



Śrī Saphalā Ekādaśī

Issue no:102

1st January 2019

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VRTRASURAS GLORIOUS DEATH

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Sukadeva Goswami said: Due to his desire to give up his body, Vṛtrasura considered death in the battle preferable to victory over his enemy. O King Parikṣit, just as Kaitabha had forcefully attacked the Supreme Personality of Godhead when the universe was inundated, with great force Vṛtrasura attacked Lord Indra, the King of heaven. Vṛtrasura, the prominent hero of the demons, whirled his trident, which had points like the flames of the blazing fire at the end of the millennium. Roaring and exclaiming loudly, “O sinful one, thus shall I kill you!”, he hurled that weapon at Indra with formidable power

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due to his blazing rage, As it flew in the sky, Vṛtrasura’s trident resembled a brilliant meteor. Although the blazing weapon was difficult to even look upon, King Indra, was undaunted and , cut it to pieces with his thunderbolt. Simultaneously, he cut off one of Vṛtrasura’s arms, which was as thick as the body of Vasuki, the King of the serpents. Although one of his arms was severed from his body, Vṛtrasura angrily approached King Indra and struck him on the jaw with an iron mace. He also struck the elephant that carried Indra. As a result of this attack Indra dropped the thunderbolt from his hand.

The denizens of various planets, like the demigods, demons, Caranas and Siddhas, praised Vṛtrasura’s deed, but

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when they observed that Indra was in great danger, they lamented, “Alas! Alas!” Having dropped the thunderbolt from his hand in the presence of his enemy, Indra was practically defeated and felt greatly ashamed. He did not dare recover his weapon. Vrtrasura, however, encouraged him, saying, “Take up your thunderbolt and kill your enemy. This is not the time to lament your fate.”

Vrtrasura continued: O Indra, no one but the original enjoyer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan is guaranteed of being always victorious. He alone is the cause of creation, maintenance and annihilation, and He knows everything. Being dependent and being obliged to accept material bodies, His belligerent subordinates- we ordinary living entities- are sometimes victorious and sometimes defeated. All living beings in all the planets of this universe, including the presiding deities of the planets themselves, are fully under the control of the Lord. They act like birds caught in a net, who cannot move independently. Our sensory prowess, mental power, bodily strength, living force, immortality and mortality are all subject to the superintendence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Not knowing this, foolish people think their dull material body to be the cause of their activities.

O King Indra, as a wooden doll that looks like a woman or as an animal made of grass and leaves cannot move or dance independently, but depend fully on the person who handles it, all of us dance according to the desire of the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead. No one is independent. The three *puruṣas* Karanodaksayi-Visnu, Garbhodakasayi Visnu and Ksirodakasayi-Visnu the material nature, the total material energy, the false ego, the five material elements, the material senses, the mind, the intelligence and consciousness cannot create the material manifestation without the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A foolish, senseless person cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although

always dependent, he falsely thinks himself the Supreme. If one thinks, “According to one’s previous fruitive actions, one’s material body is created by the father and mother, and the same body is annihilated by another agent, as another animal is devoured by a tiger,” this is not a correct understanding. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself creates and devours the living beings through other living beings. Just as a person not inclined to die must nonetheless give up his longevity, opulence, fame and everything else at the time of death, so, at the appointed time of victory, one can gain all these when the Supreme Lord awards them by His mercy. Since everything is dependent on the supreme will of the Personality of Godhead, one should be equipoised in dualities like fame and infamy, victory and defeat, life and death. When experiencing the effects of these dualities represented as happiness and distress, one should maintain oneself in equilibrium, without anxiety.

One who knows that the three qualitative modes of goodness, passion and ignorance are not qualities of the soul but rather the qualities of material nature, and who knows that the pure soul is simply an observer of the actions and reactions of these qualities, should be understood to be a liberated person. He is not bound by these material qualities. O my enemy, just look at me. I have already been defeated, for my weapon and arm have been cut to pieces. You have already overwhelmed me, but nonetheless, with a desire to defeat and kill you, I am still trying my best to fight. I am not at all morose, even under such adverse conditions. Therefore you should give up your moroseness and continue fighting.

