

10 - Aghāsura

I. Previous Life

- ॐ In his previous life Aghasura was known as Agha and was the son on Sankhacura.
- ॐ He was extremely strong and his bodily beauty was so striking that he exactly resembled Cupid
- ॐ One time Agha was in the Malaya mountains and he happened upon Astavakra muni who was performing austerities there.
- ॐ At the time Astavakra's body was uniquely bent in eight places and on beholding this peculiar deformity Agha laughed: who is the ugly person?
- ॐ Becoming deeply displeased by this arrogant conduct the muni addressed him gravely: "O fool! You will become a snake
- ॐ You will become the ugliest snake on earth.
- ॐ Although I may have to bend awkwardly sometimes I guarantee you that in a snake's body you will be forced to twist and curve for every movement you ever make.
- ॐ Moreover I hope that the experience of having a hideous form will help you to appreciate just how narcissistic and proud you have become."
- ॐ Quickly coming to his senses Agha fell at the feet of the sage begging forgiveness. Being pleased to see his change of attitude Astavakra told him:"
- ॐ Although you will become a snake when Lord Krsna who is more beautiful than millions of cupids enters your stomach you will be liberated."

II. The pastime

A. An early morning journey

- ॐ Once the Lord desired to go early in the morning with all His cowherd boy friends to the forest, where they were to assemble together and take lunch.
- ॐ As soon as He got up from bed, He blew a buffalo horn and called all His friends together.
- ॐ Keeping the calves before them, they started for the forest.
- ॐ They were each equipped with a stick, flute and horn as well as lunch bag,
- ॐ Each of them was taking care of thousands of calves.
- ॐ All the boys appeared very jolly and happy in that excursion.
- ॐ Each and every one of them was attentive for his personal calves.
- ॐ The boys were fully decorated with various kinds of golden ornaments and out of sporting propensities they began to pick up flowers, leaves, twigs, peacock feathers and red clay from different places in the forest, and they began to dress themselves in different ways.
- ॐ While passing through the forest, one boy stole another boy's lunch package and passed it to a third.

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

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- ॐ And when the boy whose lunch package was stolen came to know of it, he tried to take it back.
- ॐ But one threw it to another boy.
- ॐ When Lord Kṛṣṇa went ahead to a distant place in order to see some specific scenery, the boys behind Him tried to run to catch up and be the first to touch Him.
- ॐ One would say, "I will go there and touch Kṛṣṇa,"
- ॐ Another would say, "Oh you cannot go. I'll touch Kṛṣṇa first."
- ॐ Some of them played on their flutes or vibrated bugles made of buffalo horn.
- ॐ Some of them gladly followed the peacocks and imitated the onomatopoeic sounds of the cuckoo.
- ॐ While the birds were flying in the sky, the boys ran after the birds' shadows along the ground and tried to follow their exact courses.
- ॐ Some of them went to the monkeys and silently sat down by them, and some of them imitated the dancing of the peacocks.
- ॐ Some of them caught the tails of the monkeys and played with them, and when the monkeys jumped in a tree, the boys also followed.
- ॐ When a monkey showed its face and teeth, a boy imitated and showed his teeth to the monkey.
- ॐ Some of the boys played with the frogs on the bank of the Yamuna, and when, out of fear, the frogs jumped in the water, the boys immediately dove in after them, and they would come out of the water when they saw their own shadows and stand imitating, making caricatures and laughing.
- ॐ They would also go to an empty well and make loud sounds, and when the echo came back, they would call it ill names and laugh.

B. Aghasura appears

- ॐ Aghasura is impatient seeing K and friends playing and wants to kill all of them since he is the younger brother of Baka and Putana
- ॐ Expanded himself via *mahima siddhi* to eight miles long in a serpent shape (2 miles when coiled)
- ॐ Open mouth looked like a cave
- ॐ Lower lip touching ground, upper lip touching clouds
- ॐ Teeth appeared like mountain summits
- ॐ Tongue appeared to be a path
- ॐ Breathing was like a hurricane
- ॐ At first all gopas thought was a statue
- ॐ Then began to think it was a giant snake

