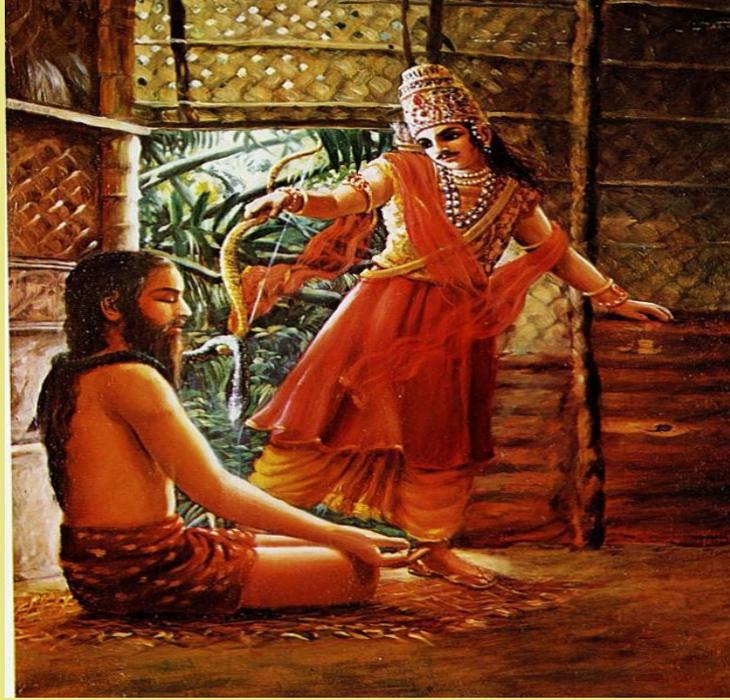


## Mahārāja Parīkṣit Cursed by a Brāhmaṇa Boy



Once upon a time Mahārāja Parīkṣit, while engaged in hunting in the forest with bow and arrows, became extremely fatigued, hungry and thirsty while following the stags. While searching for a reservoir of water, he entered the hermitage of the well-known Śamīka Ṛṣi and saw

the sage sitting silently with closed eyes.

The sage, in meditation, was covered by the skin of a stag, and long, compressed hair was scattered all over him. The King, whose palate was dry from thirst, asked him for water. The King, not received by any formal welcome by means of being offered a seat, place, water and sweet addresses, considered himself neglected, and so thinking he became angry.

The circumstances having distressed him with extreme hunger and thirst, the King directed toward the sage his anger and envy, which he had never before directed toward a brāhmaṇa. While leaving, the King, being so insulted, picked up a lifeless snake with his bow and angrily placed it

on the shoulder of the sage.

Then he returned to his palace. Upon returning, he began to contemplate and argue within himself whether the sage had actually been in meditation, with senses concentrated and eyes closed, or whether he had just been feigning trance just to avoid receiving a lower kṣatriya.

The sage had a son who was very powerful, being a brāhmaṇa's son. While he was playing with inexperienced boys, he heard of his father's distress, which was occasioned by the King. Then and there the boy spoke as follows -

O just look at the sins of the rulers who, like crows and watchdogs at the door, perpetrate sins

against their masters, contrary to the principles governing servants. The descendants of the kingly orders are definitely designated as watchdogs, and they must keep themselves at the door.

On what grounds can dogs enter the house and claim to dine with the master on the same plate? After the departure of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead and supreme ruler of everyone, these upstarts have flourished, our protector being gone. Therefore I myself shall take up this matter and punish them. Just witness my power.

The son of the ṛṣi, his eyes red-hot with anger, touched the water of the River Kauśika while

speaking to his playmates and discharged the following thunderbolt of words.

The brāhmaṇa's son cursed the King thus: On the seventh day from today a snake-bird will bite the most wretched one of that dynasty [Mahārāja Parīkṣit] because of his having broken the laws of etiquette by insulting my father.

Thereafter, when the boy returned to the hermitage, he saw a snake on his father's shoulder, and out of his grief he cried very loudly. Hearing his son crying, rishi gradually opened his eyes and saw the dead snake around his neck. He threw the dead snake aside and asked his son why he was crying, whether anyone had done him harm. On hearing this, the son

explained to him what had happened.

The father heard from his son that the King had been cursed, although he should never have been condemned, for he was the best amongst all human beings. The ṛṣi did not congratulate his son, but, on the contrary, began to repent, saying: Alas! What a great sinful act was performed by my son. He has awarded heavy punishment for an insignificant offense. The Lord, who carries the wheel of a chariot, is represented by the monarchical regime.

The Emperor Parīkṣit is a pious king. He is highly celebrated and is a first-class devotee of the Personality of Godhead. He is a saint amongst royalty, and he has performed many horse

sacrifices. When such a king is tired and fatigued, being stricken with hunger and thirst, he does not at all deserve to be cursed.

Then the ṛṣi prayed to the all-pervading Personality of Godhead to pardon his immature boy, who had no intelligence and who committed the great sin of cursing a person who was completely free from all sins, who was subordinate and who deserved to be protected.