O my enemy, consider this battle a gambling match in which our lives are the stakes, the arrows are the dice, and the animals acting as carriers are the game board. No one can understand who will be defeated and who will be victorious. It all



depends on all-powerful providence.

Sukadeva Goswami said: Hearing the straightforward, instructive words of Vrtrasura, King Indra praised him and again took up the thunderbolt. Without bewilderment or duplicity, he then smiled and spoke to Vrtrasura as follows.

Indra said: O great demon, I can understand by your discrimination and endurance in devotional service, in spite your being in a dangerous position, that you are certainly a perfect devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul and friend of everyone. You have surmounted the powerful illusory energy of Lord Visnu, and because of achieving this liberation, you have given up the demoniac mentality and have attained the position of an exalted devotee. O Vrtrasura, demons are generally conducted by the mode of passion. Therefore, it is simply wondrous that although you are a demon, you have adopted the pure mentality of a devotee and have fixed your mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, who is always situated in pure goodness. A person firmly established in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord, Hari, the Lord of the highest auspiciousness, swims in an ocean of nectar. For him what is the use of the scant water found in small ditches?

Sri Sukadeva Goswami said: Vrtrasura and King Indra spoke about devotional service even on the battlefield, and then as a matter of duty they again began fighting. My dear King, both of them were great fighters and were equally powerful. O Maharaja Pariksit, Vrtrasura, who was competent to subdue his enemies, took his iron club, whirled it, aimed it at Indra and then hurled it at him with his left hand. With his thunderbolt named Shataparvan, Indra simultaneously cut to pieces Vrtrasura's club and his remaining arm. Vrtrasura, now bleeding profusely, his two arms cut off at their roots, looked very beautiful, like a flying mountain whose wings have been cut to

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pieces by Indra. Being very powerful in physical strength and influence Vrtrasura then placed his lower part of jaw on the ground and his upper jaw in the air. His expanded mouth became very deep, like the sky itself, and his tongue appeared like a large serpent. With fearful, deadly teeth, he seemed to be trying to devour the entire universe. Thus assuming a gigantic body, the great demon Vrtrasura shook even the mountains and began crushing the surface of the earth under his feet, as if he were the Himalayas walking about. He came before Indra and swallowed him and Airavata, his elephantine carrier, just as a monstrous python might swallow an elephant. When the demigods, along with Brahma, his *prajāpatis* and other great saintly persons, saw that Indra had been swallowed by the demon, they became morose. "Alas," they lamented. "What a calamity! What a calamity!"

The protective armor of Narayana which Indra now wore, was identical with, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana Himself. Protected by that armor and by his own mystic power, King Indra, although swallowed by Vrtrasura, did not perish within the demon's belly. Using his thunderbolt, King Indra, who was also extremely powerful, pierced through Vrtrasura's abdomen and emerged. Indra, the killer of the demon Bala, then immediately began to cut off Vrtrasura's head, which was as high as the peak of a mountain. Although the thunderbolt revolved around Vrtrasura's neck with great speed, separating his head from his body took one complete year (360 days), the time in which the sun, moon and other luminaries complete a northern and southern journey. Then, at the suitable time for Vrtrasura to die, his head fell to the ground. When Vrtrasura was killed, the Gandharvas and Siddhas in the heavenly planets played kettledrums in jubilation. They celebrated the prowess of Indra, the killer of Vrtrasura, with Vedic hymns praising him and showering flowers upon his head with great pleasure. O King



Parikṣit, subduer of enemies, the living spark then came forth from Vṛtrasura's body and returned home, back to Godhead. While all the demigods looked on, he gloriously entered the transcendental world to become an associate of Lord Sankarsana.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 6: Prescribed Duties for Mankind » SB 6.12: Vṛtrasura's Glorious Death » Verse: 1-35.*

HOW CAN ONE BECOME A PERFECT PERSON?

