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THE SEVENTEEN BATTLES

Srila Sukadeva Gosvami

THE SOURCE OF TRANSCENDENTAL BLISS

Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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Sukadeva Gosvami said: When Kamsa was killed, O heroic descendant of Bharata, his two queens, Asti and Prapti, went to their father's house in great distress. The sorrowful queens told their father, King Jarasandha of Magadha, all about how they had become widows. Hearing this odious news, O King, Jarasandha was filled with sorrow and anger, and he began the greatest possible endeavor to rid the earth of the Yadavas. With a force of twenty-three *akṣauhiṇī* divisions, he laid siege to the Yadu capital, Mathura, on all sides. Although Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original cause of this world, when He descended to the earth He played the role of a human being. Thus when He saw Jarasandha's assembled army surrounding His city like a great ocean overflowing its shores, and when He saw how this army was striking fear into His subjects, the Lord considered what His suitable response should be according to the time, place and specific purpose of His current incarnation.

[**The Supreme Lord thought:**] Since it is such a burden on the earth, I will destroy Jarasandha's army, consisting of akshauhini of foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, which the King of Magadha has assembled from all subservient kings and brought together here. But Jarasandha himself should not be killed, since in the future he will certainly assemble another army. This is the purpose of My present incarnation - to relieve the earth of its burden, protect the pious and kill the impious. I also assume other bodies to protect religion and to end irreligion whenever it flourishes in the course of time.

[**Sukadeva Gosvami continued:**] As Lord Govinda was thinking in this way, two chariots as effulgent as the sun suddenly descended from the sky. They were complete with drivers and equipment. The Lord's eternal divine weapons also appeared before Him spontaneously. Seeing these, Sri Krishna, Lord of the senses, addressed Lord Sankarshana.

[**The Supreme Lord said:**] My respected elder brother, see this danger which has beset Your

dependents, the Yadus! And see, dear master, how Your personal chariot and favorite weapons have come before You. The purpose for which We have taken birth, My Lord, is to secure the welfare of Our devotees. Please now remove from the earth the burden of these twenty-three armies. After Lord Krishna had thus invited His brother, the two Dasharhas, Krishna and Balarama, wearing armor and displaying Their resplendent weapons, drove out of the city in Their chariots. Only a very small contingent of soldiers accompanied Them. As Lord Krishna came out of the city with Daruka at the reins of His chariot, He blew His conchshell, and the enemy soldiers' hearts began to tremble with fear.

Jarasandha looked at the two of Them and said: O Krishna, lowest of men! I do not wish to fight alone with You, since it would be a shame to fight with a mere boy. You fool who keep Yourself hidden, O murderer of Your relatives, go away! I will not fight with You. You, Rama, should gather Your courage and fight with me, if You think You can do it. You may either give up Your body when it is cut to pieces by my arrows, and thus attain to heaven, or else kill me. The Supreme Lord said: Real heroes do not simply boast but rather show their prowess in action. We cannot take seriously the words of one who is full of anxiety and who wants to die.

Sukadeva Gosvami said: Just as the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, the son of Jara marched toward the two descendants of Madhu and with his huge assemblage of armies surrounded Them and Their soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers. The women stood in the watchtowers, palaces and high gates of the city. When they could no longer see Krishna's and Balarama's chariots, identified by banners marked with the emblems of Garuda and a palm tree, they were struck with grief and fainted. Seeing His army tormented by the relentless and savage rain of arrows from the massive opposing forces gathered like clouds about Him, Lord Hari twanged His excellent bow, Sharanga, which both gods and demons worship. Lord Krishna took arrows from His quiver, fixed them on the bow-string, pulled back, and released endless torrents of sharp shafts, which struck the enemy's chariots, elephants, horses and infantrymen. The Lord

