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Deliverance of Aghasura

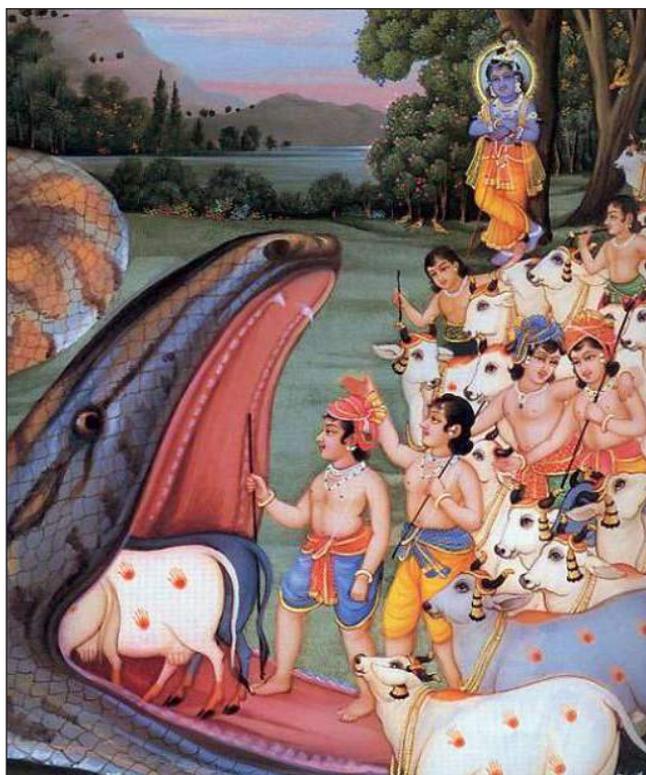
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DELIVERANCE OF AGHASURA

Sriḷa Sukadeva Goswami

One day Krishna decided to take His breakfast as a picnic in the forest. Having risen early in the morning, He blew His buffalo horn bugle which woke all the cowherd boys and calves with its beautiful sound. At that time, hundreds and thousands of cowherd boys came out of their homes in Vrajabhumi and joined Krishna. Each of them brought with them their own group of calves which were herded in front of the procession of cowherd boys. The cowherd boys looked very beautiful carrying lunch bags, bugles, flutes, and sticks for controlling the calves. Along with the cowherd boys and their own groups of calves, Krishna came out with an unlimited number of calves assembled. Thus Krishna and the boys, herding before them their respective groups of calves, proceeded from Vrajabhumi to the forest. Upon reaching, all the boys began to sport in the forest in a greatly playful spirit. Although all these boys were already decorated by their mothers with ornaments of *kāca*, *guñjā*, pearls and gold, as when they went into the forest they further decorated themselves with fruits, green leaves, bunches of flowers, peacock feathers and soft minerals. The cowherd boys were habituated to steal one another's lunch bags. When a boy came to understand that his bag had been taken, the other boys would throw it further away, to a more distant place, and those standing there would throw it further still. When the proprietor of the bag became disappointed and cried,

