

The Killing of Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ After Kāmsa's wrestlers expressed their determination, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the killer of Madhu, confronted Cāṇūra, and Lord Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī, confronted Muṣṭika.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra and then Balarāma and Muṣṭika locked themselves hand to hand,
ॐ leg to leg,
ॐ and each began to press against the other with a view to coming out victorious.
ॐ They joined palm to palm,
ॐ calf to calf,
ॐ head to head,
ॐ chest to chest
ॐ and began to strike each other.
ॐ The fighting increased as they pushed each other from one place to another.
ॐ One captured the other and threw him down on the ground,
ॐ and another rushed from the back to the front of another and tried to overcome him with a hold.
ॐ The fighting increased step by step.
ॐ There was picking up,
ॐ dragging
ॐ and pushing,
ॐ and then the legs and hands were locked together.
ॐ All the arts of wrestling were perfectly exhibited by the parties as each tried his best to defeat his opponent.
ॐ But the audience in the wrestling arena was not very much satisfied because the combatants did not appear to be equally matched.
ॐ They considered Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to be mere boys before Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, who were the strongest wrestlers, as solid as stone.
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ॐ Being compassionate and favoring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the many ladies in the audience began to talk as follows:
ॐ "Dear friends, there is injustice here."
ॐ Another said, "Even in front of the King this wrestling is going on between incompatible sides."
ॐ The ladies had lost their sense of enjoyment.
ॐ They could not encourage the fighting between the strong and the weak.

- ॐ “Muṣṭika and Cāṇūra are just like thunderbolts, as strong as great mountains, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are two delicate boys of very tender age.
- ॐ The principle of justice has already left this assembly.
- ॐ Persons who are aware of the civilized principles of justice will not remain to watch this unfair match.
- ॐ Those taking part in watching this wrestling match are not very much enlightened;
- ॐ therefore whether they speak or remain silent, they are being subjected to the reactions of sinful activities.”
- ॐ “But my dear friends,” another lady in the assembly spoke out, “just look at the face of Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ There are drops of perspiration on His face from chasing His enemy, and His face appears like a lotus flower with drops of water.”
- ॐ Another lady said, “Don’t you see how the face of Lord Balarāma has turned especially beautiful?
- ॐ There is a reddish hue on His white face because He is engaged in a strenuous wrestling match with Muṣṭika.”
- ॐ Another lady in the assembly addressed her friend, “Dear friend, just imagine how fortunate is the land of Vṛndāvana, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself is present, always decorated with flower garlands and engaged in tending cows along with His brother, Lord Balarāma.
- ॐ He is always accompanied by His cowherd boyfriends, and He plays His transcendental flute.
- ॐ The residents of Vṛndāvana are fortunate to be able to constantly see the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, which are worshiped by great demigods like Lord Śiva and by the goddess of fortune.
- ॐ We cannot estimate how many pious activities were executed by the damsels of Vrajabhūmi so that they were able to enjoy the Supreme Personality of Godhead by looking upon the unparalleled beauty of His transcendental body.
- ॐ The beauty of the Lord is beyond compare.
- ॐ No one is higher than or equal to Him in beauty of complexion or bodily luster.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are the reservoir of all kinds of opulence—namely wealth, strength, beauty, fame, knowledge and renunciation.
- ॐ The gopīs are so fortunate that they can see and think of Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day, beginning from their milking the cows or husking the paddy or churning the butter in the morning.
- ॐ While engaged in cleaning their houses and washing their floors, they are always absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa.”

ॐ *The gopīs give a perfect example of how one can execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness even while performing various types of material engagements. By constantly*

being absorbed in the thought of Kṛṣṇa, one cannot be affected by the contamination of material activities. The gopīs, therefore, are perfectly in trance, samādhi, the highest perfectional stage of mystic power. In the Bhagavad-gītā, it is confirmed that one who is constantly thinking of Kṛṣṇa is a first-class yogī among all kinds of yogīs.

