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The curse that gave Śrīmad Bhāgavatam to the world

Features

**BIRTH AND DIVINE QUALITIES
OF MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT**
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

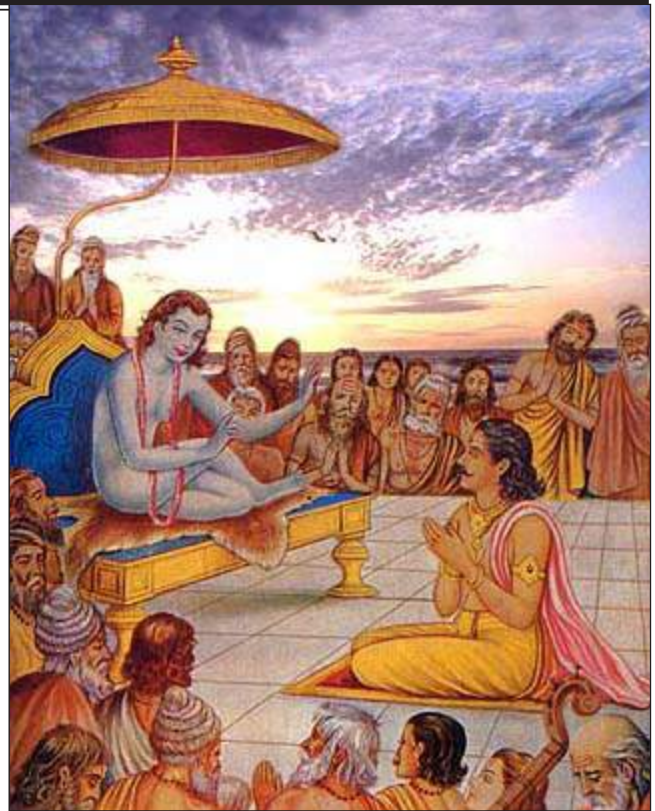
UDDHAVA INSTRUCTS MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam-Māhātmya

**MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT ESTABLISHES
KALIYUGA AT FIVE PLACES**
Sri Subodhinī

MESSAGE OF THE CURSE
Mahābhārata

**DID MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT GO TO THE BANKS
OF YAMUNA INSTEAD OF GANGA?**
*His Divine Grace
A . C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

**MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT ATTAINS
THE SUPREME ABODE**
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam





The Lord Krishna engaged in vanquishing the radiation of the brahmāstra

**BIRTH AND DIVINE QUALITIES
OF MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT**
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

When the child Parikshit, the great fighter, was in the womb of his mother, Uttara, and was suffering from the burning heat of the *brahmāstra* [thrown by Ashwatthama], he could observe the Supreme Lord coming to him. He [the Lord] was only thumb high, but He was all transcendental. He had a very beautiful, blackish, infallible body, and He wore a dress of lightning yellow and a helmet of blazing gold. Thus He was seen by the child. The Lord was enriched with four hands, earrings of molten gold and eyes blood red with fury. As He loitered about, His club constantly encircled Him like a shooting star.

The Lord was thus engaged in vanquishing the radiation of the *brahmāstra*, just as the sun evaporates a drop of dew. He was observed by the child, who thought about who He was. While thus being observed by the child, the Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of everyone and the protector of the righteous, who stretches in all directions and who is unlimited by time and space, disappeared at once.

Thereupon, when all the good signs of the zodiac gradually evolved, the heir apparent of Pandu, who would be exactly like him in prowess, took birth.

King Yudhisthira, who was very satisfied with the birth of Maharaja Parikshit, had the purificatory process of birth performed. Learned brahmanas, headed by Dhaumya and Kripa, recited auspicious hymns. Upon the birth of a son, the King, who knew how, where and when charity should be given, gave gold, land, villages, elephants, horses and good food grains to the brahmanas. The learned brahmanas, who were very satisfied with the charities of the King, addressed him as the chief amongst the Purus and informed him that his son was certainly in the line of descent from the Purus.

The brahmanas said: This spotless son has been restored by the all-powerful and all-pervasive Lord Vishnu, the Personality of Godhead, in order to oblige you. He was saved when he was doomed to be destroyed by an irresistible supernatural weapon. For this reason this child will be well known in the world as one who is protected by the Personality of Godhead. O most fortunate one, there is no doubt that this child will become a first-class devotee and will be qualified with all good qualities.

