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Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

Releasing the kings and princes

- ॐ The kings and princes released by Lord Kṛṣṇa after the death of Jarāsandha were rulers of different parts of the world.
- ॐ Jarāsandha was so powerful in military strength that he had conquered all these princes and kings, numbering 20,800.
- ॐ They were all incarcerated within a mountain cave especially constructed as a fort, and for a long time they were kept in that situation.
- ॐ When they were released by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all looked very unhappy, their garments were niggardly, and their faces were almost dried up for want of proper bodily care.
- ॐ They were very weak due to hunger, and their faces had lost all beauty and luster.
- ॐ The kings' long imprisonment had caused every part of their bodies to become slack and invalid.
- ॐ However, because in that miserable condition they had had the opportunity to think about Lord Kṛṣṇa, they immediately saw Him now as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu.
- ॐ They saw that the color of the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa resembled the hue of a newly arrived cloud in the sky.
- ॐ He appeared before them nicely covered by yellow silken garments, with four hands like Viṣṇu, and carrying the different symbols of the club, the conchshell, the disc and the lotus flower.
- ॐ His chest was marked with a golden line, and the nipples on His chest appeared like the whorls of lotus flowers.
- ॐ His eyes appeared to spread like the petals of a lotus, and His smiling face exhibited the symbol of eternal peace and prosperity.
- ॐ He wore glittering shark-shaped earrings, and His helmet was bedecked with valuable jewels.
- ॐ The Lord's necklace of pearls and the bangles and bracelets nicely situated on His body all shone with a transcendental beauty.
- ॐ The Kaustubha jewel hanging on His chest glittered with great luster, and the Lord wore a beautiful flower garland.
- ॐ After so much distress, when the kings and princes saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, with His beautiful transcendental features, they looked upon Him to their hearts' content, as if drinking nectar through their eyes, licking His body with their tongues, smelling the aroma of His body with their noses, and embracing Him with their arms.
- ॐ Just by dint of their being in front of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all reactions to their sinful activities were washed away.
- ॐ Therefore, without reservation, they surrendered themselves at the lotus feet of the Lord.

- ॐ It is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā that unless one is freed from all sinful reactions, one cannot fully surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord.
- ॐ All the princes who saw Lord Kṛṣṇa forgot all their past tribulations.
- ॐ With folded hands and with great devotion, they offered prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as follows.
- ॐ “Dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, master of all demigods, You can immediately remove all Your devotees’ pangs because Your devotees are fully surrendered unto You.
- ॐ O dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, O eternal Deity of transcendental bliss and knowledge, You are imperishable,
- ॐ and we offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.
- ॐ It is by Your causeless mercy that we have been released from the imprisonment of Jarāsandha,
- ॐ but now we pray that You release us from imprisonment within material existence, Your illusory energy.
- ॐ Please stop our continuous cycle of birth and death.
- ॐ We now have sufficient experience of the miserable material life in which we are fully absorbed, and having tasted its bitterness, we have come to take shelter under Your lotus feet.
- ॐ Therefore please give us Your protection. Dear Lord, O killer of the demon Madhu, we can now clearly see that Jarāsandha was not at fault in the least;
- ॐ it is actually by Your causeless mercy that we were bereft of our kingdoms,
- ॐ for we were very proud of calling ourselves rulers and kings.
- ॐ A ruler or king who becomes too much puffed up with false prestige and power gets no opportunity to understand his real constitutional position and eternal life.
- ॐ Under the influence of Your illusory energy, such a foolish so-called ruler or king becomes falsely proud of his position,
- ॐ just like a foolish person who considers a mirage in the desert a reservoir of water.
- ॐ Foolish persons think that their material possessions will give them protection;
- ॐ engaged in sense gratification, they falsely accept this material world as a place of eternal enjoyment.
- ॐ O Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, we must admit that before this we were puffed up with our material opulences.
- ॐ It was as if we were intoxicated. Because we were all envious and wanted to conquer one another,
- ॐ we all engaged in fighting for supremacy, even at the cost of sacrificing the lives of many citizens.”

ॐ *This is the disease of political power. As soon as a king becomes rich in material opulences, he wants to dominate other nations by military aggression. Similarly, mercantile men want to monopolize a certain type of business and control other mercantile groups. Impelled by false prestige and infatuated by material opulences, human society, instead of striving for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, creates havoc and disrupts peaceful living. Thus men forget the real purpose of life: to attain the favor of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

ॐ The kings continued: “O Lord, we were simply engaged in the abominable task of killing citizens and alluring them to be unnecessarily killed, just to satisfy our political whims.