- ॐ “My dear friends,” one lady told another, “we must accept the activities of the gopīs to be the highest form of piety; otherwise, how could they have achieved the opportunity of seeing Kṛṣṇa both morning and evening—in the morning when He goes to the pasturing ground with His cows and cowherd boyfriends, and in the evening when He returns with them, playing on His flute and smiling very brilliantly?”
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- ॐ When Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of every living being, understood that the ladies in the assembly were anxious for Him, He decided not to continue wrestling but to kill the wrestlers immediately.
- ॐ The parents of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, namely Nanda Mahārāja, Yaśodā, Vasudeva and Devakī, were also very anxious because they did not know the unlimited strength of their children.
- ॐ Lord Balarāma was fighting with the wrestler Muṣṭika in the same way that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was fighting and wrestling with Cāṇūra.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared to be cruel to Cāṇūra, and He immediately struck him thrice with His fist.
- ॐ The great wrestler was jolted, to the astonishment of the audience.
- ॐ Cāṇūra then took his last chance and attacked Kṛṣṇa, just as one hawk swoops upon another.
- ॐ Folding his two hands, he began to strike the chest of Kṛṣṇa, but Lord Kṛṣṇa was not even slightly disturbed, any more than an elephant is when hit by a flower garland.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa quickly caught the two hands of Cāṇūra and began to wheel him around, and simply by this centrifugal action, Cāṇūra lost his life.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa then threw him to the ground.
- ॐ Cāṇūra fell just like the flag of Indra, and all his nicely fashioned ornaments were scattered hither and thither.
- ॐ
- ॐ Muṣṭika also struck Balarāma, and Balarāma returned the stroke with great force.
- ॐ Muṣṭika began to tremble and vomit blood.
- ॐ Distressed, he gave up his vital force and fell down just as a tree falls down in a hurricane.
- ॐ
- ॐ After the two wrestlers were killed, a wrestler named Kūṭa came forward.
- ॐ Lord Balarāma immediately caught him in His left hand and killed him nonchalantly.

ॐ A wrestler of the name Śāla came forward, and Kṛṣṇa immediately cracked his head with a kick.

ॐ A wrestler named Tośāla came forward and was killed in the same way.

ॐ Thus all the great wrestlers were killed by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma,

ॐ and the remaining wrestlers fled from the assembly out of fear for their lives.

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ॐ All the cowherd boyfriends of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma approached Them and congratulated Them with great pleasure.

ॐ While trumpets resounded and drums were beaten, the leg bells on the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma tinkled.

ॐ All the people gathered there began to clap in great ecstasy, and no one could estimate the bounds of their pleasure.

ॐ The brāhmaṇas present began to praise Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma ecstatically.

Kāṁsa's defeat

ॐ Only Kāṁsa was morose;

ॐ he neither clapped nor offered benediction to Kṛṣṇa.

ॐ Kāṁsa resented that the trumpets and drums should be played for Kṛṣṇa's victory,

ॐ and he was very sorry that the wrestlers had been killed and had fled the assembly.

ॐ He therefore immediately ordered the band to stop playing and addressed his men as follows:

ॐ "I order that these two sons of Vasudeva be immediately driven out of Mathurā.

ॐ The cowherd boys who have come with Them should be plundered and all their riches taken away.

ॐ Nanda Mahārāja should immediately be arrested and killed for his cunning behavior, and that rascal Vasudeva should also be killed without delay.

ॐ Also my father, Ugrasena, who has always supported my enemies against my will, should be killed."

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ॐ When Kāṁsa spoke in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa became very angry with him,

ॐ and within a second He jumped onto the high dais of King Kāṁsa.

ॐ Kāṁsa was prepared for Kṛṣṇa's attack, for he knew from the beginning that Kṛṣṇa was to be the supreme cause of his death.

ॐ Kāṁsa immediately unsheathed his sword and prepared to answer the challenge of Kṛṣṇa with sword and shield.

ॐ As Kāṁsa wielded his sword up and down, hither and thither, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme powerful Lord, caught hold of him with great force.