King [Yudhisthira] inquired: O great souls, will he become as saintly a king, as pious in his very name and as famous and glorified in his achievements, as others who appeared in this great royal family?

The brahmanas said: O son of Pritha, this child shall be exactly like King Ikshvaku, son of Manu, in maintaining all those who are born. And as for following the brahminical principles, especially in being true to his promise, he shall be exactly like Rama, the Personality of Godhead, the son of Maharaja Dasharatha. This child will be a munificent donor of charity and protector of the surrendered, like the famous King Shibi of the Ushinara country. And he will expand the name and fame of his family like Bharata, the son of Maharaja Dushyanta. Amongst great bowmen, this child will be as good as Arjuna. He will be as irresistible as fire and as unsurpassable as the ocean. This child will be as strong as a lion, and as worthy a shelter as the Himalaya Mountains. He will be forbearing like the earth, and as tolerant as his parents. This child will be like his grandfather Yudhisthira or Brahma in equanimity of mind. He will be munificent like the lord of the Kailash Hill, Shiva. And he will be the resort of everyone, like the Supreme Personality of Godhead Narayana, who is even the shelter of the goddess of fortune.

This child will be almost as good as Lord Sri Krishna by following in His footsteps. In magnanimity he will become as great as King Rantideva. And in religion he will be like Maharaja Yayati. This child will be like Bali Maharaja in patience, a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna like Prahlada Maharaja, a performer of many *Aśvamedha* [horse] sacrifices and a follower of the old and experienced men.

This child will be the father of kings who will be like sages. For world peace and for the sake of religion, he will be the chastiser of the upstarts and the quarrelsome. After hearing about his death, which will be caused by the bite of a snake-bird sent by a son of a brahmana, he will get himself freed from all material attachment and surrender unto the Personality of Godhead, taking shelter of Him. After inquiring about proper self-knowledge from the son of Vyasadeva, who will be a great philosopher, he will renounce all material attachment and achieve a life of fearlessness. Thus those who were expert in astrological knowledge and in performance of the birth ceremony instructed King Yudhishthira about the future history of his child. Then, being sumptuously remunerated, they all returned to their respective homes. So his son would become famous in the world as Parikshit [examiner] because he would come to examine all human beings in his search after that personality whom he saw before his birth. Thus he would come to constantly contemplate Him.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 1: Creation » Chapter 12: Birth of Emperor Parikṣit » Verses: 7-30* ❀

UDDHAVA INSTRUCTS MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam-Māhātmya

Sri Uddhava said: I have heard the glories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the mouth of Sri Brihaspati, my spiritual master. Now I offer my respectful obeisances to him for I have become happy by hearing the instructions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. According to the Vaishnava tradition, I served *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for just one month. Due to the influence of this service, I have become the dear friend of Lord Krishna, and He therefore sent me to Vrindavan to serve His beloved gopis. Although Krishna eternally enjoys pastimes in Vrindavan, His beloved gopis were afflicted by feelings of separation. He therefore sent me here to impart the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the gopis. The gopis of Vraja were thus freed from the pains of separation by accepting the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* according to their own intelligence. Even though I do not understand the mystery of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, still I have experienced the wonder of this great literature. When the demigods, headed by Lord Brahma, prayed to Lord Krishna that He shall return to His own abode, at that time, under a banyan tree, the Lord personally taught me the mystery of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As a result of that instruction my intelligence became fixed and I proceeded to Badarikashram and attained perfection. Since then I am living here in Vraja as a creeper.

O Parikshit, I am therefore living here at



Sri Uddhava giving the teachings of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the gopis

Narada-kunda. The devotees will realise Lord Krishna by serving *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Therefore I will explain *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for the benefit of the devotees of the Lord. This will be possible only with your help.

Srila Suta Goswami said: After hearing this, Maharaja Parikshit offered his obeisances to Uddhava and said to him: O Uddhava, servant of Lord Hari! You should certainly narrate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Whatever is necessary for me to do in this regard, please order me.

Uddhava was most pleased on hearing Parikshit Maharaj speak in this way and said: O King! Since Lord Krishna has left this world, the influence of Kali-yuga has become very prominent. Whenever auspicious activities are being performed Kali certainly creates disturbances. Therefore you should go out and subdue the influence of Kali everywhere. I will remain here by your arrangement and recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for one month according to Vaishnava tradition. The audience will thus relish the mellows of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and attain the Lord's eternal abode.