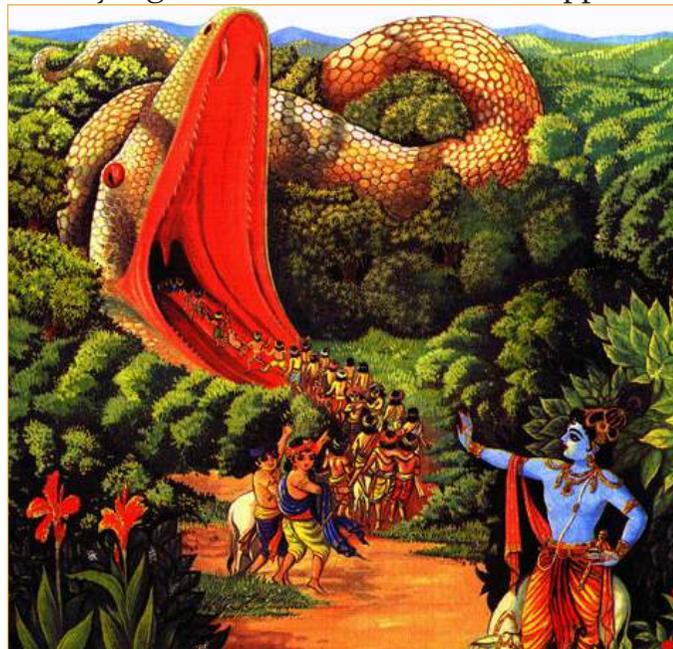
the other boys would laugh, and then the bag would be returned. Sometimes Krishna would go to a somewhat distant place to see the beauty of the forest. Then all the other boys would run to accompany Him, each one saying, "I shall be the first to run and touch Krishna! I shall touch Krishna first!" In this way they enjoyed themselves by repeatedly touching Krishna. All the boys would do different things. Some boys blew their flutes, and others blew bugles made of horn. Some imitated the buzzing of the bumblebees, and others imitated the calls of the cuckoo. Some boys imitated flying birds by running after the birds shadows on the ground, some imitated the beautiful movements and attractive postures of the swans, some sat down with the ducks, sitting silently, and others imitated the dancing of the peacocks. Some boys attracted young monkeys in the trees, some jumped into the trees, imitating the monkeys, some made faces as the monkeys were accustomed to do, and others jumped from one branch to another. Some boys went to the waterfalls and crossed over the river, jumping with the frogs, and when they saw their own reflections on the water they would laugh. They would also condemn the sounds of their own echoes. In this way, all the cowherd boys used to play with Krishna, who is the source of the Brahman effulgence for *jñānīs* desiring to merge into that effulgence, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead for devotees who have accepted eternal subservience, and who for unenlightened persons is but another ordinary child. The cowherd boys, having accumulated the results of pious activities for many lives, were

able to associate in this way with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How can one explain their great fortune? *Yogīs* may undergo severe austerities and penances for many births by practicing *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, none of which are easily performed. Yet in due course of time, when these *yogīs* attain the perfection of controlling the mind, they will still be unable to taste even a particle of dust from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What then can we say about the great fortune of the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, Vrindavana, with whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead personally lived and who regularly saw the Lord face to face?

Then there appeared in Vrindavana a great demon named Aghasura, whose death was awaited even by the demigods. Although the demigods drank nectar every day, they still feared this great demon and anxiously awaited his demise. This demon could not tolerate the transcendental pleasure the cowherd boys enjoyed in the forest. Aghasura, who had been sent by Kamsa, was the younger brother of Putana and Bakasura. Therefore, when he came and saw Krishna at the head of all the cowherd boys, he thought, "This Krishna has killed both my sister Putana and brother, Bakasura. Therefore, when he came and saw Krishna at the head of all the cowherd boys, he thought, "This Krishna has killed both my sister Putana and brother, Bakasura. Therefore, in order to avenge both of them, I shall kill this Krishna, along with His associates, the other cowherd boys." Aghasura further thought, "If somehow or other I can make Krishna and His friends serve as the last offering of sesame and water for the departed souls of my brother and sister, then the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, for whom these boys are the life and soul, will automatically die. If there is no life, there is no need for the body; consequently, when their sons are dead, naturally all the inhabitants of Vraja will also die." After concluding thus, the crooked minded Aghasura assumed the form of a huge python, as thick as a big mountain and eight miles long. Having assumed this wonderful python's body, he spread his mouth to resemble a big cave in the mountains and lay down on the road, expecting to swallow Krishna and His associates the cowherd boys. His lower lip rested on the earth, and his upper lip touched the clouds in the sky. The borders of his mouth resembled the sides of a big cave in a mountain, and the middle of his mouth was as dark as night. His tongue looked like a broad highway, his breath a warm wind, and his eyes blazed like fire.

