

The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Blessed by Lord Kṛṣṇa

Description is found
Srimad Bhagavatam
(Krishna Book)

- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of all living entities, knows everyone’s heart very well.
- ॐ *He is especially inclined to the brāhmaṇa devotees. Lord Kṛṣṇa is also called brahmaṇya-deva, which means that He is worshiped by the brāhmaṇas. Therefore it is understood that a devotee who is fully surrendered unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead has already acquired the position of a brāhmaṇa. Without becoming a brāhmaṇa, one cannot approach the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is especially concerned with vanquishing the distress of His devotees, and He is the only shelter of pure devotees.*
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa engaged for a long time in talking with Sudāmā Vipra about their past association.
- ॐ Then, just to enjoy the company of an old friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa began to smile and asked,
- ॐ “My dear friend, what have you brought for Me?”
- ॐ Has your wife given you some nice eatable for Me?”
- ॐ While addressing His friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa looked upon him and smiled with great love.
- ॐ He continued: “My dear friend, you must have brought some presentation for Me from your home.”
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Sudāmā was hesitating to present Him with the paltry chipped rice, which was actually unfit for His eating.
- ॐ Understanding the mind of Sudāmā Vipra, the Lord said,
- ॐ “My dear friend, I am certainly not in need of anything,
- ॐ but if My devotee gives Me something as an offering of love, even though it may be very insignificant, I accept it with great pleasure.
- ॐ On the other hand, if a person is not a devotee, even though he may offer Me very valuable things, I do not like to accept them.
- ॐ I actually accept only things offered to Me in devotion and love;
- ॐ otherwise, however valuable a thing may be, I do not accept it.
- ॐ If My pure devotee offers Me even the most insignificant things—a little flower, a little piece of leaf, a little water—but saturates the offering in devotional love, then not only do I gladly accept such an offering, but I eat it with great pleasure.”
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa assured Sudāmā Vipra that He would be very glad to accept the chipped rice he had brought from home, yet out of great shyness Sudāmā Vipra hesitated to present it to the Lord.

ॐ He was thinking, “How can I offer such an insignificant thing to Kṛṣṇa?” and he simply bowed his head.

ॐ *Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul, knows everything in everyone’s heart. He knows everyone’s determination and everyone’s want. He knew, therefore, the reason for Sudāmā Vipra’s coming to Him. He knew that, driven by extreme poverty, he had come there at the request of his wife. Thinking of Sudāmā as His very dear class friend, He knew that Sudāmā’s love for Him as a friend was never tainted by any desire for material benefit.*

ॐ Kṛṣṇa thought, “Sudāmā has not come asking anything from Me; being obliged by the request of his wife, he has come to see Me just to please her.”

ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore decided that He would give more material opulence to Sudāmā Vipra than could be imagined even by the King of heaven.

ॐ He then snatched the bundle of chipped rice which was hanging on the shoulder of the poor brāhmaṇa, packed in one corner of his wrapper, and said,

ॐ “What is this? My dear friend, you have brought Me nice, palatable chipped rice!”

ॐ He encouraged Sudāmā Vipra, saying,

ॐ “I consider that this quantity of chipped rice will satisfy not only Me but the whole creation.”

ॐ *It is understood from this statement that Kṛṣṇa, being the original source of everything, is the root of the entire creation. As watering the root of a tree immediately distributes water to every part of the tree, so an offering made to Kṛṣṇa, or any action done for Kṛṣṇa, is to be considered the highest welfare work for everyone, because the benefit of such an offering is distributed throughout the creation. Love for Kṛṣṇa is distributed to all living entities.*

ॐ While Lord Kṛṣṇa was speaking to Sudāmā Vipra, He ate one morsel of chipped rice from his bundle,

ॐ and when He attempted to eat a second morsel, Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune herself, checked the Lord by catching hold of His hand.

ॐ After touching the hand of Kṛṣṇa, Rukmiṇī said, “My dear Lord, this one morsel of chipped rice is sufficient to cause him who offered it to become very opulent in this life and to continue his opulence in the next life.