Description is an amalgamation of those found in Srimad Bhagavatam

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- ॐ The boys began to talk among themselves: "This figure appears to be a great animal, and he is sitting in such a posture just to swallow us all. Just see--is it not a big snake that has widened his mouth to eat all of us?"
- ॐ One of them said, "Yes, what you say is true. This animal's upper lip appears to be just like the sunshine, and its lower lip is just like the reflection of red sunshine on the ground. Dear friends, just look to the right and left hand side of the mouth of the animal. Its mouth appears to be like a big mountain cave, and its height cannot be estimated. The chin is also raised just like a mountain summit. That long highway appears to be its tongue, and inside the mouth it is as dark as in a mountain cave. The hot wind that is blowing like a hurricane is his breathing, and the fishy bad smell coming out from his mouth is the smell of his intestines."
- ॐ Then they further consulted among themselves: "If we all at one time entered into the mouth of this great serpent, how could it possibly swallow all of us? And even if it were to swallow all of us at once, it could not swallow Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will immediately kill him, as He did Bakasura."
- ॐ Talking in this way, all the boys looked at the beautiful lotus-like face of Kṛṣṇa, and they began to clap and smile. And so they marched forward and entered the mouth of the gigantic serpent.

C. Aghāsura liberated

- ॐ Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supersoul within everyone's heart, could understand that the big statuesque figure was a demon.
- ॐ While He was planning how to stop the destruction of His intimate friends, all the boys along with their cows and calves entered the mouth of the serpent.
- ॐ But Kṛṣṇa did not enter.
- ॐ The demon was awaiting Kṛṣṇa's entrance, and he was thinking, "Everyone has entered except Kṛṣṇa, who has killed my brothers and sisters."
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa became, momentarily, aggrieved.
- ॐ He was also struck with wonder how the external energy works so wonderfully.
- ॐ He then began to consider how the demon should be killed and how He could save the boys and calves.
- ॐ Finally, after some deliberation, He also entered the mouth of the demon.
- ॐ When Kṛṣṇa entered, all the demigods, who had gathered to see the fun and who were hiding within the clouds, began to express their feelings with the words, "Alas! alas!"
- ॐ At the same time, all the friends of Aghāsura, especially Kamsa, who were all accustomed to eating flesh and blood, began to express their jubilation, understanding that Kṛṣṇa had also entered the mouth of the demon.
- ॐ While the demon was trying to smash Kṛṣṇa and His companions, Kṛṣṇa heard the demigods crying, "Alas, alas," and He immediately began to expand his universal form within the throat of the demon.
- ॐ Although he had a gigantic body, the demon choked by the expanding of Kṛṣṇa.

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- ॐ His big eyes moved violently, and he quickly suffocated.
- ॐ His life-air could not come out from any source, and ultimately it burst out of a hole in the upper part of his skull.
- ॐ Thus his life-air passed off.
- ॐ After the demon dropped dead, Kṛṣṇa, with His transcendental glance alone, brought all the boys and calves back to consciousness and came with them out of the mouth of the demon.
- ॐ While Kṛṣṇa was within the mouth of Aghāsura, the demon's spirit soul came out like a dazzling light, illuminating all directions, and waited in the sky.
- ॐ As soon as Kṛṣṇa with His calves and friends came out of the mouth of the demon, that glittering effulgent light immediately merged into the body of Kṛṣṇa within the vision of all the demigods.
- ॐ *Sarupya mukti*
- ॐ The demigods became overwhelmed with joy and began to shower flowers on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and thus they worshiped Him.
- ॐ The denizens of heaven began to dance in jubilation, and the denizens in Gandharvaloka began to offer various kinds of prayers.
- ॐ Drummers began to beat drums in jubilation, the brahmanas began to recite Vedic hymns, and all the devotees of the Lord began to chant the words, "Jaya! Jaya! All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead!"

III. The Anartha

A. Caitanya Siksamṛta

- ॐ *Cruelty, violence to others*
Aghāsura, the demon who assumed the form of a gigantic snake, represents the malignant sinful mentality that desires to cause trouble and violence to others out of hatred and malice. Killed by Kṛṣṇa, this tendency must be removed, being one of the offences to harināma.

B. Krishna Samhita

- ॐ *Compassion is hindered by the violence of Agha*
Aghāsura, the personification of intolerance and cruelty, is the sixth obstacle. Due to a lack of compassion for the living entities **there is a possibility that one's attachment will gradually diminish**, because compassion cannot remain separated from attachment. The basis of compassion for the living entities and devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the same.