Upon seeing this demon's wonderful form, which resembled a great python, the boys thought that it must be a beautiful scenic spot of their Vrindavana. Thereafter, they imagined it to be similar to the mouth of a great python. Thus the boys were unafraid and thought that it was a statue made in the shape of a great python for the enjoyment of their pastimes. The boys said: "Dear friends, is this creature dead? Or is it actually a living python with its mouth spread wide just to swallow us all? I cannot understand it." Thereafter they decided: "Dear friends, this is certainly an animal sitting here to swallow us all. Its upper lip resembles a cloud reddened by the sunlight, and its lower lip resembles the reddish shadows of such a cloud.

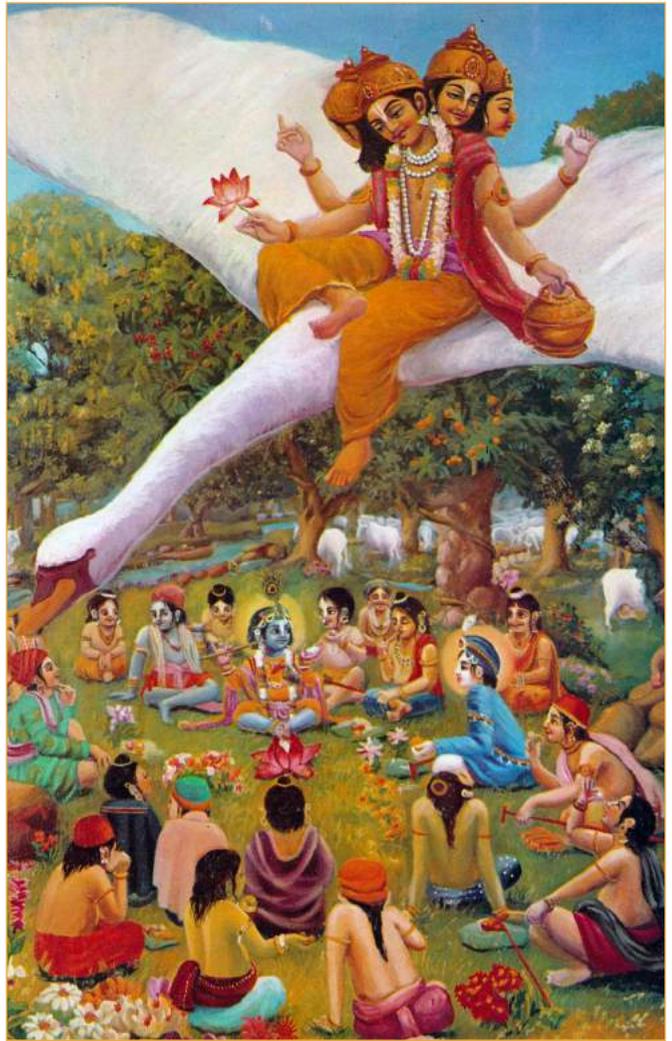
The two depressions resembling mountain caves on both sides are the corners of its mouth, and the high mountain peaks are its teeth. In length and breadth, the animal's tongue resembles a broad highway, and the inside of its mouth is very, very dark, like a cave in a mountain. The hot fiery wind is the breath coming out of his mouth, which is giving off the bad smell of burning flesh because of all the dead bodies he has eaten." Then the boys said, "Has this living creature come to swallow us? If he does so, he will immediately be killed like Bakasura, without delay." Thus they looked at the beautiful face of Krishna, the enemy of Bakasura, and, laughing loudly and clapping their hands, entered the mouth of the python. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, who is situated as *antaryāmī*, the Supersoul, in the core of everyone's heart, heard the boys talking among themselves about the artificial python. Unknown to them, it was actually Aghasura, a demon who had appeared