ॐ My Lord, You are so kind to Your devotee that even this one morsel of chipped rice pleases You very greatly, and Your pleasure assures the devotee opulence in both this life and the next.”

ॐ *This indicates that when food is offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion and He is pleased and accepts it from the devotee, Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune, becomes so greatly obliged to the devotee that she has to go personally*

to the devotee's home to turn it into the most opulent home in the world. If one feeds Nārāyaṇa sumptuously, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, automatically becomes a guest in one's house, which means that one's home becomes opulent. The learned brāhmaṇa Sudāmā passed that night at the house of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and while there he felt as if he were living on a Vaikuṅṭha planet. Actually he was living in Vaikuṅṭha, because wherever Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Nārāyaṇa, and Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune, live is not different from the spiritual planets, Vaikuṅṭhaloka.

- ॐ The learned brāhmaṇa Sudāmā did not appear to have received anything substantial from Lord Kṛṣṇa while at His palace, yet he did not ask anything from the Lord.
- ॐ The next morning he started for his home, thinking always about his reception by Kṛṣṇa, and thus he merged in transcendental bliss.
- ॐ All the way home he simply remembered the dealings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he felt very happy to have seen the Lord.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa thought, “It is most pleasurable to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is most devoted to the brāhmaṇas.
- ॐ How great a lover He is of the brahminical culture!
- ॐ He is the Supreme Brahman Himself, yet He reciprocates with the brāhmaṇas.
- ॐ He also respects the brāhmaṇas so much that He embraced to His chest such a poor brāhmaṇa as me, although He never embraces anyone to His chest except the goddess of fortune.
- ॐ How can there be any comparison between me, a poor, sinful brāhmaṇa,
- ॐ and the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the only shelter of the goddess of fortune?
- ॐ And yet, considering me a brāhmaṇa, with heartfelt pleasure He embraced me in His two transcendental arms.
- ॐ Lord Kṛṣṇa was so kind to me that He allowed me to sit on the same bedstead where the goddess of fortune lies down.
- ॐ He considered me His real brother.
- ॐ How can I appreciate my obligation to Him?
- ॐ When I was tired, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇīdevī, the goddess of fortune, began to fan me, holding the cāmara whisk in her own hand.
- ॐ She never considered her exalted position as the first queen of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ I was rendered service by the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of His high regard for the brāhmaṇas,
- ॐ and by massaging my legs and feeding me with His own hand, He practically worshiped me!

- ॐ Aspiring for elevation to the heavenly planets, liberation, all kinds of material opulence, or perfection in the powers of mystic yoga, everyone throughout the universe worships the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ Yet the Lord was so kind to me that He did not give me even a farthing, knowing very well that I am a poverty-stricken man who, if I got some money, might become puffed up and mad after material opulence and so forget Him.”
- ॐ *The statement of the brāhmaṇa Sudāmā is correct. An ordinary man who is very poor and prays to the Lord for benediction in material opulence, and who somehow or other becomes richer in material opulence, immediately forgets his obligation to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord does not offer opulences to His devotee unless the devotee is thoroughly tested. Rather, if a neophyte devotee serves the Lord very sincerely and at the same time wants material opulence, the Lord keeps him from obtaining it.*
- ॐ Thinking in this way, the learned brāhmaṇa gradually reached his own home.
- ॐ But there he saw that everything was wonderfully changed.
- ॐ He saw that in place of his cottage there were big palaces made of valuable stones and jewels, glittering like the sun, moon and rays of fire.
- ॐ Not only were there big palaces, but at intervals there were beautifully decorated parks, in which many beautiful men and women were strolling.
- ॐ In those parks there were nice lakes full of lotus flowers and beautiful lilies, and there were flocks of multicolored birds.
- ॐ Seeing the wonderful conversion of his native place, the brāhmaṇa began to think to himself,
- ॐ “How am I seeing all these changes?
- ॐ Does this place belong to me or to someone else?
- ॐ If it is the same place where I used to live, then how has it so wonderfully changed?”
- ॐ While the learned brāhmaṇa was considering this, a group of beautiful men and women with features resembling those of the demigods, accompanied by musical chanters, approached to welcome him.
- ॐ All were singing auspicious songs.
- ॐ The wife of the brāhmaṇa was very glad on hearing the tidings of her husband’s arrival,
- ॐ and with great haste she came out of the palace.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa’s wife appeared so beautiful that it seemed as if the goddess of fortune herself had come to receive him.
- ॐ As soon as she saw her husband present before her, tears of joy fell from her eyes,
- ॐ and her voice became so choked up that she could not even address her husband.
- ॐ She simply closed her eyes in ecstasy.
- ॐ But with great love and affection she bowed down before her husband,