shooting His arrows resembled a blazing circle of fire. Elephants fell to the ground, their foreheads split open, cavalry horses fell with severed necks, chariots fell with their horses, flags, drivers and masters all shattered, and foot soldiers collapsed with severed arms, thighs and shoulders. On the battlefield, hundreds of rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the humans, elephants and horses who had been cut to pieces. In these rivers arms resembled snakes; human heads, turtles; dead elephants, islands; and dead horses, crocodiles. Hands and thighs appeared like fish, human hair like waterweeds, bows like waves, and various weapons like clumps of bushes. The rivers of blood teemed with all of these. For Him who orchestrates the creation, maintenance and destruction of the three worlds and who possesses unlimited spiritual qualities, it is hardly amazing that He subdues an opposing party. Still, when the Lord does so, imitating human behavior, sages glorify His acts. Jarasandha, with his chariot lost and all his soldiers dead, was left with only his breath. At that point Lord Balarama forcibly seized the powerful warrior, just as one lion takes hold of another. With the divine noose of Varuna and other, mortal ropes, Balarama began tying up Jarasandha, who had killed so many foes.

But Lord Govinda still had a purpose to fulfill through Jarasandha, and thus He asked Balarama to stop. Jarasandha, whom fighters had highly honored, was ashamed after being released by the two Lords of the universe, and thus he decided to undergo penances. On the road, however, several kings convinced him with both spiritual wisdom and mundane arguments that he should give up his idea of selfabnegation. They told him, “Your defeat by the Yadus was simply the unavoidable reaction of your past karma.” All of his armies having been killed, and himself neglected by the Personality of Godhead, King Jarasandha, son of Brihadratha, then sadly returned to the kingdom of the Magadhas. Lord Mukunda had crossed the ocean of His enemy’s armies with His own military force completely intact. He received congratulations from the denizens of heaven, who showered Him with flowers. The people of Mathura, relieved of their feverish anxiety and filled with joy, came out to meet Him as professional bards, heralds and panegyrists sang in praise of His victory.

As the Lord entered His city, conchshells and kettledrums sounded, and many drums, horns, vinas, flutes and mridangas played in concert. The boulevards were sprinkled with water, there were banners everywhere, and the gateways were decorated for the celebration. The citizens were elated, and the city resounded with the chanting of Vedic hymns. As the women of the city affectionately looked at the Lord, their eyes wide open with love, they scattered flower garlands, yogurt, parched rice and newly grown sprouts upon Him. Lord Krishna then presented to the Yadu king all the wealth that had fallen on the battlefield—namely, the countless ornaments of the dead warriors. Seventeen times the King of Magadha met defeat in this very way. And yet throughout these defeats he fought on with his *akṣauhīnī* divisions against the forces of the Yadu dynasty who were protected by Sri Krishna. By the power of Lord Krishna, the Vrishnis would invariably annihilate all of Jarasandha’s forces, and when all his soldiers had been killed, the King, released by his enemies, would again go away. Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a barbarian warrior named Kalayavana, sent by Narada, appeared on the battlefield.

Arriving at Mathura, this Yavana laid siege to the city with thirty million barbarian soldiers. He had never found a human rival worth fighting, but he had heard that the Vrishnis were his equals. When Lord Krishna and Lord Sankarshana saw Kalayavana, Krishna thought about the situation and said, “Ah, a great danger now threatens the Yadus from two sides. “This Yavana is besieging us already, and the mighty King of Magadha will soon arrive here, if not today then tomorrow or the next day. “If powerful Jarasandha comes while we two are busy fighting Kalayavana, Jarasandha may kill our relatives or else take them away to his capital. “Therefore, we will immediately construct a fortress that no human force can penetrate. Let us settle our family members there and then kill the barbarian king.” After thus discussing the matter with Balarama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had a fortress twelve yojanas in circumference built within the sea. Inside that fort He had a city built containing all kinds of wonderful things. In the construction of that city could be seen the full scientific knowledge and architectural skill of Vishvakarma. There were wide avenues, com-

mercial roads and courtyards laid out on ample plots of land; there were splendid parks, and also gardens stocked with trees and creepers from the heavenly planets. The gateway towers were topped with golden turrets touching the sky, and their upper levels were fashioned of crystal quartz. The gold-covered houses were adorned in front with golden pots and on top with jeweled roofs, and their floors were inlaid with precious emeralds. Beside the houses stood treasury buildings, warehouses, and stables for fine horses, all built of silver and brass. Each residence had a watchtower, and also a temple for its household deity.

Filled with citizens of all four social orders, the city was especially beautified by the palaces of Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Yadus. Lord Indra brought Sri Krishna the Sudharma assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the laws of mortality. Indra also gave the *pārijāta* tree. Lord Varuna offered horses as swift as the mind, some of which were pure dark-blue, others white. The treasurer of the demigods, Kuvera, gave his eight mystic treasures, and the rulers of various planets each presented their own opulences. The Supreme Lord having come to the earth, O King, these demigods now offered Him whatever powers of control He had previously delegated to them for the exercise of their particular authority. After transporting all His subjects to the new city by the power of His mystic *Yoga-māyā*, Lord Krishna consulted with Lord Balarama, who had remained in Mathura to protect it. Then, wearing a garland of lotuses but bearing no weapons, Lord Krishna went out of Mathura by its main gate.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 49 » Verses 1–57 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*

THE SOURCE OF TRANSCENDENTAL BLISS

Disciples of His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The philosopher Aristotle once argued that the Supreme God would hardly take part in human activities, since all ordinary activities are unworthy of such a divine being. Similarly, Srila Vishva-

natha Chakravarti, who almost certainly never read the works of Aristotle, raises a similar point. Since Sri Krishna creates, maintains and annihilates the entire universe, isn't it an uninteresting mismatch when He fights against Jarasandha? The answer is as follows: The Lord plays the part of a human being and, expanding His pleasure potency, creates thrilling transcendental pastimes full of suspense and dynamic action. By the Lord's *Yoga-māyā* potency, He appears exactly like a human being, and thus we may enjoy the spectacle of the Supreme Person acting on the earthly stage. Undoubtedly, stubborn agnostics will argue that since Krishna is God, there is no real suspense involved. Such skeptics simply do not understand Krishna's attractive potency. Beauty and drama, even on the material stage, possess their own fascinating logic, and similarly we love Krishna for His own sake, we appreciate His beauty for its own sake, and we enjoy Krishna's pastimes because they are in fact wonderful in and of themselves. In fact, Krishna executes His pastimes not for a mundane egotistical purpose but for our pleasure. Thus the presentation of spiritual pastimes is itself an act of love that Krishna performs for the infinite spiritual happiness of pure-hearted souls who have transcended material envy of the Godhead. In this regard, Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti quotes an important verse from the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad: narākṛti para-brahma kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ*. "The Supreme Absolute Truth, for His own purpose, appears in a humanlike form, although He is the source of everything." Similarly, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32) we find, *yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanaṁ*: "The source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend."

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 50 » Verse 30 » Purport by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*

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Srila Jiva Goswami

"Seeing Kalayavana, Lord Krishna thought for a moment. Then Krishna touched Balarama's hand and, in a secluded place, spoke to Balarama the

following words of advice: ‘Ready to fight with the Yadavas, ferocious Kalayavana now stands at the doorstep of Mathura City. The Yādava warriors are now reluctant to fight with him. If somehow the Yadavas agree to battle with him and his army, then Jarasandha, aware that the Yadavas are engaged with Kalayavana, will take the opportunity to enter Mathura City unhindered. Jarasandha’s army will then plunder Mathura and take all its citizens captive. Therefore We should make some plan to counter all these moves. All of Our associates, the citizens of Mathura, should take shelter of a very secure fortress, an unapproachable fortress very far from this place. This should be arranged at once. Then We will not be remiss in performing Our duty. We will then go far from this place. Far from here We will crush the enemy armies in battle. That the battle will be far from Vraja will be good for Vraja’s people.’