as a python. Krishna, knowing this, wanted to forbid His associates to enter the demon's mouth. While Krishna was considering how to stop them, all the cowherd boys entered the mouth of the demon. The demon, however, did not swallow them, for he was thinking of his own relatives who had been killed by Krishna and was just waiting for Krishna to enter his mouth. Krishna saw that all the cowherd boys, who did not know anyone but Him as their Lord, had now gone out of His protection and were helpless, having entered like straws into the fire of the abdomen of Aghasura, who was death personified. It was intolerable for Krishna to be separated from His friends the cowherd boys. Seeing that all this had been arranged by His internal potency, Krishna was momentarily struck with wonder and deliberated on what should be done. How could He both the kill this demon and save His devotees simultaneously? Krishna, being unlimitedly potent, decided to wait to discover an intelligent means to achieve these two ends. Then He entered the mouth of Aghasura. When Krishna entered the mouth of Aghasura, the demigods hidden behind the clouds exclaimed, "Alas! Alas!" Conversely the friends of Aghasura, like Kamsa and other demons, were jubilant.

When the invincible Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, heard the demigods crying "Alas! Alas!" from behind the clouds, He immediately enlarged Himself within the demon's throat, just to free Himself and save the cowherd boys, His own associates, from the demon who wished to crush them. Then, because Krishna had increased the size of His body, the demon extended his own body to a very large size. Nonetheless, his breathing choked, he suffocated, his eyes rolled and forcibly popped out. The demon's life air, however, could not leave through any outlet, and therefore it finally burst out through a hole in the top of his head. When the demon's life air had passed away through that hole in the top of his head, Krishna glanced over the dead calves and cowherd boys and thus revived them. Then He, Mukunda, who can give one liberation, came out from the demon's mouth with His friends and their calves. From the body of the gigantic python, a glaring effulgence emerged, illuminating all directions, and stayed individually in the sky until Krishna Himself emerged from the corpse's mouth. Then, as all the demigods looked on, this effulgence entered into Krishna's body. Everyone was jubilant; the demigods began to shower flowers from *nandana-kānana*, the celestial girls



began to dance, and the Gandharvas, who are famous for singing, offered songs of praise. The drummers began to beat their kettledrums, and the *brāhmaṇas* offered Vedic hymns. In this way, both in the heavens and on earth, everyone began glorifying the Lord according to their respective method. Lord Brahma heard the wonderful ceremony going on near his planet, accompanied by music and songs and sounds of "Jaya! Jaya!" and immediately came down to witness the function. Upon seeing so much glorification of Lord Krishna, he was completely astonished. Later, when the python-shaped body of Aghasura dried up into merely a big skin, it became a wonderful place for the inhabitants of Vrindavana to visit, and it remained so for a long, long time. This incident of Krishna's saving Himself and His associates from death and of giving deliverance to Aghasura, who had assumed the form of a python, took place when Krishna was five years old. It was disclosed in Vrajabhumi after one year, as if it had taken place on that very day.

Krishna is the cause of all causes. The causes and effects of the material world, both higher



and lower, are all created by the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, the original controller. When Krishna appeared as the son of Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda, He did so by His causeless mercy. Consequently, for Him to exhibit His unlimited opulence was not at all wonderful. Indeed, He showed such great mercy that even Aghasura, the most sinful miscreant, was elevated to being one of His associates and achieving *sārūpya-mukti*, which is actually impossible for materially contaminated persons to attain. If even only once or even by force one brings the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into one's mind, one can attain the supreme salvation by the mercy of Krishna, as did Aghasura. What then is to be said of those whose hearts the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters when He appears as an incarnation, or those who always think of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the source of transcendental bliss for all living entities and by whom all illusion is completely removed?

Suta Goswami said: The childhood pastimes of Sri Krishna are very wonderful. After hearing about those pastimes of Krishna, who had saved him in the womb of his mother, Maharaja Pariksit became steady in his mind and again inquired from Sukadeva Goswami to hear about those auspicious activities.

Maharaja Pariksit inquired from Sukadeva Goswami: O great sage, how could things done in the past have been described as being done at the present? Lord Sri Krishna performed this pastime of killing Aghasura during His *kaumāra* age. How then, during His *pauganda* age, could the boys have described this incident as having happened recently? O greatest yogī, my spiritual master, kindly describe why this happened. I am very much curious to know about it. I think that it was nothing but another illusion due to Krishna.

