rṣabhah**), thus praised by prose (**iti nigadena abhiṣṭūyamānah**), after being addressed by King Nābhi (**varṣa-dhara abhivādita**) who worshipped the Lord's feet (**abhivandita-caraṇaḥ**), then spoke with compassion (**sa dayam idam āha**).

|| 5.3.17 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

aho batāham ṛṣayo bhavadbhir avitatha-gīrbhir varam
asulabham abhiyācito yad amuṣyātmajo mayā sadṛśo bhūyād iti
mamāham evābhirūpaḥ kaivalyād athāpi brahma-vādo na mṛṣā
bhavitum arhati mamaiva hi mukhaṁ yad dvija-deva-kulam.

The Lord said: O sages (**aho bata ṛṣayah**)! I have been requested by you (**aham bhavadbhir abhiyācitah**) with words that must come true (**avitatha-gīrbhih**) for a boon difficult to achieve (**asulabham varam**)—that King Nābhi have a son similar to me (**yad amuṣya ātmajah mayā sadṛśo bhūyād iti**). Only I am similar to myself (**mama aham eva abhirūpaḥ**) since I alone am the Lord (**kaivalyād**). But the words of brāhmaṇas should not be false (**athāpi brahma-vādah na mṛṣā bhavitum arhati**), since this group of exalted brāhmaṇas is my mouth (**yad hi mama eva mukhaṁ dvija-deva-kulam**).

॥ 5.3.18 ॥

tata āgnīdhriye 'mśa-kalayāvatarīṣyāmy ātma-tulyam
anupalabhamānaḥ.

Not finding anyone equal to me (**ātma-tulyam anupalabhamānaḥ**), I will appear in my partial form (**tataḥ amśa-kalayā avatarīṣyāmy**) for King Nābhi (**āgnīdhriye**).

|| 5.3.19 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

iti niśāmayantya merudevyāḥ patim abhidhāyāntardadhe
bhagavān.

Śukadeva said: Speaking thus (**iti abhidhāya**) to the husband of Merudevī (**merudevyāḥ patim**) who was listening (**niśāmayantya**), the Lord disappeared (**bhagavān antardadhe**).

॥ 5.3.20 ॥

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

O King Parīkṣit (**viṣṇu-datta**)! Satisfied with the great sages (**parama ṛṣibhiḥ prasāditaḥ**), wanting to please King Nābhi (**nābheḥ priya-cikīrṣayā**), and desiring to show the path (**dharmān darśayitu-kāmah**) of the naked performers of austerity (**vāta-raśanānām śramaṇānām**), who follow scripture and remain celibate (**ṛṣiṇām ūrdhva-manthinām**), the Lord then appeared with a body of śuddha-sattva (**bhagavān śuklayā tanuvā avatatāra**) in the womb of Merudevī (**merudevyām**) who was situated in the inner chambers of the palace (**tad-avarodhāyane**).

Section III – 5.3.16- 20 Appearance of Rsabhadev

Verse	Story Line
16	Sukadev Goswami to Pariksit: The Lord, thus praised by the priests and worshipped by Nabhi, spoke with compassion
17-18	Lord to the Priests and King Nabhi: You have asked for a difficult boon. Only I am similar to Myself. But the words of the Brahmanas should not be false. Hence, I will appear in my partial form for the King Nābhi.
19	Thus speaking, the Lord left.
20	The Lord then appeared as Rsabhadev for 3 purposes: (a) Satisfied with the sages (b) Wanting to please King Nābhi (c) desiring to show the path of the naked performers of austerity