C. Prof Sanyaal

- ॐ The sixth obstacle has the forms of cruelty and violence. This is the demon Aghāsura. It is possible for love to suffer gradual decay by the absence of kindness for all animate beings. This must be so inasmuch as kindness can never

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be a different principle from love for Krishna. **There is no substantive difference between love for Krishna and kindness to individual souls.**

IV. Notes

- ॐ Kṛṣṇa was five years old when He killed Aghasura. (From SB above). It was only discussed in Vraja one year later, as if it had happened on that very day.
- ॐ When the wind would blow afterwards it would inflate the body, which became a dried up skin, and make it appear to be still alive.
- ॐ Kamsa pretty certain that K will be the cause of his death
- ॐ Vats, Baka and Agha all take place within a few days (GS)
- ॐ Sarupya mukti
- ॐ
- ॐ Balarama's birthday so can't go
- ॐ B laments but could understand that something special was going to happen and
- ॐ Therefore, didn't want others to suffer his misfortune so encouraged them all to go
- ॐ
- ॐ Agha tries to kill K and gopa boys and calves to take life out of Vais community – most cruel

A. Cruelty

- ॐ When Akrura was leaving Vrndavana, some of the elderly gopis rebuked him as follows: "O son of Gandini, your cruelty is defaming the dynasty of King Yadu. You are taking Kṛṣṇa away, keeping us in such a pitiable condition without Him. Now, even before you have left, the life air of all the gopis has practically disappeared."
- ॐ Cruelty and mercy/compassion as bipolar opposites
- ॐ Real compassion is to give Krishna consciousness

B. Envy (*ahimsa means nonviolence*)

- ॐ Brahmā → Adharma (Irreligion, male) and Mṛṣa (Falsity, female)
- ॐ Adharma and Mṛṣa → Damba (bluffing) & Māyā (Cheating) (this marriage between brother and sister was the beginning of irreligion).
- ॐ Damba & Māyā were taken by a demon named Nirṛti, who had no children.
- ॐ Damba & Māyā → Lobha (Greed) & Nikṛti (Cunning)
- ॐ Lobha & Nikṛti → Krodha (Anger) and Himsā (Envy)
- ॐ Krodha (Anger) & Himsā (Envy) → Kali and his sister Durukti (Harsh Speech)
- ॐ Kali and Durukti (Harsh Speech) → Mṛtyu (Death) and Bhīti (Fear)
- ॐ Mṛtyu (Death) and Bhīti (Fear) → Yātanā (Excessive Pain) and Niraya (Hell)

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ॐ (SB 4.8.2-4)

ॐ The word jīva-himsā (envy of other living entities) actually means stopping the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Preaching work is described as paropakāra, welfare activity for others. Those who are ignorant of the benefits of devotional service must be educated by preaching. If one stops preaching and simply sits down in a solitary place, he is engaging in material activity. If one desires to make a compromise with the Māyāvādīs, he is also engaged in material activity. A devotee should never make compromises with nondevotees. (CC 2.12.135)

ॐ Since no one in this material world can tolerate another's advancement, everyone in the material world is called matsara, envious. In the beginning of Srimad-Bhagavatam it is therefore said that Srimad-Bhagavatam is meant for those who are completely nirmatsara (nonenvious). In other words, one who is not free from the contamination of envy cannot advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, if someone excels another person, the devotee who is excelled thinks how fortunate the other person is to be advancing in devotional service. Such nonenvy is typical of Vaikuntha.

C. Fear, Faith and Doubt

ॐ No fear from gopa boys – faith

ॐ Had trouble believing could be an 8 mile snake – still some doubt – K can do anything

*asraddadhānāḥ puruṣā
dharmasyāsya parantapa
aprāpya mām nivartante
mṛtyu-samsāra-vartmani*

Those who are not faithful in this devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of enemies. Therefore they return to the path of birth and death in this material world. (Bg 9.3)

*ajñās cāsradadhānas ca
samsayātmā vinasyati
nāyam loko 'sti na paro
na sukham samsayātmanah*

But ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness; they fall down. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next. (Bg 4.40)

*'sradhā'-sabde—visvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niscaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

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“Sraddhā is confident, firm faith that by rendering transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa one automatically performs all subsidiary activities. Such faith is favorable to the discharge of devotional service. (CC 2.22.62)

V. Lessons from the pastime & how it all fits together

- ॐ Snakes are cold-blooded and envious by nature
- ॐ One manifestation of envy is cruelty towards
- ॐ In killing this demon we must rid ourselves of envious and cruel behavior towards others.
- ॐ But cruelty, in the truest sense, means to not engage others in devotional service (i.e., real compassion is sharing/giving Krishna consciousness)
- ॐ Sometimes it may appear cruel when engaging someone in Krishna consciousness (soliciting someone to buy a book they may not otherwise be interested in, requesting people to do less desirable services like washing pots, forcing someone to leave the temple in reaction to some heinous behavior on his/her part)
- ॐ Yet we must have faith, as the cowherd boys did, the Krishna will purify.
- ॐ In other words, we must do our duty