O my lord, my spiritual master, although we are the lowest of *kṣatriyas*, we are glorified and benefited because we have the opportunity of always hearing from you the nectar of the pious activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Suta Goswami said: O Saunaka, greatest of saints and devotees, when Maharaja Pariksit inquired from Sukadeva Goswami in this way, Sukadeva Goswami, immediately remembered subject matters about Krishna within the core of his heart, externally lost contact with the actions of his senses. Thereafter, with great difficulty, he revived his external sensory perception and began to speak to Maharaja Pariksit about *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (BhāgavataPurāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter.12: The Killing of the Demon Aghāsura » Verses 1-44.

HOW CAN KRISHNA'S PASTIMES BE INTERRUPTED BY A DEMON? Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

Although the various activities being enjoyed by the cowherd boys could not be stopped, unless they stopped the transcendental pleasure they could not eat their lunch. Therefore at lunchtime Aghasura appeared by the arrangement of Yogamaya, so that for the time being they would stop their activities and take lunch. Variegated activities are the mother of enjoyment. The cowherd boys would continuously play, then stop, and then again enjoy in a different way. Therefore every day a demon would come and interrupt their sporting pastimes. The demon would be killed, and then the boys would engage again in their transcendental playing pastimes.

— *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Sri VishvanathaChakravarti Thakur » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter.12: The Killing of the Demon Aghāsura » Verses:13

WHY WAS AGHASURA PROMOTED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANETS?

His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Apparently the serpent named Aghasura, because of having received association with Krishna, attained *mukti* by entering Krishna's body. Entering the body of Krishna is called *sāyujya-mukti*. However, Aghasura, like Dantavakra and others, received *sārūpya-mukti*. This has been broadly described by Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura with references from the *Laghu-tosaṇī* of Sri Jiva Goswami. Promoted to the Vaikuntha planets to live with the same four-armed bodily features as Lord Vishnu, Aghasura attained *sārūpya-mukti*. This is explained further in the following section.

The effulgence came out from the python's body and it became purified, attaining spiritual *śuddha-sattva*, freedom from material contamination, because Krishna had stayed within the serpent's body, even after the serpent's death. One may doubt that how such a demon with horrendous activities could attain the liberation of *sārūpya* or *sāyujya*, and one may be astonished about this. But Krishna is so kind that in order to drive away such doubts, He made the effulgence, the individual life of the python wait for some time in its individuality, in the presence of all the demigods.

Krishna is the full effulgence, and every living being is part and parcel of that effulgence. As proved here, the effulgence in every living being



Which symbols of *anartha* is the killing of Aghasura?

Killing of the demon Aghasura symbolizes removing the sinful activity of violence towards living entities, and torturing others due to hatred.

— Chaitanya Shikṣamṛta (6/6)

is individual. For some time, the effulgence remained outside the demon's body, individually, and did not mix with the whole effulgence, the *brahma-jyoti*. The Brahman effulgence is not visible to material eyes, but to prove that every living being is individual, Krishna had this individual effulgence stay outside the demon's body for some time, for everyone to see. Then Krishna proved that anyone killed by Him attains liberation, whether *sāyujya*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* or any other.

However, the liberation of those who are on the transcendental platform of love and affection is *vimukti*, special liberation. Thus the serpent first entered the body of Krishna personally and mixed with the brahman effulgence. This merging is called *sāyujya-mukti*. But from later verses we find that Aghasura attained *sārūpya-mukti*.

*naitad vicitraṁ manujārbha-māyinaḥ
parāvarānām paramasya vedhasaḥ
agho 'pi yat-sparśana-dhauta-pātakāḥ
prāpātma-sāmyaṁ tv asatām sudurlabham*

Krishna is the cause of all causes. The causes and effects of the material world, both higher and lower, are all created by the Supreme Lord, the original controller. When Krishna appeared as the son of Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda, He did so by His causeless mercy. Consequently, for Him to exhibit His unlimited opulence on other occasions was not at all wonderful. Indeed, He showed such great mercy that even Aghasura, the most sinful miscreant, was elevated to being one of His associates and achieving *sārūpya-mukti*, which is actually impossible for materially contaminated persons to attain.