Hearing Sri Uddhava's instructions, Maharaj Parikshit was pleased by the thought of subduing Kali, but somewhat in anxiety he disclosed his mind to Uddhava.

Maharaj Parikshit said: O Prabhu! I am eager to bring Kali-yuga under my control as you have instructed, but then how will I hear the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? I have also come to take shelter at your feet, so you should also be merciful to me.

Hearing the king's words, Uddhava said: O King, there is no need for you to be worried, for you are the most eligible candidate to receive the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. People in this world are always engaged in various kinds of fruitive activities and they do not even know the importance of hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. O King, by your mercy many people in this land of *Bhārata-varṣa* will achieve eternal happiness by hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The great sage Srila Sukadeva Goswami, who is the representative of Lord Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, will recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to you. There is no doubt about it. O King, you will attain the eternal abode of Lord Krishna, the king of Vraja, by hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will then later be propagated throughout the world. Therefore, O King, prepare yourself to subdue Kali.

After Uddhava spoke in this way, Maharaja Parikshit offered obeisances to Uddhava and

circumambulated him, and he then left to eradicate Kali's influence in all directions.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam-Māhātmya Chapter Three: The Glories of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, The Speaker and the Hearer's Attainment of the Supreme Abode.* ❀

MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT ESTABLISHES KALIYUGA AT FIVE PLACES *Śrī Subodhinī*

King Parikshit had ordered Kaliyuga to go out of the kingdom. Due to this, he began to tremble; thinking as to whether he will be killed, if he does not go out of this kingdom. King Parikshit always carried out his words. Kaliyuga knew, that it was not appropriate to remain silent or not to carry out the orders of the king. Especially when the king was standing there, with his raised sword. The king is also bound to punish him for the offences committed by Kaliyuga earlier. Kaliyuga realized, that King Parikshit may tolerate his earlier offences, but to remain without following his orders (of expulsion) would be a second offense, and may be that the king will kill him for this, especially when he was standing there with his raised sword.

Kaliyuga began to pray -

*kalir uvāca
yatra kva vātha vatsyāmi
sārva-bhauma tavājñayā
lakṣaye tatra tatrāpi
tvām ātteṣu-śarāsanam
tan me dharmā-bhṛtāṁ śreṣṭha
sthānaṁ nirdeṣtum arhasi
yatraiva niyato vatsya
ātiṣṭhānis te 'nuśāsanam*

O Your Majesty, though I may live anywhere and everywhere under your order, I shall but see you with bow and arrows wherever I look. Therefore, O chief amongst the protectors of religion, please fix some place for me where I can live permanently under the protection of your government.

King Parikshit began to think and concluded that Kaliyuga has to be provided with some places, where he can reside. Especially when he is the friend and relative of *adharmā* (unrighteousness). Gambling and such activities have been regarded as unrighteous even earlier. Hence, the king thought, that Kaliyuga should be given those



Maharaja Parikshit chastises Kaliyuga

places, where from time immemorial, *adharmā* is well entrenched. Gambling means wagering with dice, drinking of alcohol, women and violence. Wherever *adharmā* takes place in these four factors, Kaliyuga was told to reside there only.

Adharma thus is caused by and is of four types basically viz. (1) Killing of a Brahmin, (2) Drinking of alcohol, (3) Stealing of wealth and (4) Adultery with the wife of one's Guru. Stealing is covered under gambling. Hence it is considered as a great sin. In these four places, Kaliyuga resides on a permanent basis. He, who does these four types of sins, he will be consumed by Kaliyuga. Kaliyuga says, that the Vedas themselves had given him five places even from earlier time. Hence, you have to give me one more place, where I can stay. With this in view, it is said, in the following two verses.

*punaś ca yācamānāya
jāta-rūpam adāt prabhuh
tato 'nṛtanī madanī kāmānī
rajo vairanī ca pañcamam
amūni pañca sthānāni
hy adharma-prabhavaḥ kaliḥ
auttareyeṇa dattāni
nyavasat tam-nideśa-kṛt*

The personality of Kali asked for something more, and because of his begging, the King gave him

permission to live where there is gold because wherever there is gold there is also falsity, intoxication, lust, envy and enmity. Thus the personality of Kali, by the directions of Maharaja Parikshit, the son of Uttara, was allowed to live in those five places.

