

## Jaḍa Bharata and Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa



Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, after this, King Rahūgaṇa, ruler of the states known as Sindhu and Sauvīra, was going to Kapilāśrama. When the King's chief

palanquin carriers reached the banks of the river Ikṣumatī, they needed another carrier. Therefore they began searching for someone, and by chance they came upon Jaḍa Bharata. They considered the fact that Jaḍa Bharata was very young and strong and had firm limbs. Like cows and asses, he was quite fit to carry loads. Thinking in this way, although the great soul Jaḍa Bharata was unfit for such work, they nonetheless unhesitatingly forced him to carry the palanquin. The palanquin, however, was very erratically carried by Jaḍa Bharata due to his sense of nonviolence. As he stepped forward, he checked before him

every three feet to see whether he was about to step on ants. Consequently he could not keep pace with the other carriers. Due to this, the palanquin was shaking, and King Rahūgaṇa immediately asked the carriers, “Why are you carrying this palanquin unevenly? Better carry it properly.”

When the palanquin carriers heard the threatening words of Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa, they became very afraid of his punishment and began to speak to him as follows -

O lord, please note that we are not at all negligent in discharging our duties. We have been faithfully carrying this palanquin

according to your desire, but this man who has been recently engaged to work with us cannot walk very swiftly. Therefore we are not able to carry the palanquin with him.

King Rahūgaṇa could understand the speeches given by the carriers, who were afraid of being punished. He could also understand that simply due to the fault of one person, the palanquin was not being carried properly. Knowing this perfectly well and hearing their appeal, he became a little angry, although he was very advanced in political science and was very experienced. His anger arose due to his inborn nature as a king.

King Rahūgaṇa told Jaḍa Bharata: How troublesome this is, my dear brother. You certainly appear very fatigued because you have carried this palanquin alone without assistance for a long time and for a long distance. Besides that, due to your old age you have become greatly troubled. My dear friend, I see that you are not very firm, nor very strong and stout. Aren't your fellow carriers cooperating with you?

Thereafter, when the King saw that his palanquin was still being shaken by the carriers, he became very angry and said: You rascal, what are you doing? Are you dead

despite the life within your body? Do you not know that I am your master? You are disregarding me and are not carrying out my order. For this disobedience I shall now punish you just as Yamarāja, the superintendent of death, punishes sinful people. I shall give you proper treatment so that you will come to your senses and do the correct thing.

The great brāhmaṇa Jaḍa Bharata said: My dear King and hero, whatever you have spoken sarcastically is certainly true. Actually these are not simply words of chastisement, for the body is the carrier. The load carried by

the body does not belong to me, for I am the spirit soul. There is no contradiction in your statements because I am different from the body. I am not the carrier of the palanquin; the body is the carrier. Certainly, as you have hinted, I have not labored carrying the palanquin, for I am detached from the body. You have said that I am not stout and strong, and these words are befitting a person who does not know the distinction between the body and the soul. The body may be fat or thin, but no learned man would say such things of the spirit soul. As far as the spirit soul is concerned, I am neither fat nor skinny;

therefore you are correct when you say that I am not very stout.

Fatness, thinness, bodily and mental distress, thirst, hunger, fear, disagreement, desires for material happiness, old age, sleep, attachment for material possessions, anger, lamentation, illusion and identification of the body with the self are all transformations of the material covering of the spirit soul. A person absorbed in the material bodily conception is affected by these things, but I am free from all bodily conceptions. Consequently I am neither fat nor skinny nor anything else you have mentioned.

My dear King, you have unnecessarily accused me of being dead though alive. In this regard, I can only say that this is the case everywhere because everything material has its beginning and end. As far as your thinking that you are the king and master and are thus trying to order me, this is also incorrect because these positions are temporary. Today you are a king and I am your servant, but tomorrow the position may be changed, and you may be my servant and I your master. These are temporary circumstances created by providence.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when King Rahūgaṇa chastised the exalted devotee Jaḍa Bharata with harsh words, that peaceful, saintly person tolerated it all and replied properly. Out of his natural humility, he never considered himself a great devotee, and he agreed to suffer the results of his past karma. Like an ordinary man, he thought that by carrying the palanquin he was destroying the reactions of his past misdeeds. Thinking in this way, he began to carry the palanquin as before.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O best of the

Pāṇḍu dynasty [Mahārāja Parīkṣit], Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa had great faith in discussions of the Absolute Truth. He immediately descended from his palanquin and fell flat on the ground with his head at the lotus feet of Jaḍa Bharata in such a way that he might be excused for his insulting words against the great brāhmaṇa. He received the divine instructions from Jaḍa Bharata about his past life and about the real goal of life and thus Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa revived his dormant love for the Lord. He could understand that his illusion was over, and he begged pardon from Jaḍa Bharata for his misbehavior.