His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada

Lord Viṣṇu is the *mahā-puruṣa*. Therefore one who becomes connected to Lord Viṣṇu as a Vaiṣṇava attains the designation of "*mahā-pauruṣya*". This status or position was attained by Maharaja Parikṣit. It is said in the *Padma Purāṇa* that the distinction between a demigod and a demon is that a demigod is a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu whereas a demon is just the opposite: *Viṣṇu-bhaktāḥ smṛto daiva āsuras tad-viparyayaḥ*. Vṛtrasura was considered a demon, but actually he was more than qualified as a devotee, or *mahā-pauruṣya*. If one somehow becomes the Supreme Lord's devotee, regardless of his previous position, he can be brought to the platform of a perfect person. This is possible if an unalloyed devotee serves the Lord by elevating him in this way. Therefore Sukadeva Goswami says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18):

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

"Kiratas, Hunas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Abhiras, Shumbhas, Yavanas and members of the Khasa races, and others who are addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, for He is the supreme power

whom they hold in their hearts. I beg to offer my respectful obeisance unto Him."

Anyone can be purified if he takes shelter of a pure devotee and molds his character according to the pure devotee's direction. Then, even if one is a Kirāta, Andhra, Pulinda or whatever, he can be purified and elevated to the position of a *mahā-pauruṣya*.

Vṛtrasura has formerly prayed (SB 6.11.25), *na nāka-prṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam na sārva-bhaumam na rasādhipatyam*. "I do not want the facilities for happiness on the highest planets of Brahmaloḳa, Svargaloka or even Dhruvaloka, what to speak of on this earth or the lower planets. I simply want to return home, back to Godhead."

This is the determined resolution of a pure devotee. He is never attracted to any exalted position within this material world. He simply wants to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the manner of the inhabitants of Vrindavana - Srimati Radharani, the gopis, Krishna's father and mother (Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda), Krishna's friends and Krishna's servants. He simply wants to associate with the Krishna conscious atmosphere of Vrindavana's unalloyed beauty. These are the highest ambitions of a devotee of Krishna. Devotees of Lord Viṣṇu may aspire for a position in Vaikunthaloka, but a devotee of Krishna never aspires even for the facilities of Vaikuntha; his only wish is to return to Goloka Vrindavan and associate with Lord Krishna in His eternal pastimes. Any form of material happiness is like measly water in a ditch, whereas the spiritual happiness eternally enjoyed in the spiritual world is like an ocean of nectar in which a devotee always submerges himself. This is what a devotee of Krishna ardently aspires for.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 6: Prescribed Duties for Mankind » SB 6.12: Vṛtrasura's Glorious Death » Purort to the Verses: 21 and 23.*





**VRTRASURA, ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM
AND DEVĪ-BHĀGAVATAM**

Srila Jiva Goswami

*yaatrādhikṛtya gāyatrīm
kīrtyate dharma-vistarahaḥ
Vrtrasura-vadhopenam
tad Bhāgavatam ucyate
sārasvatasya kalpasya
proṣṭhapadyāni tu tad dadet
aṣṭādaśa-sahasrāṇi
hema-simha-samanvitam*

"In the beginning of one of the *Purāṇas* the *Gāyatrī mantra* is the focus of discourse. In it all the ramifications of true religion are enunciated, and the killing of the demon Vrtra is also described. The *Purāṇa* which has these characteristics is called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata *Purāṇa*).

It deals with the *Sārasvata-kalpa* and has eighteen thousand verses. One should give it as a gift on a gold lion-throne in the month of *Prauṣṭhapada*."

This unidentified *Purāṇic* verse cited by Srila Sridhara Swami specifies that the *Bhāgavatam* describes the *Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā*. Although Hayagrīva is also the name of an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu who appeared with a horse's head and spoke the Vedas to Lord Brahma, Srila Jiva Goswami here explains that this Hayagrīva is different. He is the sage Dadhici, who taught the Ashvini-kumaras two specific *vidyās*, (systematic meditations on the Supreme for aspirants on various levels of realization). The *Upaniṣads* give instruction on several such *vidyās*, among them the pravargya taught by Dadhici, otherwise known as the *prāṇa-vidyā*, a meditation on the Supreme in the form of the air of life. The *prāṇa-vidyā* is introduced in a passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (1.11.4–5):

*katamā devateti. prāṇa iti hovāca,
sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam
evābhisaṁviśanti prāṇam abhyujjihate
saiśā devatā.*

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"Which is the controlling deity?" He answered, "It is *prāṇa*, the air of life. All beings which exist enter within *prāṇa*, and all rise up again from *prāṇa*. That *prāṇa* is the controlling deity."

