

The Son of Droṇa Punished



Draupadī then saw Aśvatthāmā, who was bound with ropes like an animal and silent for having enacted the most inglorious murder. Due to her female nature, and due to her being naturally good and well-behaved, she showed him due respects as a brāhmaṇa. She could not tolerate

Aśvatthāmā's being bound by ropes, and being a devoted lady, she said: Release him, release him, for he is a brāhmaṇa, our spiritual master. It was by Droṇācārya's mercy that you learned the military art of throwing arrows and the confidential art of controlling weapons. He [Droṇācārya] is certainly still existing, being represented by his son. His wife Kṛpī did not undergo a satī with him because she had a son.

King Yudhiṣṭhira fully supported the statements of the Queen, which were in accordance with the principles of religion

and were justified, glorious, full of mercy and equity, and without duplicity. Nakula and Sahadeva [the younger brothers of the King] and also Sātyaki, Arjuna, the Personality of Godhead Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī, and the ladies and others all unanimously agreed with the King.

Bhīma, however, angrily disagreed with them and recommended killing this culprit, who had murdered sleeping children for no purpose and for neither his nor his master's interest. The Personality of Godhead, after hearing the words of Bhīma, Draupadī and

others, saw the face of His dear friend Arjuna, and He began to speak as if smiling.

The Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

A friend of a brāhmaṇa is not to be killed, but if he is an aggressor he must be killed.

All these rulings are in the scriptures, and you should act accordingly. You have to fulfill your promise to your wife, and you must also act to the satisfaction of Bhīmasena and Me.

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Just then Arjuna could understand the motive of the Lord by His equivocal orders, and thus with his sword

he severed both hair and jewel from the head of Aśvatthāmā. He [Aśvatthāmā] had already lost his bodily luster due to infanticide, and now, moreover, having lost the jewel from his head, he lost even more strength. Thus he was unbound and driven out of the camp.

Cutting the hair from his head, depriving him of his wealth and driving him from his residence are the prescribed punishments for the relative of a brāhmaṇa. There is no injunction for killing the body. Thereafter, the sons of Pāṇḍu, and Draupadī,

overwhelmed with grief, performed the proper rituals for the dead bodies of their relatives. Thereafter the Pāṇḍavas, desiring to deliver water to the dead relatives who had desired it, went to the Ganges with Draupadī. The ladies walked in front. Having lamented over them and sufficiently offered Ganges water, they bathed in the Ganges, whose water is sanctified due to being mixed with the dust of the lotus feet of the Lord.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa caused three well-performed aśvamedha-yajñas [horse

sacrifices] to be conducted by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira and thus caused his virtuous fame to be glorified in all directions, like that of Indra, who had performed one hundred such sacrifices. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa then prepared for His departure. He invited the sons of Pāṇḍu, after having been worshiped by the brāhmaṇas, headed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva. The Lord also reciprocated greetings. As soon as He seated Himself on the chariot to start for Dvārakā, He saw Uttarā hurrying toward Him in fear.

Uttarā said: O Lord of lords, Lord of the universe! You are the greatest of mystics. Please protect me, protect me, for there is no one else who can save me from the clutches of death in this world of duality. O my Lord, You are all-powerful. A fiery iron arrow is coming towards me fast. My Lord, let it burn me personally, if You so desire, but please do not let it burn and abort my embryo. Please do me this favor, my Lord.

Sūta Gosvāmī said: Having patiently heard her words, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is always very affectionate to His devotees, could at

once understand that Aśvatthāmā, the son of Droṇācārya, had thrown the brahmāstra to finish the last life in the Pāṇḍava family. The almighty Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having observed that a great danger was befalling His unalloyed devotees, who were fully surrendered souls, at once took up His Sudarśana disc to protect them.

The Lord of supreme mysticism, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resides within everyone's heart as the Paramātmā. As such, just to protect the progeny of the Kuru dynasty, He covered the embryo of Uttarā by His personal

energy. Although the supreme brahmāstra weapon released by Aśvatthāmā was irresistible and without check or counteraction, it was neutralized and foiled when confronted by the strength of Viṣṇu [Lord Kṛṣṇa]. Thus Parikshit, Uttara's was saved.