

I. The pastime

Narada approaches Kṛṣṇa

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ After [the killing of Keśi], Nārada Muni, the greatest of all devotees, came to see Kṛṣṇa in a solitary place and began to talk with Him.
- ॐ “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa,” he said, “You are the unlimited Supersoul, the supreme controller of all mystic powers, the Lord of the whole universe, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ You are the resting place of the cosmic manifestation, the master of all the devotees and the Lord of everyone.
- ॐ My dear Lord, as the Supersoul of all living entities, You remain concealed within their hearts exactly as fire remains concealed in every piece of fuel.
- ॐ You are the witness of all the activities of the living entities, and You are the supreme controller within their hearts.
- ॐ You are self-sufficient; before the creation, You existed, and by Your energy You have created all the material elements.
- ॐ According to Your perfect plan, this material world is created by the interaction of the modes of nature, and by You it is maintained and annihilated.
- ॐ Although You are unaffected by all these activities, You are the supreme controller eternally.
- ॐ My dear Lord, You have advented Yourself on the surface of this earth just to kill all the so-called kings who are actually demons.
- ॐ These hobgoblins are cheating people in the dress of the princely order.
- ॐ You have advented Yourself to fulfill Your own statement that You come within this material world just to protect the principles of religion and annihilate unwanted miscreants.
- ॐ My dear Lord, I am therefore sure that the day after tomorrow I shall see demons like Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika and the other wrestlers and elephants, as well as Kamsa himself, killed by You.
- ॐ I shall see this with my own eyes.
- ॐ After this I shall be able to see the killing of other demons, like Śankha, Yavana, Mura and Narakāsura.
- ॐ I shall also see how You take away the pārijāta flower from the kingdom of heaven and how You defeat the King of heaven himself.
- ॐ “My dear Lord,” Nārada Muni continued, “I shall then be able to see how You marry princesses, the daughters of chivalrous kings, by paying the price of kṣatriya strength.”
- ॐ “I shall also see how You save King Nṛga from a hellish condition,” said Nārada Muni.

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- ॐ “This You shall enact in Dvārakā. I shall also be able to see how You get Your wife and the Syamantaka jewel and how You save the son of a brāhmaṇa from death after he has already been transferred to another planet.
- ॐ After this, I will be able to see You kill the Pauṇḍraka demon and burn to ashes the kingdom of Kāśī.
- ॐ I will see how You kill the King of Cedi and Dantavakra during the great sacrifice of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
- ॐ Besides all this, it will be possible for me to see many other chivalrous activities while You remain in Dvārakā.
- ॐ And all these activities performed by Your Grace will be sung by great poets throughout the world.
- ॐ And at the Battle of Kurukṣetra You will take part as the chariot driver of Your friend Arjuna, and as the invincible death incarnation, eternal time, You will vanquish all belligerents assembled there.
- ॐ I shall see a large number of military forces killed in that battlefield. My Lord, let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.
- ॐ You are situated completely in the transcendental position, in perfect knowledge and bliss. You are complete in fulfilling all Your desires.
- ॐ By exhibiting Your internal potency, You have set up the influence of māyā. Your unlimited potency cannot even be measured by anyone.
- ॐ My dear Lord, You are the supreme controller. You are under Your own internal potency, and it is simply vain to think that You are dependent on any of Your creations.
- ॐ “You have taken birth in the Yadu dynasty, or the Vṛṣṇi dynasty.
- ॐ Your advent on the surface of the earth in Your original form of eternal blissful knowledge is Your own pastime.
- ॐ You are not dependent on anything but Yourself; therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.”
- ॐ After offering his respectful obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni took permission and left.
- ॐ *Nārada Muni wanted to impress upon people in general that Kṛṣṇa is fully independent. His activities, such as His appearance in the family of Yadu or His friendship with Arjuna, do not necessarily oblige Him to act to enjoy their results. They are all pastimes, and for Him they are all play. But for us they are actual, tangible facts.*

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- ॐ After He had killed the Keśī demon, Kṛṣṇa returned to tending the cows with His friends in the forest as though nothing had happened.
- ॐ Later that morning, Kṛṣṇa went to play with His cowherd boyfriends on the top of the Govardhana Hill.