“That night Lord Krishna eagerly traveled in His airplane to a place in the ocean. With His mystic power He constructed a great city there, and then, traveling on the pathways of the sky, He brought all the people of Mathura to that city in the midst of the ocean. The people of Mathura, who had been sleeping the whole time, awakened in the morning to find themselves in a different place. They thought: ‘What kind of celestial city is this, surrounded on all sides by the ocean? How did we come here?’ By that time Krishna was back in Mathura City. It was as if He had stayed there the entire night and had not gone anywhere else. That morning we arrived in Mathura and saw Krishna and Balarama surrounded by Their earnest friends and associates. Then all the people of Vraja said: “O Nanda, O king of Vraja, we know very well that all this happened because of your good influence. Krishna learned all these expert strategies from you. O messengers, please tell us what happened then. Tell us everything.”

The two messengers said: “Then Krishna said to Balarama: ‘You stay here and protect Our friends and kinsmen. I will chase away this Kalayavana. I will fight with Kalayavana. I will extract the breath-of-life from his body. Then, opening a small door of the fort, remembering the Śruti-śāstra’s words ‘Fear comes from thinking one has no relationship with the Supreme’, and fully aware that He is the

Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, fearless Krishna went out from the fort.

“As Krishna departed from the fort, Kalayavana’s soldiers watched. They gazed at Krishna, who carried no weapons, whose ornaments and yellow garments were glorious, whose splendid dark form was like a raincloud with lightning, who glistened with great power, and who, at that moment, had four arms. Entranced by Krishna’s charming handsomeness, they had no power even to speak. How, then, could they lay a hand on Krishna? Somehow evading all those warriors, Krishna approached Kalayavana. It was then that Kalayavana saw Krishna.

“Understanding, because of the description he had heard from Devarṣi Nārada, that the enchanting dark person before him was indeed Krishna, and still feeling contempt for Krishna even though Krishna’s form was filled with the most wonderful bliss, and putting down his weapons because Krishna, then, carried no weapon, Kalayavana desired to fight with Krishna. Although Kalayavana yearned to fight with Krishna, Krishna did not wish to fight with him. As Kalayavana stood before Him, Krishna said to him: ‘I do not wish to touch a mleccha.’ When the mleccha-king Kalayavana tried to touch Him, Krishna fled.

“Kalayavana pursued Krishna. Krishna said to him: ‘If you touch me, that is your victory. If you cannot touch Me, that is your defeat.’ Step by step it seemed that Kalayavana was just about to touch Krishna. Swiftly Krishna ran. Krishna laughed. Krishna’s laughter was like nectar. Kalayavana pursued Krishna. Krishna ran and leapt. As he

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ran behind, Kalayavana felt his strength begin to wane.

“Thirty million yavana warriors waited as their king, Kalayavana, pursued Krishna but remained always unable to touch Him.” Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Southwest of Mathura, near the city of Dhavala-nagara, Lord Krishna, even as He was being rebuked by Kalayavana, ran into a mountain-cave. Rebuking Krishna with the words, ‘Where will You go now?’, Kalayavana ran into the cave to capture Krishna. Entering the cave, seeing there a very tall man rapt in sleep, and assuming the sleeping man to be Krishna, Kalayavana angrily said: ‘First You try to hide in this cave and now You pretend to sleep!’ Saying these words, Kalayavana angrily kicked the sleeping man. As he was kicking the sleeping man, Kalayavana was suddenly showered by a poison glance from that man. At once Kalayavana was burned into ashes. Thirsting to see what would happen, Lord Krishna hid and watched all of this.”

Sighing a great sigh of relief, the people of Vraja asked: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Then Sri Krishna, who is like the breath-of-life to you slowly, slowly approached that man and then showered upon him the nectar of a glance.” Upananda said: “Aha! It is he! He was born in the Andhaka dynasty. The person sleeping there must have been Mucukunda, who is like an abode of great devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is said that whoever awakened him would be burned up by the flames of his glance. All of this was clearly arranged by fate. Aware of Mucukunda’s condition, Krishna sought him out. Now please tell us of another of Krishna’s confidential and very expert actions.”