This verse explains that Aghasura attained a body exactly like that of Lord Vishnu, and the subsequent verse also clearly states that he attained a completely spiritual body like that of Narayana.

*sakṛd yad-aṅga-pratimāntar-āhitā
manomayī bhāgavatīm dadau gatim*

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

*sa eva nityātma-sukhānubhūty-abhi-
vyudasta-māyo 'ntar-gato hi kiṁ punaḥ*

If, one brings the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into one's mind, only one time, or even by force one can, by the mercy of Krishna, attain the supreme salvation, as did Aghasura. What then is to be said of those whose hearts the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters when He appears as an incarnation? Or those who always think of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the source of transcendental bliss for all living entities and by whom all illusion is completely removed, What mercy will they receive?

Therefore in two or three places the *Bhāgavatam* has confirmed that Aghasura attained *sārūpya-mukti*. One may then argue, how is it that he mixed with the Brahman effulgence? The answer is that as Jaya and Vijaya, after three births, again attained *sārūpya-mukti* and association with the Lord, Aghasura received a similar liberation.

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (BhāgavataPurāṇa) » Canto 10: The SummumBonum
» Chapter.12: The Killing of the Demon Aghāsura.

FAITH IN KRISHNA AS PROTECTOR
Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura

*ātma-samarpane gelā abhimān
nāhi korobuñ nija rakhā-vidhān*

Surrendering my soul unto You has lifted from me the burden of false pride. No longer will I try to provide for my own safety.

*tuwā dhana jāni' tuhuñ rākhobi, nāth!
pālya godhana jñāna kori' tuwā sāth*

I know that You will give protection to Your treasured possessions, O Lord. I now understand the mentality of Your treasured cows safely maintained by Your side.

*carāobi mādhava! jāmuna-tīre
bamśi bājāoto dākobi dhīre*

When You lead Your herds to pasture, O Madhava, on the banks of the Yamuna river, You will call to them by softly playing Your flute.

*agha-baka mārato rakhā-vidhān
korobi sadā tuhuñ gokula-kān!*

By slaying great demons such as Aghasura and



Bakasura You will always provide full protection,
O Kana of the cowherd settlement!

*rakhā korobi tuhuñ niścoy jāni
pāna korobuñ hāma jāmuna-pāni*

Fearless and confident of Your protection, I will
drink the water of the Yamuna.

*kāliya-dokha korobi vināśā
śodhobi nadī-jala, bāḍāobi āśā*

The Kaliya serpent's venom poisoned the
Yamuna's waters, yet that poison will be
vanquished. You will purify the Yamuna, and by
such heroic deeds enhance our faith.

*piyato dāvānala rākhobi mo'y
'gopāla', 'govinda' nāma tava hoy*

You will surely protect me by swallowing the
forest fire. Thus You are called Gopala (protector
of the cows) and Govinda (pleaser of the cows).

*sura-pati-durmati-nāśa vicāri'
rākhobi varṣane, giri-vara-dhāri!*

In order to curb the malice of Indra, king of the
demigods, You will protect me from his torrents
of rain, O lifter of the mighty Govardhana Hill!

*catur-ānana korabo jab cori
rakhā korobi mujhe, gokula-hari!*

When the four-headed Brahma abducts me along
with Your cowherd boyfriends and calves, then
also You will surely protect me, O Gokula Hari!

*bhaktivinoda-tuwā gokula-dhan
rākhobi keśava! korato jatan*

Bhaktivinoda is now the property of Gokula,
Your holy abode. O Keshava! Kindly protect him
with gentle loving care.

— Śaraṅāgati: "Surrendered to the Lord's Shelter" Fourth Principle of
Surrender: 'Avaśya Rakhibe Kṛṇṇa'-Viśvāsa, Pālana, translation by Dasāratha-
sutadāsa

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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