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- ॐ They were imitating the play of thieves and police.
- ॐ Some of the boys became police constables, and some became thieves,
- ॐ and some took the role of lambs.
- ॐ While they were thus enjoying their childhood pastimes, a demon known by the name of Vyomāsura, “the demon who flies in the sky,” appeared on the scene.
- ॐ He was the son of another great demon, named Maya.
- ॐ Vyomāsura took the part of a cowherd boy playing as a thief and stole many boys who were playing the parts of lambs.
- ॐ One after another he took away almost all the boys and put them in the caves of the mountain and sealed the mouths of the caves with stones.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa could understand the trick the demon was playing;
- ॐ therefore He caught hold of him exactly as a lion catches hold of a lamb.
- ॐ The demon tried to expand himself like a hill to escape arrest,
- ॐ but Kṛṣṇa did not allow him to get out of His clutches.
- ॐ He was immediately thrown to the ground with great force and killed, just as an animal is killed in the slaughterhouse.
- ॐ After killing the Vyoma demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa released all His friends from the caves of the mountain.
- ॐ He was then praised by His friends and by the demigods for these wonderful acts. He again returned to Vṛndāvana with His cows and friends.

II. The Anartha

A. *Kṛṣṇa Saṁhita*

ॐ *Theft & dishonesty*

The fourteenth obstacle in developing love for Kṛṣṇa is stealing others’ property and speaking lies. These create disturbances in Vraja in the form of Vyomāsura.

B. *Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta*

ॐ *Theft & dishonesty*

The Vyomāsura-vadha-līlā, Kṛṣṇa killing the demon who flies in the sky, represents leaving the dishonest company of thieves and fake, deceitful devotees.

C. *Professor Sanyal*

ॐ *Theft & dishonesty*

The offenses of theft of another’s property and telling of Lies are the fourteenth obstacle. These are represented by the demon Byowrāsura. They stand in the way of one’s attaining to perfect love for Krishna and give a good deal of trouble to the novice.

III. Lies

A. Yudhistira and lies

- ॐ It is also predicted here that Yudhiṣṭhira, after gaining victory in this battle, would flourish more and more because not only was he righteous and pious but he was also a strict moralist. He never spoke a lie during his life. [Bg 18.78 purport]
- ॐ So you can violate the laws on the order of Kṛṣṇa. You cannot do. This is surrender. When Kṛṣṇa says that "You do this," although it is wrong, you have to do it. There is no consideration. Just like in fight, the commander says to the soldiers, "Do this." His duty is to do that. He should not think at that time what is right or wrong. Just like Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, he was advised by Kṛṣṇa that "Yudhiṣṭhira, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, you go to Droṇācārya and inform him that 'Your son is dead.'" It was a false information. Because Droṇācārya would not die if he is not affected with some lamentation. So Kṛṣṇa asked Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira that "You go because you are recognized truthful, Dharmarāja. So when you will say, this is also false, he will believe." But Yudhiṣṭhira hesitated, "How can I tell lie?" He disobeyed the order of Kṛṣṇa, and he wanted to become very truthful. For this reason he had to see hell. So in the mundane consideration there are so many things, right and wrong. So long you are on the mundane platform, you have to obey all these right and wrong. But in the spiritual platform, when it is ordered by Kṛṣṇa... He is above all this duality. He is Absolute. So even if He says to do something wrong... Because He cannot say anything which is wrong. God is all-good. If you discriminate God's order from the mundane platform, then you will be misguided. Anyone who has got firm and fixed up faith that whatever God does, whatever God orders, even from mundane calculation it may be wrong, that is right... That is absolute understanding. So those who are in the spiritual platform, for them, there is no such consideration, which is right and which is wrong. Their only consideration is whether Kṛṣṇa is pleased. That's all. If Kṛṣṇa is pleased by inducing me to do something wrong, I will not hesitate to do it. I will do it because it is Kṛṣṇa's order. *Tasmin tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam*. My principle should be, "If Kṛṣṇa is satisfied, then everything is all right." But while we are in the mundane platform, we should not concoct the idea that "Kṛṣṇa is pleased; let me do that." No. That you, cannot do. You have to follow the rules and regulations. But if you think that it is... You cannot think; neither you can manufacture. So either you should hear from Kṛṣṇa directly or... That is not possible because we are not in touch with Kṛṣṇa at the present moment. We are trying to see Kṛṣṇa through the transparent medium of spiritual master. So we cannot manufacture that "This is Kṛṣṇa's desire." No. You have to get it confirmed from the transparent medium, spiritual master. These are the principles. [Bhagavad-gītā 1.45-46 -- London, August 1, 1973]

ॐ Droṇa continued to destroy the Pāṇḍava army as if appointed by Death for their destruction. The oppressed troops' screams filled the air as he assailed them with countless blazing shafts. Witnessing Droṇa's power, Yudhiṣṭhira felt he could never become victorious. He met Arjuna and Bhīma and revealed his anxiety. "It seems that Droṇa will consume us. No one can check that mighty hero."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "What you say is true, O King. Droṇa cannot be checked as long as he stands with his weapons raised. But if he lowers them, he can be slain. I think if he hears that his son has been killed, he will lose all heart for the fight. Tell him that Aśvatthāmā is dead. Then he will lower his bow and we will kill him."

Arjuna was shocked. "I cannot accept this, O Madhava." But Bhīma, upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's words, immediately broke away. He raced into a nearby Kaurava elephant division. At its head rode Indravarma, the Malava ruler. Bhīma knew his elephant was named Aśvatthāmā. Whirling his iron mace, the Pāṇḍava smashed the beast and slew it and its rider together. He then rushed over to Droṇa and bellowed out, "Aśvatthāmā is slain! Aśvatthāmā is slain!" As he deceived Droṇa, his voice was tremulous and his heart wavered, but he knew it was Kṛṣṇa's instruction, so he called out again and again, telling Droṇa that Aśvatthāmā was dead.

Hearing Bhīma's words, Droṇa stopped fighting. His limbs seemed to dissolve like sand in water. However, recalling his son's prowess, he decided it could not be true. Bhīma was known to be capricious. It would not be beyond him to speak an untruth in anger or in jest. Droṇa rallied himself and resumed his assault on the Pāṇḍavas. Dr̥ṣṭadyumna had reached him and they had begun to fight again. Holding off Dr̥ṣṭadyumna's attack, the Kuru general continued annihilating the Pāṇḍava forces. He invoked the terrible Brahmā weapon. Warriors fell to the earth like trees uprooted in a tempest. Heads and arms flew about as Droṇa's arrows fell on his enemies. In a short time, he had killed ten thousand chariot fighters before Yudhiṣṭhira's eyes, even while Dr̥ṣṭadyumna assailed him with all his strength. Droṇa stood on the battlefield like a blazing fire without a single curl of smoke.

As Droṇa surveyed his ravaged foes, there suddenly appeared in the sky above him a group of ṛṣis headed by Agni. His own father, Bharadvāja, along with Vasiṣṭa, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Kaśyapa, and many other celestial sages stood in the sky in subtle forms. They addressed Droṇa in a single voice that only he could hear. "You are fighting unfairly, O Droṇa, using celestial weapons against lesser warriors. It is now time for you to die. Cast away your weapons. You are a learned Brahmin and such cruelty does not become you. By employing the Brahmā weapon to kill ordinary men, you have earned

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disrepute. Stop these sinful acts and stop fighting. Your days are now at an end.”

Droṇa looked around. Dr̥ṣṭadyumna was still near him, roaring out his challenge. Perhaps the time for the prophesy’s fulfillment had arrived. Droṇa’s arms fell to his side. He could not continue. Bhīma’s words still troubled him, and the sages’ speech pained him even more. Could Aśvatthāmā actually be dead? Who could he ask and be sure to receive the truth? Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira not far away, the Kuru general went toward him. He was the one to ask—Yudhiṣṭhira would speak no lie.

Kṛṣṇa saw Droṇa coming toward Yudhiṣṭhira and said, “Save us from Droṇa, O King. If he fights for even a half day more, your army will be finished. Under the circumstances, falsehood is better than truth. Speaking falsehood in order to preserve life is not a sin.”

Kṛṣṇa cited a scriptural passage that sanctioned lying under certain circumstances, including times when life was endangered. Yudhiṣṭhira reflected on Kṛṣṇa’s words. He could not ignore them. He had never in his life spoken even an ambiguity. The thought of a lie was difficult to face. Yet if Droṇa was not checked, his forces would be defeated. The Pāṇḍava remembered Droṇa’s own prophetic statement at the beginning of the war: that he would be overpowered at a time when he heard something disagreeable from a creditable source. Reluctantly, Yudhiṣṭhira agreed to Kṛṣṇa’s suggestion. As the Kuru preceptor approached him, he gave him the false news. “Aśvatthāmā is dead,” he called out, adding inaudibly at the end, “the elephant,” as he could not tell an utter untruth under any circumstances.

