

Akrūra visits Hastināpura

ॐ Thus ordered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra visited Hastināpura, said to be the site of what is now New Delhi.

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

ॐ *The part of New Delhi still known as Indraprastha is accepted by people in general as the old capital of the Pāṇḍavas. The very name Hastināpura suggests that there were many hastīs, or elephants; because the Pāṇḍavas kept many elephants in the capital, it was called Hastināpura. Keeping elephants is very expensive; to keep many elephants, therefore, the kingdom must be very rich, and Hastināpura, as Akrūra saw when he reached it, was full of elephants, horses, chariots and other opulences. The kings of Hastināpura were taken to be the ruling kings of the whole world. Their fame was widely spread throughout the entire kingdom, and their administration was conducted under the good counsel of learned brāhmaṇas.*

ॐ After seeing the very opulent capital city, Akrūra met King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

ॐ He also saw grandfather Bhīṣma sitting with him.

ॐ After meeting them, he went to see Vidura

ॐ then Kuntī, Akrūra's cousin.

ॐ One after another, he saw King Bāhlīka and his son Somadatta,

ॐ Droṇācārya,

ॐ Kṛpācārya,

ॐ Karṇa

ॐ Suyodhana. (*Suyodhana is another name of Duryodhana.*)

ॐ Then he saw the son of Droṇācārya, Aśvatthāmā,

ॐ five Pāṇḍava brothers

ॐ and other friends and relatives living in the city.

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ॐ All those who met Akrūra, known also as the son of Gāndinī, were very much pleased to receive him and inquire about the welfare of their respective relatives.

ॐ He was offered a good seat at his receptions, and he in turn inquired all about the welfare and activities of his relatives.

ॐ *Since he was deputed by Lord Kṛṣṇa to visit Hastināpura, it is understood that he was very intelligent in studying a diplomatic situation. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was unlawfully occupying the throne after the death of King Pāṇḍu, despite the presence of Pāṇḍu's sons. Akrūra could understand very well that ill-motivated Dhṛtarāṣṭra was much inclined in favor of his own sons. In fact, Dhṛtarāṣṭra had already usurped the kingdom and was now intriguing to dispose of the five Pāṇḍava brothers. Akrūra knew that all the sons of*

Dhṛtarāṣṭra, headed by Duryodhana, were very crooked politicians. Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not act in accordance with the good instructions given by Bhīṣma and Vidura; instead, he was being conducted by the ill instructions of such persons as Karṇa and Śakuni. Akrūra decided to stay in Hastināpura for a few months to study the whole political situation.

ॐ Gradually Akrūra learned from Kuntī and Vidura that the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were intolerant and envious of the five Pāṇḍava brothers because of their extraordinary learning in military science and their greatly developed bodily strength.

ॐ *The Pāṇḍavas acted as truly chivalrous heroes, exhibited all the good qualities of kṣatriyas and were very responsible princes, always thinking of the welfare of the citizens. Akrūra also learned that the envious sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had tried to kill the Pāṇḍavas by poisoning them.*

ॐ Akrūra happened to be one of the cousins of Kuntī; therefore, after meeting him, she began to inquire about her paternal relatives.

ॐ Thinking of her birthplace and beginning to cry, she asked Akrūra whether her father, mother, brothers, sisters and other friends at home still remembered her.

ॐ She especially inquired about Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, her glorious nephews.

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ॐ She asked, “Does Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is very affectionate to His devotees, remember my sons?”

ॐ Does Balarāma remember us?”

ॐ *Inside herself, Kuntī felt like a she-deer in the midst of tigers, and actually her position was like that. After the death of her husband, King Pāṇḍu, she was supposed to take care of the five Pāṇḍava children, but the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were always planning to kill them.*

ॐ *She was certainly living like a poor innocent animal in the midst of several tigers. Being a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, she always thought of Him and expected that one day Kṛṣṇa would come and save them from their dangerous position. She inquired from Akrūra whether Kṛṣṇa proposed to come to advise the fatherless Pāṇḍavas how to get free of the intrigues of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons. Talking with Akrūra about all these affairs, she felt herself helpless and exclaimed,*

ॐ “My dear Kṛṣṇa, my dear Kṛṣṇa! You are the supreme mystic, the Supersoul of the universe.

ॐ You are the real well-wisher of the whole universe.

ॐ My dear Govinda, at this time You are far away from me, yet I pray to surrender unto Your lotus feet. I am now grief-stricken with my five fatherless sons.

ॐ I can fully understand that but for Your lotus feet there is no shelter or protection.

- ॐ Your lotus feet can deliver all aggrieved souls because You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ One can be safe from the clutches of repeated birth and death by Your mercy only. My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the supreme pure one, the Supersoul and the master of all yogīs.
- ॐ What can I say?
- ॐ I can simply offer my respectful obeisances unto You. Accept me as Your fully surrendered devotee.”
- ॐ *Although Kṛṣṇa was not present before her, Kuntī offered her prayers to Him as if she were in His presence face to face. This is possible for anyone following in the footsteps of Kuntī. Kṛṣṇa does not have to be physically present everywhere. He is actually present everywhere by spiritual potency, and one simply has to surrender unto Him sincerely.*
- ॐ When Kuntī was offering her prayers very feelingly to Kṛṣṇa, she could not check herself and began to cry loudly before Akrūra.
- ॐ Vidura was also present, and both Akrūra and Vidura became very sympathetic to the mother of the Pāṇḍavas and began to solace her by glorifying her five sons, namely Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva.
- ॐ They pacified her, saying that her sons were extraordinarily powerful; she should not be perturbed about them, since they were born of great demigods like Yamarāja, Indra and Vāyu.

Akrūra advises Dhṛtarāṣṭra then returns home

- ॐ Akrūra decided to return home and report on the strained circumstances in which he found Kuntī and her five sons.
- ॐ He first wanted to give good advice to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was so favorably inclined toward his own sons and unfavorably inclined toward the Pāṇḍavas.
- ॐ When King Dhṛtarāṣṭra was sitting among friends and relatives, Akrūra began to address him, calling him Vaicitravīrya.
- ॐ *Vaicitravīrya means “the son of Vicitravīrya.”*
- ॐ Akrūra said, “My dear son of Vicitravīrya, you have unlawfully usurped the throne of the Pāṇḍavas.
- ॐ Anyway, somehow or other you are now on the throne.
- ॐ Therefore I beg to advise you to please rule the kingdom on moral and ethical principles.
- ॐ If you do so and try to please your subjects in that way, your name and fame will be perpetual.”
- ॐ *Akrūra hinted that although Dhṛtarāṣṭra was ill-treating his nephews, the Pāṇḍavas, they happened to be his subjects.*
- ॐ “Even if you treat them not as the owners of the throne but as your subjects, you should impartially think of their welfare as though they were your own sons.

ॐ But if you do not follow this principle and act in just the opposite way, you will be unpopular among your subjects, and in the next life you will have to live in a hellish condition.

ॐ I therefore hope you will treat your sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu equally.”

ॐ *Akrūra hinted that if Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not treat the Pāṇḍavas and his sons as equals, surely there would be a fight between the two camps of cousins. Since the cause of the Pāṇḍavas was just, they would come out victorious, and the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra would be killed. This was a prophecy told by Akṛūra to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.*

ॐ Akṛūra further advised Dhṛtarāṣṭra, “In this material world, no one can remain an eternal companion to another.

ॐ Only by chance do we assemble together in a family, society, community or nation, but at the end, because every one of us has to give up the body, we must be separated.

ॐ Akṛūra continued: “My dear Dhṛtarāṣṭra, I beg to advise you not to be blind to the facts of material existence.

ॐ Material, conditioned life, either in distress or in happiness, is to be accepted as a dream.

ॐ One should try to bring his mind and senses under control and live peacefully for spiritual advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

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ॐ After hearing these moral instructions from Akṛūra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra replied,

ॐ “My dear Akṛūra, you are very charitable in giving me good instructions, but unfortunately I cannot accept them.

ॐ A person destined to die does not utilize the effects of nectar, although it may be administered to him.

ॐ I can understand that your instructions are valuable.

ॐ Unfortunately, they do not stay in my flickering mind, just as the glittering lightning in the sky does not stay fixed in a cloud.

ॐ I can understand only that no one can stop the onward progress of the supreme will.

ॐ I understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, has appeared in the family of the Yadus to decrease the burdensome load on this earth.”

ॐ *Dhṛtarāṣṭra hinted to Akṛūra that he had complete faith in Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At the same time, he was very partial to his family members. In the very near future, Kṛṣṇa would vanquish all the members of his family, and in a helpless condition Dhṛtarāṣṭra would take shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. To show His special favor to a devotee, Kṛṣṇa usually takes away all the objects of his material affection, thus forcing the devotee to be materially helpless, with no alternative but to accept the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. This actually happened to Dhṛtarāṣṭra after the end of the Battle of Kurukṣetra.*

- ॐ *Dhṛtarāṣṭra could realize two opposing factors acting before him. He could understand that Kṛṣṇa was there to remove all the unnecessary burdens of the world. His sons were an unnecessary burden, and so he expected that they would be killed. At the same time, he could not rid himself of his unlawful affection for his sons. Understanding these two contradictory factors, he offered his respectful obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*
- ॐ “The contradictory ways of material existence are very difficult to understand; they can be taken only as the inconceivable execution of the plan of the Supreme, who by His inconceivable energy creates this material world and enters into it and sets into motion the three modes of nature.
- ॐ When everything is created, He enters into each and every living entity and into the smallest atom. No one can understand the incalculable plans of the Supreme Lord.”
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- ॐ After hearing this statement, Akrūra could clearly understand that Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not going to change his policy of discriminating against the Pāṇḍavas in favor of his sons.
- ॐ He at once took leave of his friends in Hastināpura and returned to his home in the kingdom of the Yadus.
- ॐ After returning home, he vividly informed Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma of the actual situation in Hastināpura and the intentions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
- ॐ Akrūra was sent to Hastināpura by Kṛṣṇa to study these, and by the grace of the Lord he was successful.