- ॐ and within herself she thought of embracing him.
- ॐ She was fully decorated with a gold necklace and ornaments,
- ॐ and while standing among the maidservants she appeared like a demigod’s wife just alighting from an airplane.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa was surprised to see his wife so beautiful,
- ॐ and in great affection and without saying a word he entered the palace with her.
- ॐ When the brāhmaṇa entered his personal apartment in the palace, he saw that it was not an apartment but the residence of the King of heaven.
- ॐ The palace was surrounded by many columns of jewels.
- ॐ The couches and the bedsteads were made of ivory and bedecked with gold and jewels,
- ॐ and the bedding was as white as the foam of milk and as soft as a lotus.
- ॐ There were many whisks hanging from golden rods, and many golden thrones with sitting cushions as soft as lotus flowers.
- ॐ In various places there were velvet and silken canopies with laces of pearls hanging all around.
- ॐ The structure of the building stood on excellent transparent marble, with engravings made of emerald stones.
- ॐ All the women in the palace carried lamps made of valuable jewels.
- ॐ The flames and the jewels combined to produce a wonderfully brilliant light.
- ॐ When the brāhmaṇa saw his position suddenly changed to one of opulence,
- ॐ and when he could not determine the cause for such a sudden change, he began to consider very gravely how it had happened.
- ॐ He thus began to think,
- ॐ “From the beginning of my life I have been extremely poverty-stricken,
- ॐ so what could be the cause of such great and sudden opulence?
- ॐ I do not find any cause other than the all-merciful glance of my friend Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty.
- ॐ Certainly these are gifts of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s causeless mercy.
- ॐ The Lord is self-sufficient, the husband of the goddess of fortune,
- ॐ and thus He is always full with six opulences.
- ॐ He can understand the mind of His devotee,
- ॐ and He sumptuously fulfills the devotee’s desires.
- ॐ All these are acts of my friend Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ My beautiful dark friend Kṛṣṇa is far more liberal than the cloud, which can fill the great ocean with water.

- ॐ Without disturbing the cultivator with rain during the day, the cloud brings liberal rain at night just to satisfy him.
- ॐ And yet when the cultivator wakes up in the morning, he thinks that it has not rained enough.
- ॐ Similarly, the Lord fulfills the desire of everyone according to his position, yet one who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness considers all the gifts of the Lord to be less than his desire.
- ॐ On the other hand, when the Lord receives a little thing in love and affection from His devotee, He considers it a great and valuable gift.
- ॐ I am a vivid example of this: I simply offered Him a morsel of chipped rice,
- ॐ and in exchange He has given me opulences greater than the opulence of the King of heaven.”
- ॐ *What the devotee actually offers the Lord is not needed by the Lord, for He is self-sufficient. If the devotee offers something to the Lord, it acts for his own interest because whatever a devotee offers the Lord comes back in a quantity a million times greater than what was offered. One does not become a loser by giving to the Lord; one becomes a gainer by millions of times.*
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa, feeling great obligation to Kṛṣṇa, thought,
- ॐ “I pray to have the friendship of Lord Kṛṣṇa and to engage in His service,
- ॐ and to surrender fully unto Him in love and affection, life after life.
- ॐ I do not want any opulence.
- ॐ I only desire not to forget His service. I simply wish to be associated with His pure devotees.
- ॐ May my mind and activities be always engaged in His service.
- ॐ The unborn Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, knows that many great personalities have fallen from their positions because of extravagant opulence.
- ॐ Therefore, even when His devotee asks for some opulence from Him, the Lord sometimes does not give it.
- ॐ He is very cautious about His devotees.
- ॐ Because a devotee in an immature position of devotional service may, if offered great opulence, fall from his position due to being in the material world, the Lord does not offer opulence to him.
- ॐ This is another manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Lord upon His devotee.
- ॐ His first interest is that the devotee not fall.
- ॐ He is exactly like a well-wishing father who does not give much wealth into the hand of his immature son,
- ॐ but who, when the son is grown up and knows how to spend money, gives him the whole treasury house.”

