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AKRURA'S MISSION IN HASTINAPURA

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Sukadeva Gosvami said: Akrura went to Hastinapura, the city distinguished by the glory of the Paurava rulers. There he saw Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Vidura and Kunti, along with Bahlika and his son Somadatta. He also saw Dronacharya, Kṛpacarya, Karna, Duryodhana, Ashvatthama, the Pandavas and other close friends. After Akrura, the son of Gandini, had appropriately greeted all his relatives and friends, they asked him for news of their family members, and he in turn asked about their welfare. He remained in Hastinapura for several months to scrutinize the conduct of the weakwilled King, who had bad sons and who was inclined to give in to the whims of mischievous advisers.

Kunti and Vidura described to Akrura in detail the evil intentions of Dhritarashtra's sons, who could not tolerate the great qualities of Kunti's sons such as their powerful influence, military skill, physical strength, bravery and humility or the intense affection the citizens had for them. Kunti and Vidura also told Akrura about how the sons of Dhritarashtra had tried to poison the Pandavas and carry out other such plots. Kuntidevi, taking advantage of her brother Akrura's visit, approached him confidentially. While remembering her birthplace, she spoke with tears in her eyes.

[Queen Kunti said:] O gentle one, do my parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, family women and girlhood friends still remember us? Does my nephew Krishna, the Supreme Personality and the compassionate shelter of His devotees, still remember His aunt's sons? And does lotus-eyed Rama remember them also? Now that I am suffering in the midst of my enemies like a doe in the midst of wolves, will Krishna come to console me and my fatherless sons with His words? Krishna, Krishna! O great yogi! O Supreme Soul and protector of the universe! O Govinda! Please protect me, who have surrendered to You. I and my sons are being overwhelmed by trouble. For persons fearful of death and rebirth, I see no shelter other than Your liberating lotus feet, for You are the Supreme Lord. I offer my obeisances unto You, Krishna, the supreme pure, the Absolute Truth

and the Supersoul, the Lord of pure devotional service and the source of all knowledge. I have come to You for shelter.

Sukadeva Gosvami said: Thus meditating on her family members and also on Krishna, the Lord of the universe, your great-grandmother Kuntidevi began to cry out in grief, O King. Both Akrura, who shared Queen Kunti's distress and happiness, and the illustrious Vidura consoled the Queen by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons had taken birth. The ardent affection King Dhritarashtra felt for his sons had made him act unjustly toward the Pandavas. Just before leaving, Akrura approached the King, who was seated among his friends and supporters, and related to him the message that his relatives Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama had sent out of friendship.

[Akrura said:] O my dear son of Vicitravirya, O enhancer of the Kurus' glory, your brother Pandu having passed away, you have now assumed the royal throne. By religiously protecting the earth, delighting your subjects with your noble character, and treating all your relatives equally, you will surely achieve success and glory. If you act otherwise, however, people will condemn you in this world, and in the next life you will enter the darkness of hell. Remain equally disposed, therefore, toward Pandu's sons and your own. In this world no one has any permanent relationship with anyone else, O King. We cannot stay forever even with our own body, what to speak of our wife, children and the rest. Every creature is born alone and dies alone, and alone one experiences the just rewards of his good and evil deeds. In the guise of dear dependents, strangers steal the sinfully acquired wealth of a foolish man, just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water that sustains the fish.

A fool indulges in sin to maintain his life, wealth and children and other relatives, for he thinks, "These things are mine." In the end, however, these very things all abandon him, leaving him frustrated. Abandoned by his so-called dependents, ignorant of the actual goal of life, indifferent to his real duty, and having failed to fulfill his purposes, the foolish soul enters the blindness of hell, taking his sinful reactions with him. Therefore, O King, looking upon this world as a dream, a magician's illusion or a flight of fancy, please



control your mind with intelligence and become equipoised and peaceful, my lord.

[**Dhritarashtra said:**] O master of charity, I can never be satiated while hearing your auspicious words. Indeed, I am like a mortal who has obtained the nectar of the gods. Even so, gentle Akrura, because my unsteady heart is prejudiced by affection for my sons, these pleasing words of yours cannot remain fixed there, just as lightning cannot remain fixed in a cloud. Who can defy the injunctions of the Supreme Lord, who has now descended in the Yadu dynasty to diminish the earth's burden? I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of His material energy and then distributes the various modes of nature by entering within the creation. From Him, the meaning of whose pastimes is unfathomable, come both the entangling cycle of birth and death and the process of deliverance from it.

Sukadeva Gosvami said: Having thus apprised himself of the King's attitude, Akrura, the descendant of Yadu, took permission from his well-wishing relatives and friends and returned to the capital of the Yadavas. Akrura reported to Lord Balarama and Lord Krishna how Dhritarashtra was behaving toward the Pandavas. Thus, O descendant of the Kurus, he fulfilled the purpose for which he had been sent.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 48 » Verses 1–31 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*

WHO IS AKRURA?

Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The commander in chief of the Vrishni dynasty and a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Akrura attained success in devotional service to the Lord by the one single process of offering prayers. He was the husband of Sutani, daughter of Ahuka. He supported Arjuna when Arjuna took Subhadra forcibly away by the will of Krishna. Both Krishna and Akrura went to see Arjuna after his successful kidnapping of Subhadra. Both of them presented dowries to Arjuna after this incident. Akrura was present also when Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra, was married with Uttara, mother of Maharaja Pariksit. Ahuka, the father-in-law of Akrura, was not on good terms with Akrura. But both of them were devotees of the Lord.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 1: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 11 » Verse 1 » Purport by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*



"DESTINY" OR "FATE"

Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
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Naturally, we would like to ask Dhritarashtra, "If you know all this, why don't you behave properly?" Of course, this is exactly Dhritarashtra's point: he feels that since events have already been set in motion, he is helpless to change them. In fact, events have been set in motion by his attachment and sinful propensities, and therefore he should have taken responsibility for his own acts. Lord Krishna clearly states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.15), *nādatte kasyacit pāpam*: "The Supreme Lord does not accept responsibility for anyone's sinful activities." It is a dangerous policy to claim that we are acting improperly because of "destiny" or "fate." We should take up Krishna consciousness seriously and create an auspicious future for ourselves and our associates. Finally, one may argue that, after all, Dhritarashtra is involved in the Lord's pastimes and is actually His eternal associate. In answer to this we may say that the Lord's pastimes are not only entertaining but also didactic, and the lesson here is that Dhritarashtra should have acted properly. This is what the Lord wanted to teach. Dhritarashtra claims that Krishna came to relieve the burden of the earth, but the earth's burden is precisely the improper behavior of its inhabitants. So, let us take the lesson the Lord wants to teach here and be instructed for our benefit.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāna) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 49 » Verses 29 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

UNDERSTANDING DESTINY

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Sometimes one loses his money on a public street, where everyone can see it, and yet his money is protected by destiny and not seen by others. Thus the man who lost it gets it back. On the other hand, if the Lord does not give protection, even money maintained very securely at home is lost. If the Supreme Lord gives one protection, even though one has no protector and is in the jungle,

one remains alive, whereas a person well protected at home by relatives and others sometimes dies, no one being able to protect him.

These are examples of the supremacy of the Lord. Our plans to protect or annihilate do not act, but whatever He thinks of doing actually happens. The examples given in this regard are practical. Everyone has had such practical experiences, and there are also many other clear examples. For instance, Prahlada Maharaja said that a child is certainly dependent on his father and mother, but in spite of their presence, the child is harassed in many ways. Sometimes, in spite of a supply of good medicine and an experienced physician, a patient does not survive. Therefore, since everything is dependent on the free will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, our only duty is to surrender unto Him and seek His protection. necessities will be supplied by the arrangement of the supreme controller.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāna) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter 2 » Translations by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

*yadṛcchayopapannena
santuṣṭo vartate sukham
nāsantuṣṭas tribhir lokair
ajitātmopasāditaiḥ*

"One should be satisfied with whatever he achieves by his previous destiny, for discontent can never bring happiness. A person who is not self-controlled will not be happy even with possessing the three worlds."

If happiness is the ultimate goal of life, one must be satisfied with the position in which he is placed by providence. This instruction is also given by Prahlada Maharaja in *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (7.6.3):

*sukham aindriyakam daityā
deha-yogena dehinām
sarvatra labhyate daivād*

yathā duḥkham ayatnataḥ

"My dear friends born of demoniac families, the happiness perceived with reference to the sense objects by contact with the body can be obtained in any form of life, according to one's past fruitive activities. Such happiness is automatically obtained without endeavor, just as we obtain distress."

This philosophy is perfect in regard to obtaining happiness. Real happiness is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.21):

*sukham ātyantikam yat tad
buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam
veti yatra na caivāyam
sthitaś calati tattvataḥ*

"In the spiritually joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth."

One has to perceive happiness by the super-senses. The super-senses are not the senses of the material elements. Every one of us is a spiritual being (*aham brahmāsmi*), and every one of us is an individual person. Our senses are now covered by material elements, and because of ignorance we consider the material senses that cover us to be our real senses. The real senses, however, are within the material covering. *Dehino'smin yathā dehe*: [Bhagavad-gītā 2.13] within the covering of the material elements are the spiritual senses. *Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam*: [Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 19.170] when the spiritual senses are uncovered, by these senses we can be happy. Satisfaction of the spiritual senses is thus described: *hr̥ṣīkeṇa hr̥ṣīkeṣa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*. When the senses are engaged in devotional service to Hrishikesha, then the senses are completely satisfied. Without this superior knowledge of sense gratification, one may try to satisfy his material senses, but happiness will never be possible. One may increase his ambition for sense gratification and even achieve

what he desires for the gratification of his senses, but because this is on the material platform, he will never achieve satisfaction and contentment. According to brahminical culture, one should be content with whatever he obtains without special endeavor and should cultivate spiritual consciousness. Then he will be happy.

The purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement is to spread this understanding. People who do not have scientific spiritual knowledge mistakenly think that the members of the Krishna consciousness movement are escapists trying to avoid material activities. In fact, however, we are engaged in real activities for obtaining the ultimate happiness in life. If one is not trained to satisfy the spiritual senses and continues in material sense gratification, he will never obtain happiness that is eternal and blissful. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.1) therefore recommends: *tapo divyam putrakāyena sattvam śuddhyed yasmād brahma-saukhyam tv anantam*. One must practice austerity so that his existential position will be purified and he will achieve unlimited blissful life.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations » Chapter 19 » Verse 25 » Translations by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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