ॐ We did not consider that Your Lordship is always present before us in the form of cruel death.

ॐ We were so fooled that we became the cause of death for others, forgetting our own impending death.

ॐ But, dear Lord, the force of the time element, which is Your representative, is certainly insurmountable.

ॐ The time element is so strong that no one can escape its influence; therefore we have received the reactions of our atrocious activities, and we are now bereft of all opulences and stand before You like street beggars.

ॐ We consider our position Your causeless, unalloyed mercy upon us because now we can understand that we were falsely proud and that our material opulences could be withdrawn from us within a second by Your will.

ॐ By Your causeless mercy only, we are now able to think of Your lotus feet. This is our greatest gain.

ॐ Dear Lord, everyone knows that the body is a breeding ground of diseases.

ॐ Now we are aged, and instead of being proud of our bodily strength, we are getting weaker day by day.

ॐ We are no longer interested in sense gratification or the false happiness derived through the material body.

ॐ By Your grace, we have now come to the conclusion that hankering after such material happiness is just like searching for water in a desert mirage.

ॐ We are no longer interested in the results of our pious activities, such as performing great sacrifices to be elevated to the heavenly planets.

ॐ We now understand that such elevation to a higher material standard may sound very relishable,

ॐ but actually there cannot be any happiness within this material world.

ॐ We pray for Your Lordship to favor us by instructing us how to engage in the transcendental loving service of Your lotus feet so that we may never forget our eternal relationship with Your Lordship.

- ॐ We do not want liberation from the entanglement of material existence.
- ॐ By Your will we may take birth in any species of life; it does not matter.
- ॐ We simply pray that we never forget Your lotus feet under any circumstances.
- ॐ Dear Lord, we now surrender unto Your lotus feet by offering our respectful obeisances unto You because You are the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.
- ॐ You are the Supersoul in everyone’s heart,
- ॐ and You are Lord Hari, who can take away all miserable conditions of material existence.
- ॐ Dear Lord, Your name is Govinda, the reservoir of all pleasure, because one who is engaged in satisfying Your senses satisfies his own senses automatically.
- ॐ Dear Lord, You are ever famous, for You can put an end to all the miseries of Your devotees.
- ॐ Please, therefore, accept us as Your surrendered servants.”
- ॐ After hearing the prayers of the kings released from the prison of Jarāsandha, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is always the protector of surrendered souls and the ocean of mercy for the devotees, replied to them as follows in His sweet, transcendental voice, which was grave and full of meaning.
- ॐ “My dear kings,” He said,
- ॐ “I bestow upon you My blessings.
- ॐ From this day forth you will be attached to My devotional service without fail.
- ॐ I give you this benediction, as you have desired.
- ॐ You may know from Me that I am always sitting within your hearts as the Supersoul,
- ॐ and because you have now turned your faces toward Me, I, as master of everyone, shall always give you good counsel so that you may never forget Me and so that gradually you will come back home, back to Godhead.
- ॐ My dear kings, your decision to give up all conceptions of material enjoyment and turn instead toward My devotional service is factually the symptom of your good fortune.
- ॐ Henceforward you will always be blessed with blissful life.
- ॐ I confirm that all you have spoken about Me in your prayers is factual.
- ॐ It is a fact that the materially opulent position of one who is not fully Kṛṣṇa conscious is the cause of his downfall and his becoming a victim of the illusory energy.
- ॐ In the past there were many rebellious kings, such as Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Vena, Rāvaṇa and Narakāśura.
- ॐ Some of them were demigods and some of them demons, but because of their false perception of their positions, they fell from their exalted posts, and thus they no longer

remained kings of their respective kingdoms and were lost in the violence of abominable conditioned life.