In the *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.23), Srila Vyasa offers the aphorism *ata eva prāṇaḥ* to prove that the *prāṇa-vidyā* is not just a depiction of a subtle physical energy but a transcendental meditation on Brahman. Baladeva Vidyabhusana explains in his *Vedānta* commentary, *Govinda-bhāṣya*: *prāṇo 'yam sarveśvara eva na tu vāyuvikāraḥ. kutaḥ? ata eva sarva-bhūtotpattipralaya-hetutva-rūpād brahma-līngād eva.* "This *prāṇa* is the Lord of all, not a mere transformation of the element air. Why is that? It is because *prāṇa* is characterized as the Supreme, in terms of its being the cause of all beings' generation and destruction."

The second *vidyā* which the Ashvini learned from Dadhici is the *Nārāyaṇa-kavaca*, a meditation on God in many of His personal forms meant for protection from various kinds of danger. The same *Nārāyaṇa-kavaca* is recited in the eighth chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s Sixth Canto (Texts 12–34), although in that instance it is being taught by a grand-disciple of Dadhici, the sage Viśvarūpa, to Lord Indra.

His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupāda gives more information on the story of Dadhici's teaching that *brahma-vidyā* in a purport to his translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.9.52:

"The following story is narrated by many ācāryas in their commentaries: The great sage Dadhici had perfect knowledge of how to perform fruitive activities, and he had also attained advanced spiritual knowledge. Knowing this, the minor demigods named the Ashvini-kumaras once approached him, begging to be instructed in spiritual science (*brahma-vidyā*). Dadhici Muni replied, "I am now busily engaged in arranging ritual sacrifices for auspicious results. Kindly

return some time later.' When the Ashvini-kumaras left, Indra, the King of heaven, approached Dadhici and said, 'My dear Muni, the Ashvini-kumaras are mere physicians. Please do not instruct them in spiritual science. If you impart the spiritual science to them despite my admonition, I shall punish you by cutting off your head.' After threatening Dadhici in this way, Indra returned to heaven. The Ashvini-kumaras, who understood Indra's desires, returned and again begged Dadhici for *brahma-vidyā*. When the great saint Dadhici informed them of Indra's threat, the Ashvini-kumaras replied, 'Let us first cut off your head and replace it with the head of a horse. You can instruct *brahma-vidyā* through the horse's head, and when Indra returns and cuts off that head, we shall reward you and restore your original head.' Since Dadhici had already promised to impart *brahma-vidyā* to the Ashvini-kumaras, he agreed to their proposal. Thus, because Dadhici imparted *brahma-vidyā* through the mouth of a horse, this *brahma-vidyā* is also known as *Aśvaśirā*."

In this Text Jiva Goswami gives special attention to establishing that the *Bhāgavatam* glorified in the *Purāṇas* is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He does this because some scholars of his time held that the *Devī Bhāgavatam*, rather than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was actually the *Bhāgavatam* glorified in the *Purāṇas*. Like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Devī Bhāgavatam* is a *Purāṇa* with twelve cantos, 18,000 verses, and an account of Vrtrasura's death, although its account of how Vrtra was killed differs from the one in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Also, when some traditional scholars read in the *Purāṇas* that on the full-moon day of the month of *Bhādra* one should donate the *Bhāgavatam* mounted on a golden lion (*hema-siṃha*), they take this to mean the *Devī Bhāgavatam*. This seems quite fitting, since Devi, or Durga, rides on a lion. (In the case of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *hema-siṃha* is understood to mean "golden lion-throne.")