- ॐ The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the shelter of the complete creation and from whose lotus navel the whole creation is manifested, immediately knocked the crown from the head of Kāṁsa and grabbed his long hair in His hand.
- ॐ He then dragged Kāṁsa from his seat to the wrestling dais and threw him down.
- ॐ Then Kṛṣṇa at once straddled his chest and began to strike him over and over again.
- ॐ Simply from the strokes of His fist, Kāṁsa lost his vital force.
- ॐ
- ॐ To assure His parents that Kāṁsa was dead, Lord Kṛṣṇa dragged him just as a lion drags an elephant after killing it.
- ॐ When people saw this, there was a great roaring sound from all sides as some spectators expressed their jubilation and others cried in lamentation.
- ॐ *From the day Kāṁsa had heard he would be killed by the eighth son of Devakī, he was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa with His wheel in hand, and because he was very much afraid of his death, he was thinking of Kṛṣṇa in that form twenty-four hours a day, without stopping—even while eating, while walking and while breathing—and naturally he got the blessing of liberation. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is stated, sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitāḥ: [Bg. 8.6] a person gets his next life according to the thoughts in which he is always absorbed. Kāṁsa was thinking of Kṛṣṇa with His wheel, which means Nārāyaṇa, who holds a wheel, conchshell, lotus flower and club.*
- ॐ *According to the opinion of authorities, Kāṁsa attained sārūpya-mukti after death; that is to say, he attained the same form as Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu). On the Vaikuṅṭha planets all the inhabitants have the same bodily features as Nārāyaṇa. After his death, Kāṁsa attained liberation and was promoted to Vaikuṅṭhaloka. From this instance we can understand that even a person who thinks of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as an enemy gets liberation or a place in a Vaikuṅṭha planet, so what to speak of the pure devotees, who are always absorbed in favorable thoughts of Kṛṣṇa? Even an enemy killed by Kṛṣṇa gets liberation and is placed in the impersonal brahmajyoti. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-good, anyone thinking of Him, either as an enemy or as a friend, gets liberation. But the liberation of the devotee and the liberation of the enemy are not the same. The enemy generally gets the liberation of sāyujya, and sometimes he gets sārūpya liberation.*
- ॐ Kāṁsa had eight brothers, headed by Kaṅka, all of them younger than he, and when they learned that their elder brother had been killed, they combined together and rushed toward Kṛṣṇa in great anger to kill Him.
- ॐ Kāṁsa and his brothers were all Kṛṣṇa's maternal uncles, brothers of Kṛṣṇa's mother, Devakī. When Kṛṣṇa killed Kāṁsa He killed His maternal uncle, which is against the regulations of Vedic injunctions. Although Kṛṣṇa is independent of all Vedic injunctions, He

violates the Vedic injunctions only in inevitable cases. Kāmsa could not be killed by anyone but Kṛṣṇa; therefore Kṛṣṇa was obliged to kill him.

- ॐ But as far as Kāmsa's eight brothers were concerned, Balarāma took charge of killing them. *Balarāma's mother, Rohiṇī, although the wife of Vasudeva, was not the sister of Kāmsa; therefore Balarāma took charge of killing all of Kāmsa's eight brothers.*
- ॐ He immediately took up an available weapon (most probably the elephant's tusk which He carried) and killed the eight brothers one after another, just as a lion kills a flock of deer.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma thus verified the statement that the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in order to give protection to the pious and to kill the impious demons, who are always enemies of the demigods.
- ॐ The demigods from the higher planetary systems showered flowers, congratulating Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.
- ॐ Among the demigods were powerful personalities like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, and all joined together in showing their jubilation over Kāmsa's death.
- ॐ There were beating of drums and showering of flowers from the heavenly planets, and the wives of the demigods danced in ecstasy.
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- ॐ The wives of Kāmsa and his eight brothers were aggrieved at the sudden death of their husbands, and all of them struck their foreheads and shed torrents of tears.
- ॐ Crying loudly and embracing the bodies of their husbands, which lay on the wrestling dais, the wives of Kāmsa and his brothers lamented, addressing the dead bodies:
- ॐ "Our dear husbands, you are so kind and are the protectors of your dependents.
- ॐ Now, after your death, we are also dead, along with your homes and children.
- ॐ We no longer look auspicious.
- ॐ On account of your death, the auspicious functions to take place, such as the sacrifice of the bow, have all been spoiled.
- ॐ Our dear husbands, you treated persons ill who were faultless,
- ॐ and as a result you have been killed.
- ॐ This is inevitable because a person who torments an innocent person must be punished by the laws of nature.
- ॐ We know that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ He is the supreme master and supreme enjoyer of everything; therefore, one who neglects His authority can never be happy, and ultimately, as you have, he meets death."
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- ॐ Since Kṛṣṇa was kind and affectionate to His aunts, He solaced them as far as possible.

- ॐ The ritualistic ceremonies performed after death were then conducted under the personal supervision of Kṛṣṇa because He happened to be the nephew of all the dead princes.
- ॐ After finishing this business, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma immediately released Their father and mother, Vasudeva and Devakī, who had been imprisoned by Kāṁsa.
- ॐ Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma fell at Their parents' feet and offered them prayers.
- ॐ Vasudeva and Devakī had suffered so much trouble from Kāṁsa because Kṛṣṇa was their son.
- ॐ Devakī and Vasudeva were fully conscious of Kṛṣṇa's exalted position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead;
- ॐ therefore, although Kṛṣṇa touched their feet and offered them obeisances and prayers, they did not embrace Him but simply stood up to hear the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ Although Kṛṣṇa was born as their son, Vasudeva and Devakī were always conscious of His position.