- ॐ “Every one of you must understand that anything material has its starting point, growth, maintenance, expansion, deterioration and, finally, disappearance.
- ॐ All material bodies are subject to these six conditions, and any relative acquisitions accumulated by this body are definitely subject to final destruction.
- ॐ Therefore, no one should be attached to perishable things.
- ॐ As long as one is within this material body, he should be very cautious in worldly dealings.
- ॐ The most perfect way of life in this material world is simply to be devoted to My transcendental loving service and to execute honestly the prescribed duties of one’s particular position.
- ॐ As far as you are concerned, you all belong to kṣatriya families.
- ॐ Therefore, you should live honestly, according to the prescribed duties befitting the royal order, and make your citizens happy in all respects.
- ॐ Keep to the standard of kṣatriya life. Do not beget children out of sense gratification, but simply take charge of the welfare of the people in general.
- ॐ Everyone takes birth in this material world in continuation of his previous life, and thus he is subject to the stringent laws of nature, such as birth and death, distress and happiness, profit and loss.
- ॐ One should not be disturbed by duality but should always be fixed in My devotional service and thus remain balanced in mind and satisfied in all circumstances, considering all things to be given by Me.
- ॐ Thus one can live a very happy and peaceful life, even within this material condition.
- ॐ In other words, one should actually be callous to the material body and its by-products and should be unaffected by them.
- ॐ One should remain fully satisfied in the interests of the spirit soul and engage in the service of the Supersoul.
- ॐ One should engage his mind only in thinking of Me, one should simply become My devotee, one should simply Worship Me, and one should offer his respectful obeisances unto Me alone.
- ॐ In this way, one can cross over this ocean of nescience very easily and at the end come back to Me.
- ॐ In conclusion, your lives should constantly be engaged in My service.”
- ॐ After delivering His instructions to the kings and princes, Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately arranged for their comfort and asked many servants and maidservants to take care of them.

- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa requested Sahadeva, the son of King Jarāsandha, to supply all necessities to the kings and show them all respect and honor.
- ॐ In pursuance of the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Sahadeva offered them all honor and presented them with ornaments, garments, garlands and other paraphernalia.
- ॐ After taking their baths and dressing very nicely, the kings appeared happy and gentle.
- ॐ Then they were supplied nice food.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa supplied everything for their comfort, as befitting their royal positions.
- ॐ Since the kings were so mercifully treated by Lord Kṛṣṇa, they felt great happiness, and their bright faces appeared just like the stars in the sky after the end of the rainy season.
- ॐ All nicely dressed and ornamented, their earrings glittering, they were then seated on chariots bedecked with gold and jewels and drawn by decorated horses.
- ॐ After seeing that each was taken care of, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in a sweet voice, asked them to return to their respective kingdoms.
- ॐ By His liberal behavior, unparalleled in the history of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa released all the kings who had been in the clutches of Jarāsandha, and the kings, being fully satisfied, began to chant His holy name, think of His holy form, and glorify His transcendental pastimes as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- ॐ Thus engaged, they returned to their respective kingdoms.
- ॐ The citizens of their kingdoms were greatly pleased to see them return, and when they heard of the kind dealings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they were all very happy.
- ॐ The kings began to manage the affairs of their kingdoms in accordance with the instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and all those kings and their subjects passed their days very happily.
- ॐ This is a vivid example of a Kṛṣṇa conscious society.
- ॐ If the people of the world, taking into account their respective material qualities, divide the whole society into four orders for material progress and four orders for spiritual progress, centering these orders on Kṛṣṇa and following the instructions of Kṛṣṇa as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, the entire human society will undoubtedly be happy.
- ॐ This is the lesson we have to take from this incident.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Returns to the City of Hastināpura

- ॐ After thus causing the annihilation of Jarāsandha by Bhīmasena and after being properly honored by Sahadeva, the son of Jarāsandha, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Bhīmasena and Arjuna, returned to the city of Hastināpura.
- ॐ When they reached the precincts of Hastināpura, they blew their respective conchshells, and by hearing the sound vibrations and understanding who was arriving, everyone immediately became cheerful.
- ॐ But the enemies of Kṛṣṇa, upon hearing the conchshells, were very sorry.

- ॐ The citizens of Indraprastha felt their hearts become joyful simply by hearing the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's conchshell because they could understand that Jarāsandha had been killed.
- ॐ Now the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice by King Yudhiṣṭhira was almost certain.
- ॐ Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, arrived before King Yudhiṣṭhira and offered their respects to the King.
- ॐ King Yudhiṣṭhira attentively heard the narration of the killing of Jarāsandha and the setting free of the kings.
- ॐ He also heard of the tactics adopted by Kṛṣṇa to kill Jarāsandha.
- ॐ The King was naturally affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa,
- ॐ but after hearing the story he became even more bound to Him in love;
- ॐ tears of ecstasy glided from his eyes, and he was so stunned that he was almost unable to speak.