He, who is desirous of attaining the best, and is deeply committed for his noble and exalted spiritual progress, should avoid to serve these *adharmā* actions such as untruth etc. Usually due to the desire for material objects, an individual adopts all these ways of conduct (untruthful) and gets involved in the grip of Kaliyuga. He then gets into big trouble and sorrow. Hence, all these five places are the residing places of Kaliyuga. A wise person should give up these five factors from far away i.e. from a distance; as he will experience only opposing results in all these. Especially for a king; all these have been totally prohibited, as he is bound to confront opposing experiences and results; by opting for these five places.

King Parikshit was a king with a good conduct and character, being the enemy of *adharmā*. He is also the teacher of this world i.e. it is he, who should give advice and instructions to his disciples, so that they can lead virtuous lives. He is their protector too. He is the ruler of his subject. The duty of the king and his virtues get reflected on his subjects. Due to this, a king

should be disciplined, and he will attain real welfare only, if he remains very far away from these wicked qualities. In this way, Maharaja Parikshit established Kaliyuga.

—Taken from Sri Subodhini, Sripad Vallabhacharyas commentary on Srimad Bhagavata Purana ❀

MESSAGE OF THE CURSE

Mahābhārata

Srngi said: O Father, if I have acted rashly, or even if I have committed a wicked deed, and whether I have pleased or displeased you, nevertheless that which I have already uttered cannot be changed. O Father! I must tell you that it will come to pass, for I am incapable of false speech, even when joking, much less while uttering a curse.

The sage Samika said: I know of your terrible prowess, my son, that your words must come to pass. You have never uttered a false word, and your tragic curse upon the King cannot fail to act. It is always a father's duty, however, to correct even a grown son, so that the son acquires good character and a lasting reputation. What then of a mere child such as you, who has prospered by austerities and now acts like the lord of the world? Anger multiplies to excess in the hearts of great and powerful persons. You have distinguished yourself in the practice of religious principles, but observing that you are my son, and a mere boy, and that you have acted so rashly and impulsively, I see that it is my duty to correct you. You must become peaceful. Maintain yourself by collecting the simple eatables of the forest and give up your anger and thus you will never reject your religious principles.

Anger plunders the hard-earned spiritual progress of those who endeavor for perfection, and those bereft of spiritual progress will never achieve their goal in life. When endeavoring spiritualists are able to forgive, their own equanimity will award them their desired perfection. This world can be enjoyed by those who forgive, and the next world as well is only for those who forgive. Therefore, practice always a life of forgiveness, with your senses fully controlled. By such forgiveness you will someday achieve the spiritual planets, which lie beyond the world of Brahma and beyond the impersonal absolute.

Despite this tragedy, my son, I must remain

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

calm. I shall immediately do all I can by sending the following message to the King: O King, my young and immature son, seeing your offense to me, was unable to tolerate it, and now he has cursed you.

Srila Suta Goswami said: That ascetic sage of noble vows gave the message to a disciple, and, his heart breaking with compassion sent him to King Parikshit. He carefully instructed the disciple, a well-behaved and serious young man named Gaura-mukha, to inquire about the King's welfare and about the news of state affairs in general.

Gaura-mukha went quickly to that ruler of men, who had benefitted the Kuru dynasty in so many ways. His arrival duly announced by the doorkeepers, he entered the king's palace. The brahmana Gaura-mukha was thereupon properly honored by the King, and after he was well-rested from his journey he accurately related to the monarch, in the presence of the royal ministers, the full and frightening message of the sage Samika, omitting nothing.

"Dear king," he said, "There is a most virtuous and self-controlled sage named Samika, who is peaceful and greatly austere and who lives in your kingdom. O tiger among men, O glory of the Bharatas, with the tip of your bow you wrapped a dead snake around the sage's shoulders. He himself was tolerant of your deed, but his son could not abide it. O King, without the knowledge of his father, he has cursed you! On the seventh night hence Takshaka will certainly cause your death. None can mitigate the curse, and therefore the compassionate sage again and again urges you to care for your soul. The sage was unable to restrain his enraged son, and therefore, O King, he who earnestly desires your welfare has sent me to you."