- ॐ The learned brāhmaṇa thus concluded that whatever opulences he had received from the Lord should be used not for his extravagant sense gratification but for the service of the Lord.
- ॐ The brāhmaṇa accepted his newly acquired opulence, but he did so in a spirit of renunciation, remaining unattached to sense gratification, and thus he lived very peacefully with his wife, enjoying all the facilities of opulence as the prasādam of the Lord.
- ॐ He enjoyed varieties of food by offering it to the Lord and then taking it as prasādam.
- ॐ Similarly, if by the grace of the Lord we get such opulences as material wealth, fame, power, education and beauty, it is our duty to consider that they are all gifts of the Lord and must be used for His service, not for our sense enjoyment.
- ॐ The learned brāhmaṇa remained in that position, and thus his love and affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa increased day after day; it did not deteriorate due to great opulence.
- ॐ Material opulence can be the cause of degradation and also the cause of elevation, according to the purposes for which it is used.
- ॐ If opulence is used for sense gratification it is the cause of degradation, and if used for the service of the Lord it is the cause of elevation.
- ॐ It is evident from Lord Kṛṣṇa's dealings with Sudāmā Vipra that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very, very much pleased with a person who possesses brahminical qualities.

ॐ *A qualified brāhmaṇa like Sudāmā Vipra is naturally a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is said, brāhmaṇo vaiṣṇavaḥ: a brāhmaṇa is a Vaiṣṇava. Or sometimes it is said, brāhmaṇaḥ paṇḍitaḥ. Paṇḍita means a highly learned person. A brāhmaṇa cannot be foolish or uneducated. Therefore there are two divisions of brāhmaṇas, namely Vaiṣṇavas and paṇḍitas. Those who are simply learned are paṇḍitas but not yet devotees of the Lord, or Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not especially pleased with them. Simply the qualification of being a learned brāhmaṇa is not sufficient to attract the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Not only must a brāhmaṇa be well qualified according to the requirements stated in scriptures such as Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, but at the same time he must be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The vivid example is Sudāmā Vipra. He was a qualified brāhmaṇa, unattached to all sorts of material sense enjoyment, and at the same time he was a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances, is very fond of a brāhmaṇa like Sudāmā Vipra, and we have seen by the actual behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa how much He adores such a brāhmaṇa. Therefore, the ideal stage of human perfection is to become a brāhmaṇa-vaiṣṇava like Sudāmā Vipra.*

- ॐ Sudāmā Vipra realized that although Lord Kṛṣṇa is unconquerable, He nevertheless agrees to be conquered by His devotees.

ॐ He realized how kind Lord Kṛṣṇa was to him, and he was always in trance, constantly thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

ॐ *By such constant association with Lord Kṛṣṇa, whatever darkness of material contamination remained within his heart was completely cleared away, and very shortly he was transferred to the spiritual kingdom, which is the goal of all saintly persons in the perfectional stage of life.*

ॐ Śukadeva Gosvāmī has stated that all persons who hear this history of Sudāmā Vipra and Lord Kṛṣṇa will know how affectionate Lord Kṛṣṇa is to brāhmaṇa devotees like Sudāmā. Therefore anyone who hears this history gradually becomes as qualified as Sudāmā Vipra, and he is thus transferred to the spiritual kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa.