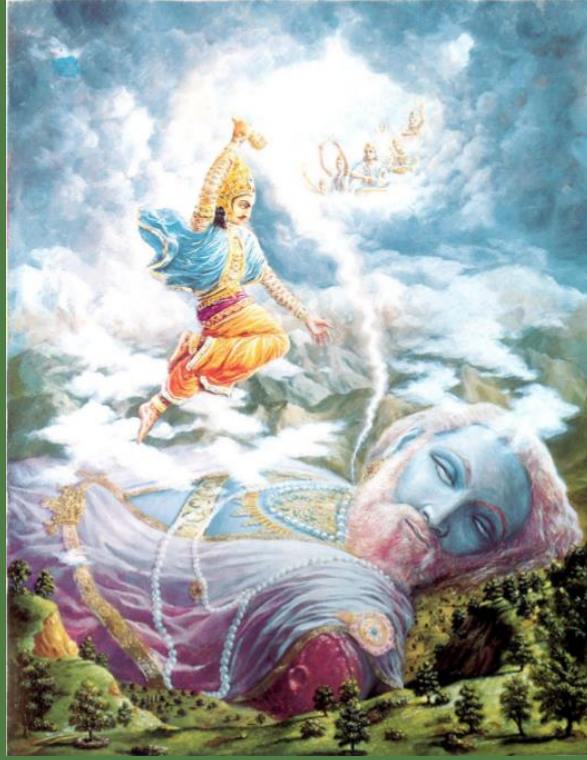


Vṛtrāsura's Glorious Death



Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Desiring to give up his body, Vṛtrāsura considered death in the battle preferable to victory. O King Parīkṣit, he vigorously took up his trident and with great force attacked Lord Indra, the King of heaven.

Then Vṛtrāsura, the great hero of the demons, whirled his trident, which had points like the flames of the blazing fire at the end of the millennium. With great force and anger he threw it at Indra, roaring and exclaiming loudly, “O sinful one, thus shall I kill you!”

Flying in the sky, Vṛtrāsura’s trident resembled a brilliant meteor. Although the blazing weapon was difficult to look upon, King Indra, unafraid, cut it to pieces with his thunderbolt. Simultaneously, he cut off one of Vṛtrāsura’s arms, which was as thick as the body of Vāsuki, the King of the serpents.

Although one of his arms was severed from

his body, Vṛtrāsura angrily approached King Indra and struck him on the jaw with an iron mace. He also struck the elephant that carried Indra. Thus Indra dropped the thunderbolt from his hand.

The denizens of various planets, like the demigods, demons, Cāraṇas and Siddhas, praised Vṛtrāsura's deed, but when they observed that Indra was in great danger, they lamented, "Alas! Alas!"

Having dropped the thunderbolt from his hand in the presence of his enemy, Indra was practically defeated and was very much ashamed. He dared not pick up his weapon

again. Vṛtrāsura, however, encouraged him, saying, “Take up your thunderbolt and kill your enemy. This is not the time to lament your fate.”

Vṛtrāsura continued: O Indra, no one is guaranteed of being always victorious but the original enjoyer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān. He is the cause of creation, maintenance and annihilation, and He knows everything.

O my enemy, just look at me. I have already been defeated, for my weapon and arm have been cut to pieces. You have already overwhelmed me, but nonetheless, with a

desire to kill you, I am trying my best to fight. I am not at all morose, even under such adverse conditions. Therefore you should give up your moroseness and continue fighting.

O my enemy, consider this battle a gambling match in which our lives are the stakes, the arrows are the dice, and the animals acting as carriers are the game board. No one can understand who will be defeated and who will be victorious. It all depends on providence.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing the

straightforward, instructive words of Vṛtrāsura, King Indra praised him and again took the thunderbolt in his hand. Without bewilderment or duplicity, he then smiled and spoke to Vṛtrāsura as follows.

Indra said: O great demon, I see by your discrimination and endurance in devotional service, despite your dangerous position, that you are a perfect devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul and friend of everyone. You have given up the demoniac mentality and fixed your mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, who is always situated in pure

goodness.

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vṛtrāsura and King Indra spoke about devotional service even on the battlefield, and then as a matter of duty they again began fighting. My dear King, both of them were great fighters and were equally powerful.

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Vṛtrāsura, who was completely able to subdue his enemy, took his iron club, whirled it around, aimed it at Indra and then threw it at him with his left hand.

With his thunderbolt named Śataparvan, Indra simultaneously cut to pieces Vṛtrāsura's club and his remaining hand. Vṛtrāsura, bleeding

profusely, his two arms cut off at their roots, looked very beautiful, like a flying mountain whose wings have been cut to pieces by Indra.

Vṛtrāsura was very powerful in physical strength and influence. He placed his lower jaw on the ground and his upper jaw in the sky. His mouth became very deep, like the sky itself, and his tongue resembled a large serpent. With his fearful, deathlike teeth, he seemed to be trying to devour the entire universe. Thus assuming a gigantic body, the great demon Vṛtrāsura shook even the mountains and began crushing the surface of

the earth with his legs, as if he were the Himālayas walking about. He came before Indra and swallowed him and Airāvata, his carrier, just as a big python might swallow an elephant.

When the demigods, along with Brahmā, other prajāpatis and other great saintly persons, saw that Indra had been swallowed by the demon, they became very morose. “Alas,” they lamented. “What a calamity! What a calamity!”

The protective armor of Nārāyaṇa, which Indra possessed, was identical with Nārāyaṇa Himself, the Supreme Personality of

Godhead. Protected by that armor and by his own mystic power, King Indra, although swallowed by Vṛtrāsura, did not die within the demon's belly.

With his thunderbolt, King Indra, who was also extremely powerful, pierced through Vṛtrāsura's abdomen and came out. Indra, the killer of the demon Bala, then immediately cut off Vṛtrāsura's head, which was as high as the peak of a mountain.

Although the thunderbolt revolved around Vṛtrāsura's neck with great speed, separating his head from his body took one complete year. Then, at the suitable time for Vṛtrāsura

to be killed, his head fell to the ground.

O King Parīkṣit, subduer of enemies, the living spark then came forth from Vṛtrāsura's body and returned home, back to Godhead. While all the demigods looked on, he entered the transcendental world to become an associate of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa.