The two messengers said: “I will not say anything more of Lord Krishna’s expert skill. You are rather overcome by Lord Krishna’s sweetness. Still, it is not right that I describe Lord Krishna’s sweetness to you. It would only be vainly repeating and repeating what you all know very well. O leaders of the families of Vraja, what can I tell you about Krishna? You are all like *cātaka* birds that with glistening eyes taste the glorious nectar of gazing at the dark raincloud that is Sri Krishna. Please place within your ears the following melting-with-compassion words that very ancient

person Mucukunda spoke then to Lord Krishna. Mucukunda said: “O person with an effulgent dark form, why, alas, have You with Your delicate-like-a-new-grown-lotus-flower feet entered into this mountain-cave filled with sharp brambles and with sharp pebbles and jagged rocks?”

Hearing these descriptions spoken by the messengers, the saintly people of Vraja became overwhelmed with compassion. For some moments they wept. Then, their voices choked with emotion, they said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “His love for Krishna now awakened, the great soul Mucukunda then introduced himself, giving his name, family, and other particulars. When this was completed, smiling Krishna introduced Himself, His words as if caressing Mucukunda’s ears. Krishna and Mucukunda were both filled with love for each other. No longer interested in anything of the material world, and now attached to Sri Krishna, Mucukunda requested: ‘O Lord, , association with You is the only thing that will bring auspiciousness to me.’ Lord Krishna was not inclined, however, to grant that request at once. Only after some time would He be willing to grant it. We think the reason for this is given in the scriptural statements, ‘Only persons that know the truth about Him can attain the association of Lord Krishna,’ and ‘Association with Lord Krishna, who is like a glorious moon shining in your dynasty, is indeed difficult to attain’.

“It is also said: ‘One may easily attain spiritual peace, or one may easily attain oneness with the impersonal feature of the Lord, or one may even be able to see Lord Krishna directly. Still, one will not be able to even once touch Lord Krishna and have His company. These things are rare and difficult to attain.’” Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Understanding (that he must do something to become qualified to attain Lord Krishna’s association), Mucukunda again and again offered respectful obeisances to Lord Krishna, and then, determined to engage in devotional service, proceeded to perform austerities and serve Sri Krishna so that he could attain the personal association of Sri Krishna. eventually he did indeed attain the eternal association of Sri Krishna. As Krishna was engaged in defeating Kalayavana, Balarama diligently protected the city of Mathura. Then Krishna remembered His chariot

and paraphernalia. By that act they were all suddenly manifested before Him. Then Krishna returned to Mathura, blew His conchshell Panchajanya, and announced: 'Kalayavana is now dead.' When Krishna blew His conchshell, Balarama approached, blew His conchshell, and asked: 'What should We do? Please tell Us.' Then Krishna blew His conchshell and said: 'With Your plow and club You should kill all these worthless mlecchas.'

"Picking up His club, Lord Balarama joyfully attacked the enemy soldiers. Picking up His Nandaka sword, Krishna joyfully attacked the enemy also. We messengers do not know the details of the battle, but at the end thirty-million mleccha warriors were slain along with their horses and other military animals. As they were being slain, the mleccha warriors screamed many words in their filled-with-jumbled-sounds mleccha-language, sounds that filled the Yādava heroes with wonder, for they could not understand a word of it. The severed bearded heads of the mleccha-warriors were strewn, like palm-trees covered with black bees, over the ground.