Hearing these terrible words, the beloved King of the Kuru dynasty began to grieve. He was himself highly advanced in spiritual knowledge and thus he grieved not for his own passing away, but for his offense against the sage. Understanding that the accomplished sage had been absorbed in meditation under a religious vow of silence, the King's lament grew all the greater. When he understood the sage Samika's sincere compassion upon him, his grief and remorse grew still more, and his heart was filled with sorrow for the sin he had committed upon the holy ascetic. Noble as a god, King

Parikshit lamented only his sin against the sage and nothing more. He sent Gaura-mukha back with this message: "May the holy Samika again grant me his mercy."

—Section 42 of *Ādi-parva*, *The Mahābhārata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa* by Roy, Pratap Chandra, 1842-1895; Kisari Mohan Ganguli ❀

DID MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT GO TO THE BANKS OF YAMUNA INSTEAD OF GANGA?

His Divine Grace

A .C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Maharaja Parikshit, just after receiving the news of his death within seven days, at once retired from family life and shifted himself to the sacred bank of the Yamuna River. Generally it is said that the King took shelter on the bank of the Ganges, but according to Srila Jiva Goswami, the King took shelter on the bank of the Yamuna. Srila Jiva Goswami's statement appears to be more accurate because of the geographical situation. Maharaja Parikshit resided in his capital Hastinapura, situated near present Delhi, and the River Yamuna flows down past the city. Naturally the King would take shelter of the River Yamuna because she was flowing past his palace door. And as far as sanctity is concerned, the River Yamuna is more directly connected with Lord Krishna than the Ganges. The Lord sanctified the River Yamuna from the beginning of His transcendental pastimes in the world.

While His father Vasudeva was crossing the Yamuna with the baby Lord Krishna for a safe place at Gokula on the other bank of the river from Mathura, the Lord fell down in the river, and by the dust of His lotus feet the river at once became sanctified. It is especially mentioned herein that Maharaja Parikshit took shelter of that particular river which is beautifully flowing, carrying the dust of the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, mixed with tulasi leaves. Lord Krishna's lotus feet are always besmeared with the tulasi leaves, and thus as soon as His lotus feet contact the water of the Ganges and the Yamuna, the rivers become at once sanctified. The Lord, however, contacted the River Yamuna more than the Ganges. According to the Varaha Purana, as quoted by Srila Jiva Goswami, there is no difference between the water of the Ganges and the Yamuna, but when the water of the Ganges is sanctified one hundred times, it is called the

Yamuna. Similarly, it is said in the scriptures that one thousand names of Vishnu are equal to one name of Rama, and three names of Lord Rama are equal to one name of Krishna.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 1: Creation » Chapter 19: The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī » Verses: 6, Purport* ❀

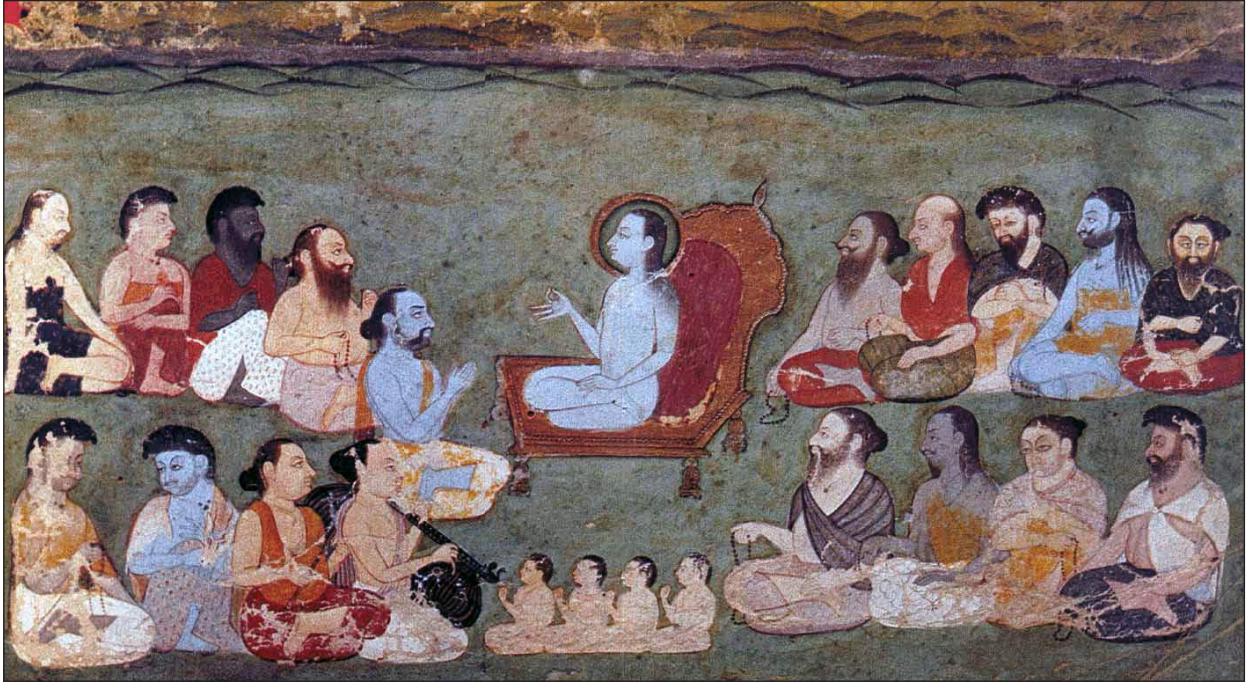
MAHARAJA PARIKSHIT ATTAINS THE SUPREME ABODE Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Suta Goswami said: After hearing all that was narrated to him by the self-realized and equipoised Sukadeva, the son of Vyasadeva, Maharaja Parikshit humbly approached his lotus feet. Bowing his head down upon the sage's feet, the King, who had lived his entire life under the protection of Lord Vishnu, folded his hands in supplication and spoke as follows.