Until that time, Yudhiṣṭhira’s horses seemed to move across the field without touching the earth. After he lied to Droṇa, his horses descended to earth. The sages looking on wondered why that was so. Some said that Yudhiṣṭhira’s lie had been the cause, while others argued that his reluctance to obey Kṛṣṇa’s order was the reason.

As soon as Yudhiṣṭhira spoke, Droṇa felt his heart sink into fathomless grief. His agony was compounded by the sages’ words, which made him feel like he had offended the Pāṇḍavas. Distracted by sorrow, he moved away from Yudhiṣṭhira with his weapons lowered. Dr̥ṣṭadyumna attacked. Droṇa was struck all over, but he did not resist. He was plunged into despair. Dr̥ṣṭadyumna attacked him with even more force and the old Kuru chief, incited to anger, finally raised his bow to fight back. Displaying his incomparable lightness of hand, he cut down all of Dr̥ṣṭadyumna’s arrows. He chanted mantras, invoking celestial weapons to destroy Dr̥ṣṭadyumna, but they no longer appeared at his command. Marveling, he fired volleys of ordinary arrows at his foe. Suddenly, he saw that his stock of shafts,

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inexhaustible for the last fifteen days, was empty.

Despondent, Droṇa decided to give up his life. He dropped his bow and repeatedly cried out his son’s name. Looking over at the other Kurus, he called out, “O Duryodhana, O Karna, O Kṛpa, fight with all your power. I will now lay aside my weapons.”

B. Bhumi not tolerating lies

C. Truthfulness last leg of religion

D. Fifth Canto

ॐ A person who in this life bears false witness or lies while transacting business or giving charity is severely punished after death by the agents of Yamarāja. Such a sinful man is taken to the top of a mountain eight hundred miles high and thrown headfirst into the hell known as Avīcimat. This hell has no shelter and is made of strong stone resembling the waves of water. There is no water there, however, and thus it is called Avīcimat [waterless]. Although the sinful man is repeatedly thrown from the mountain and his body broken to tiny pieces, he still does not die but continuously suffers chastisement. [SB 5.26.28]

E. Symptoms of Kali Yuga

ॐ First decreasing-religiosity. People will become irreligious, and they will forget what is telling truth. They will be accustomed to speak lie. And śaucam, no cleanliness. And kṣamā. Kṣamā means forgiveness. Suppose I have done some wrong... [break] ...but there is no forgiveness. Kṣamā-rūpaṁ tapasvinaḥ, people is advised, especially those who are following penance and austerity, yogic principle or devotional life, they should learn to excuse. In our dealings, there are so many faulty dealings between ourselves. So if we take everything very seriously, then it is very difficult to live. So kṣamā. But that kṣamā—kṣamā means forgiveness—will reduce. Nobody will forgive. Retaliation, vengeance, that will increase. So four items: religiosity, truthfulness, cleanliness, and forgiveness. Four. Then dayā. Dayā means mercy. What is dayā? Who is, I mean to say, less strong. Just like animals, birds, beast, you should be very merciful. Just like children: you should be very merciful to children. According to Vedic injunctions, children, woman, brāhmaṇas, old men, and cows. How many? Children, women, brāhmaṇa, cow, and what else? [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.2.1 -- San Francisco, March 18, 1968]

F. Qualifications of a brahmana

ॐ If a person is a brāhmaṇa, then his natural qualification will be like this. What is that? Satyam: he is truthful. In any circumstances he will be truthful.

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Even to an enemy he will disclose the secret, "This is the fact." That is truthfulness, not that I am very truthful, but when my interest is jeopardized, I tell lie. That is not truthfulness. Truthfulness means at any circumstances one will speak the plain truth. That is truthfulness. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.10 -- Montreal, July 9, 1968]

G. Bali Mahārāja & Śukrācārya

ॐ After hearing the instructive advice of Śukrācārya, Bali Mahārāja became contemplative. Because it is the duty of a householder to maintain the principles of religion, economic development and sense gratification, Bali Mahārāja thought it improper to withdraw his promise to the brahmacārī. To lie or fail to honor a promise given to a brahmacārī is never proper, for lying is the most sinful activity. Everyone should be afraid of the sinful reactions to lying, for mother earth cannot even bear the weight of a sinful liar. [SB 8.20 Summary]