Vraja's King Nanda said: "Then? Then?" The two messengers said: "Then Krishna and Balarama sent some men to dispose of the enemy corpses and gather whatever was valuable upon them. At that time we two messengers arrived in Mathura, informed Prime Minister Uddhava of our presence, heard from him the news of all that had happened, and, accompanied by two other messengers sent by Krishna, have returned now to your palace. The two messengers sent by Krishna have now learned that all is well with you, so please send them back to Mathura at once so they may reassure Krishna and Balarama." After hearing this report, Vraja's King Nanda fed the two messengers sent by Krishna, gave them gifts of garments, ornaments, and other things, and sent them, along with another pair of his own messengers, back to Mathura.

Bearing with them a message given by Vraja's King Nanda, the two pairs of messengers departed. When they arrived, they saw that the city of Mathura, normally filled with many sweet and saintly people, was now deserted.

Lamenting greatly, the messengers set out for Vraja. As they were traveling on the path, they heard this news: "Jarasandha is now chasing Krishna and Balarama in the direction of Dvaraka."

On hearing that news, the two messengers sent by Krishna eagerly set out on the path for Dvaraka. The two messengers sent by Vraja's King Nanda returned to Vraja to report what they had heard and to receive further instructions. Arriving in Vraja, they reported what they had heard. Hearing this report, Vraja's King Nanda and all the other people of Vraja became very worried. What will be gained by my describing and you hearing of these worries? After some days the two messengers that had gone to Dvaraka had still not, because the distance was so great, returned to Vraja. Then two glorious men riding on horses that had traversed 800 miles, arrived in Vraja. Approaching Vraja's King Nanda and bowing down before his lotus feet, the two messengers spoke these pleasing words: "Now that They have broken into pieces a great host of enemies, supremely auspicious, delicate, and powerful Krishna and Balarama have sent us here to offer obeisances at your feet."

When these words entered their ears, the people of Vraja, the hairs of their bodies now erect with bliss, said: "Then? Then?" The two messengers said: "Krishna and Balarama send this message: 'We are now happily staying in a fort that bears the name Dvaraka, a fort no enemy can enter. No visible or invisible danger can ever be seen within this fort. We can be happy only if you are happy also. Therefore, please send, without fail, regular news to Us. Then We will be happy.'

"His voice choked with emotion, Krishna spoke this message: 'Because of My relationship with you as your son, you suffered so many calamities in Gokula, calamities beginning with Pūtanās attempt to kill Me. Then, when I was in Mathura City, there were other calamities, calamities brought by Jarasandha, Kalayavana, and others. I will spend some time here in the fort of Dvaraka, but I also reassure you: Soon I will return to Vraja.' " After hearing this message, the gopa-king Nanda said: "Destiny has brought Krishna to this fort. As Gokula had become before, so the city of Mathura also became a place full of dangers. So be it. Afterwards we will hear all the details. For now all of you please give some food to these two messengers."

After the messengers had taken their meal, Vraja's King Nanda, accompanied by all the people of Vraja, and very eager to hear the news of Sri Krishna, approached the two messengers and asked: "Under what circumstances did Krishna and Balarama set out on the path to Dvaraka? Under what circumstances? Please tell us." The two messengers said: "We are the servants of Srīman Uddhava. Commanded by Uddhava, who has taken shelter of the Yadava-king Krishna, we have come here to deliver the following message: Krishna and Balarama did not desire to keep the wealth taken from the fallen mlechha warriors. However, they kept that wealth as wealth belonging to the kingdom. Then Jarasandha, who had no power to see what should and what should not be done, attacked Mathura again, as he had done many times before. Seeing that the attacker was Jarasandha again, Krishna and Balarama playfully fled from him. As Jarasandha came close, Krishna called out to him:

"Many times in the past we defeated you, captured you, and then released you. You have no inclination to be embarrassed by all this. O Jarasandha, if it were proper for Me to kill you now, then why would I flee from you? Catch Me, if you have the power. If you cannot catch Me, then I have defeated you.' After speaking these words, Lord Krishna continued His pastime of fleeing, in jest, from Jarasandha. Leaving his own army behind for its own safety, Jarasandha entered in the midst of Krishna's army. Doggedly he pursued Krishna and Balarama. He did not pursue alone. Twenty-three *akṣauhiṇī* divisions of chariot warriors followed him.