Srila Jiva Goswami solves the controversy by citing references that list distinctive features of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: it begins with the *Gāyatrī mantra*, it contains the *Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā*, the events it narrates happened in the *Sārasvata-kalpa*, and it was first spoken by Sri Sukadeva Goswami to Pariksit Maharaja. Jiva Goswami further supports his opinion by quoting from the *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, Sridhara Swam's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *Devī Bhāgavatam* opens with a statement that appears to be based on *Gāyatrī*: *om sarva-caitanya-rūpām tām ādyam vidyām ca dhīmaḥi, buddhiṃ yā naḥ pracodayāt*. There are two reasons this statement should not be equated with *Gāyatrī*: Firstly, nothing in it corresponds to the words *savituh*, *vareṇyam*, and *bhargas* from *Gāyatrī*. (By contrast, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1 such a correspondence is found.). Secondly, this statement is a meditation on Devi, but as Sri Jiva will show in the next Text, the object of meditation in *Gāyatrī* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Visnu.

Like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Devī Bhāgavatam* narrates the killing of Vrtrasura, but in its account Indra kills Vrtra with ocean foam empowered by Devī. That version tells that Vrtrasura performed severe penances for hundreds of years to please Lord Brahma. When Brahma appeared before him and offered a boon, Vrtra asked that he would not be slain by any weapon made of iron or wood, or one that was dry or wet. After Lord Brahma granted this boon, Vrtra attacked Indra and defeated him. Indra subsequently took help from Lord Visnu, who entered Indra's thunderbolt and also advised him to take the help of Devī and make a truce with Vrtra. Indra then apparently befriended Vrtrasura. But one day at dusk Indra surprised Vrtrasura on a beach and slew him with his thunderbolt covered with foam, which was not a weapon of iron or wood and was neither moist nor dry.



The *Devī Bhāgavatam* also makes no mention of the *Hayagrīva-brahma-vidyā* (the *Nārāyaṇa-varma*). For all these reasons it is clear that the *Bhāgavatam* referred to in the verse cited by Sridhara Swami is not the *Devī Bhāgavatam*.

— An excerpt from *Śrī Tattva-sandarbhā* (20.5) of *Śrīla Jīva Goswami* Translated by *Śrī Gopīparadhān Das* and *BBT*.

WHAT IS THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THOSE WHO WORSHIP SRI GAURANGA?

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura

“Sri Krishna and Sri Gauranga are non-different in terms of *tattva* (category); they are the same Absolute Truth and both are the fountainheads of *madhura-rasa*, nectarean, honey-like mellows. However, there are two ways in which *madhura-rasa* manifests: *mādhurya*, transcendental conjugal sweetness; and *audārya*, transcendental magnanimity. When *mādhurya* is pre-eminent, Sri Krishna manifests, and when *audārya* is prominent, Sri Gauranga manifests. In the original Vrindavan, known also as Goloka, there are two symmetrical halves: *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha*, the abode of Sri Krishna; and *gaura-pīṭha*, the abode of Sri Gauranga. Those Jīvas whose devotional mood is primarily *mādhurya* appended with *audārya* reside in *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha*,—they are the devotees of Sri Krishna. Those Jīvas whose devotional mood is most pronouncedly *audārya*, supported by *mādhurya* reside in *gaura-pīṭha* —they are the eternal servitors of Śrī Gauranga. In certain cases, some eternally liberated souls are present simultaneously in both the *pīṭhas* through their *svarūpa-vyūha*, personal expansions. In other instances, particular *pārśadās* (associates) are present in one *pīṭha* in their spiritual form, and absent in the other.

“Devotees who exclusively worship Sri Gauranga in their period of *sādhana* (practice) attain *gaura-pīṭha* when they are liberated and perfect. Alternative;y, those who exclusively worship Sri Krishna in their period of *sādhana* serve in *kṛṣṇa-*

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pīṭha after liberation. Then there are those devotees who in their period of *sādhana* worship both Sri Krishna and Sri Gauranga. After obtaining liberation, these devotees acquire two transcendental forms and simultaneously serve Sri Krishna in *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha* and Sri Gauranga in *gaura-pīṭha*. This is the divine and confidential mystery of the inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference of Sri Krishna and Sri Gauranga. ”

— Excerpt from Chapter 17 of *Jaiva-dharma* by *Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura*, Translated by *Sarvabhāvana Das*.



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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