H. From Śrīla Prabhupāda

1. Letter to: Sri Govinda — Bombay 25 December, 1972

ॐ So far this making some false story for collecting money or selling book, of course we may do anything for Krishna, but that is supposed to be reserved for very advanced experts in Krishna Consciousness—they know how to catch the big fish without themselves getting wet. So it is not very much advisable to make lies just to sell book. If we simply stick to describing how wonderful is Krishna, then whatever we may lie or exaggerate, that will not be lie! But other things, lies, they will not help us to train ourselves in truthfulness. Lie to some, not to others, that is not a good philosophy. Rather the brahmanas are always truthful, even to their enemies. There is sufficient merit in our books that if you simply describe them sincerely to anyone, they will buy. That art you must develop, not art of lying. Convince them to give by your preaching the Absolute Truth, not by tricking, that is more mature stage of development of Krishna Consciousness.

2. Bhagavad-gītā 2.13-17 -- Los Angeles, November 29, 1968

Madhudviṣa: Prabhupāda, when you say we must be honest in our dealings... If we have an advantage to, to take advantage of somebody else for Kṛṣṇa, for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is this permissible? If we have a chance to take advantage of somebody to get money from them, not by stealing but by means... (Prabhupāda chuckles) Is this permissible?

Prabhupāda: Yes, but that is not by your discretion. You have to consult your spiritual master. Just like what Kṛṣṇa says Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, "Yudhiṣṭhira, My dear brother Yudhiṣṭhira, you go and tell," I mean to say, "Droṇācārya, that 'Your son is dead.' " Because this gentleman would not die unless he hears the message of the death of his son. So he was not dying. So Yudhiṣṭhira was commissioned to speak this lie, that

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"You go and say that 'Your son is dead.' " And he says that "I never spoke lie. I cannot do that." Now here the order is coming from Kṛṣṇa, therefore he should have executed the order immediately. Although speaking lie for common man is sin, but because it is in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, it is not sin. So that telling lie should not be taken risk of at one's own discretion. It must be ordered by Kṛṣṇa or by His representative. Telling lie is always sinful. That's all right. But if Kṛṣṇa says "Tell lie," it is not sinful. That is the secret. You can violate the laws only on the direct order of Kṛṣṇa or His representative. That's all. That is common sense. Just like a political person is engaged to kill somebody under superior order. And if he can kill, he is rewarded, he is given high post. But the same man, if he kills by his own discretion, he'll be hanged. So serving greater purpose, supreme purpose, absolute purpose, there is no question of such piety or sinful. But in the ordinary field, there must be "This is pious, this is sinful." So that discretion should not be taken by oneself, but it should be consulted.

Jaya-gopāla: If one can engage one who is demonic in service by telling a lie...

Prabhupāda: General principle is that if you can engage anyone in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is good. That is good. That is also said in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta. Yena tena prakāreṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet. If your aim is to engage him in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if you do something which is not very straight, that is allowed. (laughter) Because you are doing very good to him. Suppose a man is drunkard. So suppose if you say, "Oh, all right. I'll give you a very nice bottle of whiskey at cheap price. Give me fifteen dollars." And if you take fifteen dollars and engage it (in) Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that cheating is allowed. (laughter) Because that fifteen dollars he'll take and drink. So you have by some way taken away that fifteen dollars and engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So that you have done good to him. So therefore it requires little intelligence and discretion. But that does not mean you shall cheat fifteen dollars from everywhere. But there is no cheating because anyone who is not Kṛṣṇa conscious, he is a drunkard. He is drunkard, he is illusioned under material spell. You see? You see? The greatest drunkard, everyone who is not Kṛṣṇa conscious. Therefore any way, if you can induce him to spend something of his hard earned money in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is very good to him. Yes. This is called ajñāta-sukṛti. He does not know, but he is advanced one step to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Anybody who is contributing even a farthing to you, he is advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is so nice thing. Yes.

Young man: I had something come up once. Is it all right to cheat the government?

Prabhupāda: Oh, we don't care for anyone. (laughter) We are on the supreme government. (laughs) But don't take the risk. No, that should be not our policy. But the basic principle is that if some way or other you can engage a materialistic person's money into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is good for him. It is good for him. You may take some tactics, that doesn't matter. But not... We cannot take anything for our personal consideration. Yes?

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