"Although he pursued very swiftly, Jarasandha, whose sins were so horrible they defy any description with words, could not catch Krishna and Balarama. No one dared touch Krishna and Balarama as They fled from Jarasandha's army, for Krishna and Balarama seemed to be like two lightning bolts. At each step it seemed Jarasandha was just about to catch Krishna and Balarama, but the truth is that Jarasandha had no power to catch Them. He could not catch Them even after ten million kalpas. After some time, Jarasandha's army became exhausted, although Jarasandha himself was not exhausted. Then Jarasandha became exhausted, but Krishna and Balarama were not exhausted at all.

"Krishna and Balarama joked and laughed as They fled. Jarasandha angrily roared in pursuit. Joking and laughter gave strength to Krishna and Balarama. The flames of anger weakened Jarasandha. The lotus flowers of Their faces blooming with bliss, Krishna and Balarama fled. Seeing Jarasandha's angry frustration as he pursued, the demigods laughed. Sometimes Krishna and Balarama proceeded with playful teasing slowness. Even then They remained out of reach. Unable to catch Them, Jarasandha cursed his own life's-breath. Krishna and Balarama then climbed an 88-mile-high mountain. Jarasandha had no power to climb that mountain. Even though in the past Krishna had swallowed forest-fires, Jarasandha's soldiers thought they could harm Krishna by building a great fire around Him. Gathering kindling from afar, They set that mountain, which was named Pravarshana, on fire.

"What we say is the truth. You may believe it or not. Krishna and Balarama jumped down from that mountain and entered Dvaraka City. At that time there was a great uproar of many birds flying away from that mountain. At that moment no one could see Krishna and Balarama as They jumped down. Although They had jumped from such a great distance, Krishna and Balarama were not hurt in the least. When They arrived at the gates of Dvaraka City, They were both seen to be pleasantly smiling. Their hair and garments still neatly bound, perspiration anointing Their faces and garments, and free from any hurt of anxiety, Krishna and Balarama stood before the people of Dvaraka."

Vraja's King Nanda said: "Jarasandha and the other sinful demons must have departed and returned to their places." The two messengers said: "Although they were not blinded in their eyes, Jarasandha and his followers were blinded in their intelligence, for they thought of Lord Krishna as their enemy. Thinking Krishna their enemy, Jarasandha and his followers rejoiced. Later, when they heard from a spy that Krishna had not died at all, Jarasandha and his followers were filled with grief. Traveling on the path that runs through the desert, they were all tormented by thirst. Some few returned, with great difficul-



ty, to their homes. Most of them perished. What more need we say? Jarasandha made no effort to claim the wealth left behind by the mlechha-king Kalayavana. Eventually that wealth was used to beautify the city of Dvaraka.”

After hearing this narration spoken in the assembly, Vraja’s King Nanda wept, laughed, and sighed. After some time he said: “Alas! How did the feet of Krishna and Balarama, feet soft like flowers, traverse that very hard and rough path?” The two messengers said: “Actually Krishna and Balarama floated in the air. Their feet only seemed to lightly touch the ground.” After speaking these words, the two messengers, overcome by the kindness the people of Vraja offered to them, set out for Dvaraka. As they were about to depart, the gopa-king Nanda and his followers gave them a letter for Lord Krishna. The letter said: “We can somehow tolerate the pain of being separated from You. Please don’t

worry about us, O Krishna like a moon shining in Gokula. The fact that You are now staying in a fortress-city the demons have no power to enter is like a nectar that makes us all very strong and healthy.”

Then Snigdhantha concluded his narration by saying: Although He remained playful and joyful even in the midst of battle, Krishna still killed His enemies very quickly. (O King Nanda), if He did not do so, then how would it be possible for Him to quickly return to Vraja and stay there at your side?

—Sri Gopāla-Campū of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī » Translation by Kushakratha Das