

Pauṇḍraka's message

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ *The story of King Pauṇḍraka is very interesting because it proves that there have always been many rascals and fools who have considered themselves God. Even in the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, there was such a foolish person. His name was Pauṇḍraka, and he wanted to declare himself God.*
- ॐ While Lord Balarāma was absent in Vṛndāvana, this King Pauṇḍraka, the King of the Karūṣa Province, being foolish and puffed up, sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but King Pauṇḍraka directly challenged Kṛṣṇa through the messenger, who stated that Pauṇḍraka, not Kṛṣṇa, was Vāsudeva.
- ॐ *In the present day there are many foolish followers of such rascals. Similarly, in Pauṇḍraka's day, many foolish men accepted Pauṇḍraka as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because he could not estimate his own position, Pauṇḍraka falsely thought himself to be Lord Vāsudeva. Thus the messenger declared to Kṛṣṇa that King Pauṇḍraka, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had descended to the earth out of his causeless mercy just to deliver all distressed persons.*
- ॐ Surrounded by many other foolish persons, this rascal Pauṇḍraka had actually concluded that he was Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ *This kind of conclusion is certainly childish. When children are playing, they sometimes select a "king" amongst themselves, and the selected child may think that he is actually the king. Similarly, many foolish persons, due to ignorance, select another fool as God, and then the rascal actually considers himself God, as if God could be created by childish play or by the votes of men. Under this false impression, thinking himself the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka sent his messenger to Dvārakā to challenge the position of Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ The messenger reached the royal assembly of Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā and conveyed the message given by his master, Pauṇḍraka. The message contained the following statements.
- ॐ "I am the only Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.
- ॐ No man can compete with me.
- ॐ I have descended as King Pauṇḍraka, taking compassion on the distressed conditioned souls out of my unlimited causeless mercy.
- ॐ You have falsely taken the position of Vāsudeva without authority, but You should not propagate this false idea.
- ॐ You must give up Your position.

- ॐ O descendant of the Yadu dynasty, please give up all the symbols of Vāsudeva, which You have falsely assumed.
- ॐ And after giving up this position, come and surrender unto me.
- ॐ If out of Your gross impudence You do not care for my words, then I challenge You to fight.
- ॐ I am inviting You to a battle in which the decision will be settled.”
- ॐ When all the members of the royal assembly, including King Ugrasena, heard this message sent by Pauṇḍraka, they laughed very loudly for a considerable time.
- ॐ After enjoying the loud laughter of all the members of the assembly, Kṛṣṇa replied to the messenger as follows:
- ॐ “O messenger of Pauṇḍraka, you may carry My message to your master:
- ॐ ‘You are a foolish rascal.
- ॐ I directly call you a rascal, and I refuse to follow your instructions.
- ॐ I shall never give up the symbols of Vāsudeva, especially My disc.
- ॐ I shall use this disc to kill not only you but all your followers also.
- ॐ I shall destroy you and your foolish associates, who merely constitute a society of cheaters and the cheated.
- ॐ O foolish King, you will then have to conceal your face in disgrace, and when your head is severed from your body by My disc, it will be surrounded by meat-eating birds like vultures, hawks and eagles.
- ॐ At that time, instead of becoming My shelter, as you have demanded, you will be subject to the mercy of these lowborn birds.
- ॐ At that time your body will be thrown to the dogs, who will eat it with great pleasure.’ ”

Kṛṣṇa kills Pauṇḍraka and the King of Kāśī

- ॐ The messenger carried the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa to his master, Pauṇḍraka, who patiently heard all these insults.
- ॐ Without waiting any longer, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately started out on His chariot to punish the rascal Pauṇḍraka, the King of Karūṣa.
- ॐ Because at that time he was living with his friend the King of Kāśī, Kṛṣṇa surrounded the whole city of Kāśī.
- ॐ King Pauṇḍraka was a great warrior, and as soon as he heard of Kṛṣṇa’s attack, he came out of the city with two akṣauhiṇī divisions of soldiers.
- ॐ The King of Kāśī also came out, with three akṣauhiṇī divisions.
- ॐ When the two kings came before Lord Kṛṣṇa to oppose Him, Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka face to face for the first time.

- ॐ Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka had decorated himself with the symbols of the conchshell, disc, lotus and club.
- ॐ He carried an imitation Śārṅga bow, and on his chest was a mock insignia of Śrīvatsa.
- ॐ His neck was decorated with a false Kaustubha jewel, and he wore a flower garland in exact imitation of Lord Vāsudeva's.
- ॐ He was dressed in yellow silken garments, and the flag on his chariot carried the symbol of Garuḍa, exactly imitating Kṛṣṇa's.
- ॐ He had a very valuable helmet on his head, and his earrings, like swordfish, glittered brilliantly.
- ॐ On the whole, however, his dress and makeup were clearly imitation.
- ॐ Anyone could understand that he was just like someone onstage playing the part of Vāsudeva in false dress.
- ॐ When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw Pauṇḍraka imitating His posture and dress, He could not check His laughter, and thus He laughed with great satisfaction.
- ॐ The soldiers on the side of King Pauṇḍraka began to shower their weapons upon Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ The weapons, including various kinds of tridents, clubs, poles, lances, swords, daggers and arrows, came flying in waves, and Kṛṣṇa counteracted them.
- ॐ He smashed not only the weapons but also the soldiers and assistants of Pauṇḍraka, just as during the dissolution of this universe the fire of devastation burns everything to ashes.
- ॐ The elephants, chariots, horses and infantry belonging to the opposite party were scattered by the weapons of Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ Indeed, the whole battlefield became strewn with smashed chariots and the bodies of men and animals.
- ॐ There were fallen horses, elephants, men, asses and camels.
- ॐ Although the devastated battlefield appeared like the dancing place of Lord Śiva at the time of the dissolution of the world, the warriors on the side of Kṛṣṇa were very much encouraged by seeing this, and they fought with greater strength.
- ॐ At this time, Lord Kṛṣṇa told Pauṇḍraka,
- ॐ “Pauṇḍraka, you requested Me to give up the symbols of Lord Viṣṇu,
- ॐ specifically My disc.
- ॐ Now I will give it up to you.
- ॐ Be careful!
- ॐ You falsely declare yourself Vāsudeva, imitating Me.
- ॐ Therefore no one is a greater fool than you.” From this statement of Kṛṣṇa's it is clear that any rascal who advertises himself as God is the greatest fool in human society.

- ॐ Kṛṣṇa continued: “Now, Pauṇḍraka, I shall force you to give up this false representation.
ॐ You wanted Me to surrender unto you.
ॐ Now this is your opportunity.
ॐ We shall now fight, and if I am defeated and you are victorious, I shall certainly surrender unto you.”
- ॐ In this way, after chastising Pauṇḍraka very severely, Kṛṣṇa smashed Pauṇḍraka’s chariot to pieces by shooting an arrow.
ॐ Then with the help of His disc He separated Pauṇḍraka’s head from his body, just as Indra shaves off the peaks of mountains by striking them with his thunderbolt.
ॐ Similarly, Kṛṣṇa also killed the King of Kāśī with His arrows.
ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa specifically arranged to throw the head of the King of Kāśī into the city of Kāśī itself so that his relatives and family members could see it.
ॐ Kṛṣṇa did this just as a hurricane carries a lotus petal here and there. Lord Kṛṣṇa killed Pauṇḍraka and his friend Kāśīrāja on the battlefield, and then He returned to His capital city, Dvārakā.

Kṛṣṇa returns to Dvārakā

- ॐ When Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to the city of Dvārakā, all the Siddhas from the heavenly planets were singing His glories.
- ॐ *As far as Pauṇḍraka was concerned, somehow or other he always thought of Lord Vāsudeva by falsely dressing himself in imitation of the Lord. Therefore Pauṇḍraka achieved sārūpya, one of the five kinds of liberation, and was thus promoted to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where the devotees have the same bodily features as Viṣṇu, with four hands holding the four symbols. Factually, his meditation was concentrated on the Viṣṇu form, but because he thought himself Lord Viṣṇu, it was offensive. By his being killed by Kṛṣṇa, however, that offense was mitigated. Thus he was given sārūpya liberation, and he attained the same form as the Lord.*
- ॐ When the head of the King of Kāśī was thrown through the city gate, people gathered and were astonished to see that wonderful thing.
ॐ When they found out that there were earrings on it, they could understand that it was someone’s head.
ॐ They conjectured as to whose head it might be.
ॐ Some thought it was Kṛṣṇa’s head because Kṛṣṇa was the enemy of Kāśīrāja,
ॐ and they calculated that the King of Kāśī might have thrown Kṛṣṇa’s head into the city so that the people might take pleasure in the enemy’s having been killed.
ॐ But they finally detected that the head was not Kṛṣṇa’s but that of Kāśīrāja himself.

ॐ When this was ascertained, the queens of the King of Kāśī immediately approached and began to lament the death of their husband.

ॐ “Our dear lord,” they cried, “upon your death, we have become just like dead bodies.”

Sudakṣiṇa

ॐ The King of Kāśī had a son whose name was Sudakṣiṇa.

ॐ After observing the ritualistic funeral ceremonies, he took a vow that since Kṛṣṇa was the enemy of his father, he would kill Kṛṣṇa and in this way liquidate his debt to his father.

ॐ Therefore, accompanied by a learned priest qualified to help him, he began to worship Mahādeva, Lord Śiva. *(Lord Śiva, who is also known as Viśvanātha, is the lord of the kingdom of Kāśī. The temple of Lord Viśvanātha is still existing in Vārāṇasī, and many thousands of pilgrims still gather daily in that temple.)*

ॐ By the worship of Sudakṣiṇa, Lord Śiva was very much pleased, and he wanted to give a benediction to his devotee.

ॐ Sudakṣiṇa’s purpose was to kill Kṛṣṇa, and therefore he prayed for a specific power by which to kill Him.

ॐ Lord Śiva advised that Sudakṣiṇa, assisted by the brāhmaṇas, execute the ritualistic ceremony for killing one’s enemy.

ॐ *This ceremony is also mentioned in some of the tantras. Lord Śiva informed Sudakṣiṇa that if such a black ritualistic ceremony were performed properly, then the evil spirit named Dakṣiṇāgni would appear and then carry out any order given to him. He would have to be employed, however, to kill someone other than a qualified brāhmaṇa. If all these conditions were met, then Dakṣiṇāgni, accompanied by Lord Śiva’s ghostly companions, would fulfill the desire of Sudakṣiṇa to kill his enemy.*

ॐ When Sudakṣiṇa was encouraged by Lord Śiva in that way, he was sure that he would be able to kill Kṛṣṇa.

ॐ With a determined vow of austerity, he began to execute the black art of chanting mantras, assisted by the priests.

ॐ After this, out of the fire came a great demoniac form, whose hair, beard and mustache were exactly the color of hot copper.

ॐ This form was very big and fierce.

ॐ As the demon arose from the fire, cinders of fire emanated from the sockets of his eyes.

ॐ The giant fiery demon appeared still more fierce due to the movements of his eyebrows.

ॐ He exhibited long, sharp teeth and, sticking out his long tongue, licked his upper and lower lips.

ॐ He was naked,

ॐ and he carried a big trident, blazing like fire.

- ॐ After appearing from the fire of sacrifice, he stood wielding the trident in his hand.
- ॐ Instigated by Sudakṣiṇa, the demon proceeded toward the capital city, Dvārakā, with many hundreds of ghostly companions, and it appeared that he was going to burn all outer space to ashes.
- ॐ The surface of the earth trembled because of his striking steps.
- ॐ When he entered the city of Dvārakā, all the residents panicked, just like animals in a forest fire.
- ॐ At that time, Kṛṣṇa was playing chess in the royal assembly council hall.
- ॐ All the residents of Dvārakā approached and addressed Him,
- ॐ “Dear Lord of the three worlds, a great fiery demon is ready to burn the whole city of Dvārakā!
- ॐ Please save us!”
- ॐ In this way all the inhabitants of Dvārakā appealed to Lord Kṛṣṇa for protection from the fiery demon who had just appeared in Dvārakā to devastate the whole city.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa, who specifically protects His devotees, saw that the whole population of Dvārakā was most perturbed by the presence of the great fiery demon.
- ॐ He immediately smiled and assured them,
- ॐ “Don’t worry. I shall give you all protection.”
- ॐ *The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is all-pervading. He is within everyone’s heart, and He is also without, in the form of the cosmic manifestation.*
- ॐ He could understand that the fiery demon was a creation of Lord Śiva, and in order to vanquish the demon He took His Sudarśana cakra and ordered him to take the necessary steps.
- ॐ The Sudarśana cakra appeared with the effulgence of millions of suns, his heat being as powerful as the fire created at the end of the cosmic manifestation.
- ॐ By his effulgence the Sudarśana cakra illuminated the entire universe, on the surface of the earth as well as in outer space.
- ॐ Then the Sudarśana cakra began to freeze the fiery demon created by Lord Śiva.
- ॐ In this way, the fiery demon was checked by the Sudarśana cakra of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and, being defeated in his attempt to devastate the city of Dvārakā, he turned back.
- ॐ Having failed to set fire to Dvārakā, the fiery demon went back to Vārāṇasī, the kingdom of Kāśīrāja.
- ॐ As a result of his return, all the priests who had helped instruct the black art of mantras, along with their employer, Sudakṣiṇa, were burned to ashes by the glaring effulgence of the fiery demon.

- ॐ According to the methods of black art mantras instructed in the tantras, if the mantra fails to kill the enemy, then, because it must kill someone, it kills the original creator. Sudakṣiṇa was the originator, and the priests assisted him; therefore all of them were burned to ashes. This is the way of the demons: the demons create something to kill God, but by the same weapon the demons themselves are killed.
- ॐ Following just behind the fiery demon, the Sudarśana cakra also entered Vārāṇasī.
- ॐ This city had been very opulent and great for a very long time. *Even now, the city of Vārāṇasī is opulent and famous, and it is one of the important cities of India.*
- ॐ There were then many big palaces, assembly houses, marketplaces and gates, with large and very important monuments by the palaces and gates.
- ॐ Lecturing platforms could be found at each and every crossroads.
- ॐ There were buildings that housed the treasury, elephants, horses, chariots and grain, and places for distribution of food.
- ॐ The city of Vārāṇasī had been filled with all these material opulences for a very long time,
- ॐ but because the King of Kāśī and his son Sudakṣiṇa were against Lord Kṛṣṇa, the viṣṇu-cakra Sudarśana (the disc weapon of Lord Kṛṣṇa) devastated the whole city by burning all these important places.
- ॐ This excursion was more ravaging than modern bombing.
- ॐ The Sudarśana cakra, having thus finished his duty, came back to his Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, at Dvārakā.
- ॐ *This narration of the devastation of Vārāṇasī by Kṛṣṇa's disc weapon, the Sudarśana cakra, is transcendental and auspicious. Anyone who narrates or hears this story with faith and attention will be released from all reaction to sinful activities. This is the assurance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who narrated this story to Parīkṣit Mahārāja.*