Maharaja Parikshit said: I have now achieved the purpose of my life, because a great and merciful soul like you has shown such kindness to me. You have personally spoken to me this narration of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, who is without beginning or end. I do not consider it at all amazing that great souls such as yourself, whose minds are always absorbed in the infallible Personality of Godhead, show mercy to the foolish conditioned souls, tormented as we are by the problems of material life. I have heard from you this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the perfect summary of all the Puranas and which perfectly describes the Supreme Lord, *Uttamaḥśloka*. My lord, I now have no fear of Takshaka or any other living being, or even of repeated deaths, because I have absorbed myself in that purely spiritual Absolute Truth, which you have revealed and which destroys all fear.

*anujānīhi māṁ brahman
vācaṁ yacchāmy adhokṣaje
mukta-kāmāśayanī cetaḥ
praveśya visrjāmy astūn*

O brahmana, please give me permission to resign my speech and the functions of all my senses unto Lord Adhokshaja. Allow me to absorb my mind, purified of lusty desires, within Him and to thus give up my life.



Maharaja Parikshit seeking permission from Srila Sukadeva goswami to give up his life .

You have revealed to me that which is most auspicious, the supreme personal feature of the Lord. I am now fixed in knowledge and self-realization, and my ignorance has been eradicated. By knowing about the Lord and realization of his sweetness and powers, my ignorance has been destroyed. How did this arise? The supreme form, abode or lotus feet of the Lord have been shown by you.

Suta Goswami said: Thus requested, the saintly son of Srila Vyasadeva gave his permission to King Parikshit. Then, after being worshiped by the King and all the sages present, Sukadev departed from that place.

*parikṣid api rājarṣir
ātmany ātmānam ātmanā
samādhāya param dādhyāv
aspandāsura yathā taruḥ
prāk-kūle barhiṣy āsīno
gaṅgā-kūla udam-mukhaḥ
brahma-bhūto mahā-yogī
niḥsaṅgaś chinna-saiṅśayaḥ*

Maharaja Parikshit then sat down on the bank of the Ganges, upon a seat made of darbha grass with the tips of its stalks facing east, and turned himself toward the north. Having attained the perfection of yoga, he experienced full self-realization and was free of material attachment and doubt. The saintly King settled his mind within his spiritual self by pure intelligence and proceeded to meditate

upon the Supreme Absolute Truth. His life air ceased to move, and he became as stationary as a tree.

In *Sārārtha-darśini* verse 12.6.11&13, Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakur explains that since Maharaja Parikshit already attained the abode of the Lord, the attack of Takshaka was a useless action. And the burning of his body was like the last rites performed by his son.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 12: The Age of Deterioration » Chapter 6: Mahārāja Parikṣit Passes Away» Verses: 1-10.* ❧



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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