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LORD KRISHNA FIGHTS WITH BANASURA

Srila Shukadeva Gosvami

Shukadeva Gosvami said: O descendant of Bharata, the relatives of Aniruddha, not seeing Him return, continued to lament as the four rainy months passed. After hearing from Narada the news of Aniruddha's deeds and His capture, the Vrishnis, who worshiped Lord Krishna as their personal Deity, went to Shonitapura. With Lord Balarama and Lord Krishna in the lead, the chiefs of the Satvata clan Pradyumna, Satyaki, Gada, Samba, Sarana, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others converged with an army of twelve divisions and laid siege to Banasura's capital, completely surrounding the city on all sides. Banasura became filled with anger upon seeing them destroy his city's suburban gardens, ramparts, watchtowers and gateways, and thus he went out to confront them with an army of equal size. Lord Rudra, accompanied by his son Kartikeya and the Pramathas, came riding on Nandi, his bull carrier, to fight Balarama and Krishna on Bana's behalf. A most astonishing, tumultuous and hair-raising battle then commenced, with Lord

Krishna matched against Lord Shankara, and Pradyumna against Kartikeya. Lord Balarama fought with Kumbhanda and Kupakarna, Samba with Bana's son, and Satyaki with Bana. Brahma and the other ruling demigods, along with Siddhas, Caranas and great sages, as well as Gandharvas, Apsaras and Yakshas, all came in their celestial airplanes to watch. With sharp-pointed arrows discharged from His bow Sharanga, Lord Krishna drove away the various followers of Lord Shiva- Bhutas, Praamathas, Guhyakas, Dakinis, Yatudhanas, Vetalas, Vinayakas, Pretas, Matas, Pishacas, Kushmandas and Brahma-rakshasas. Lord Shiva, wielder of the trident, shot various weapons at Lord Krishna, wielder of Sharanga. But Lord Krishna was not in the least perplexed: He neutralized all these weapons with appropriate counterweapons. Lord Krishna counteracted a brahmastra with another brahmastra, a wind weapon with a mountain weapon, a fire weapon with a rain weapon, and Lord Shiva's personal pashupatastra weapon with His own personal weapon, the narayanastra. After bewildering Lord Shiva by making him yawn with a yawning

nityam bhāgavata-sevayā

weapon, Lord Krishna proceeded to strike down Banasura's army with His sword, club and arrows. Lord Kartikeya was distressed by the flood of Pradyumna's arrows raining down from all sides, and thus he fled the battlefield on his peacock as blood poured from his limbs. Kumbhanda and Kupakarna, tormented by Lord Balarama's club, fell down dead. When the soldiers of these two demons saw that their leaders had been killed, they scattered in all directions.

Banasura was furious to see his entire military force being torn apart. Leaving his fight with Satyaki, he charged across the battlefield on his chariot and attacked Lord Krishna. Excited to a frenzy by the fighting, Bana simultaneously pulled taut all the strings of his five hundred bows and fixed two arrows on each string. Lord Sri Hari split every one of Banasura's bows simultaneously, and also struck down his chariot driver, chariot and horses. The Lord then sounded His conchshell. Just then Banasura's mother, Kotara, desiring to save her son's life, appeared before Lord Krishna naked and with her hair undone. Lord Gadagraja turned His face away to avoid seeing the naked woman, and Banasura deprived of his chariot, his bow shattered took the opportunity to flee into his city.

After Lord Shiva's followers had been driven away, the Shiva-jvara, who had three heads and three feet, pressed forward to attack Lord Krishna. As the Shiva-jvara approached, he seemed to burn everything in the ten directions. Seeing this personified weapon approach, Lord Narayana then released His own personified fever weapon, the Vishnu-jvara. The Shiva-jvara and Vishnu-jvara thus battled each other. The Shiva-jvara, overwhelmed by the strength of the Vishnu-jvara, cried out in pain. But finding no refuge, the frightened Shiva-jvara approached Lord Krishna, the master of the senses, hoping to attain His shelter. Thus with joined palms he began to praise the Lord.

[The Shiva-jvara said:] I bow down to You of unlimited potencies, the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul of all beings. You possess pure and complete consciousness and are the cause of cosmic creation, maintenance and dissolution. Perfectly peaceful, You are the Absolute Truth to whom the

Vedas indirectly refer. Time; fate; karma; the jiva and his propensities; the subtle material elements; the material body; the life air; false ego; the various senses; and the totality of these as reflected in the living being's subtle body all this constitutes your material illusory energy, *māyā*, an endless cycle like that of seed and plant. I take shelter of You, the negation of this *māyā*. With various intentions, You perform pastimes to maintain the demigods, the saintly persons and the codes of religion for this world. By these pastimes You also kill those who stray from the right path and live by violence. Indeed, your present incarnation is meant to relieve the earth's burden. I am tortured by the fierce power of Your terrible fever weapon, which is cold yet burning. All embodied souls must suffer as long as they remain bound to material ambitions and thus averse to serving Your feet.

[The Supreme Lord said:] O three-headed one, I am pleased with you. May your fear of My fever weapon be dispelled, and may whoever remembers our conversation here have no reason to fear you. Thus addressed, the Maheshvarajvara bowed down to the infallible Lord and went away. But Banasura then appeared, riding forth on his chariot to fight Lord Krishna. Carrying numerous weapons in his thousand hands, O King, the terribly infuriated demon shot many arrows at Lord Krishna, the carrier of the disc weapon. As Bana continued hurling weapons at Him, the Supreme Lord began using His razor-sharp cakra to cut off Banasura's arms as if they were tree branches. Lord Shiva felt compassion for his devotee Banasura, whose arms were being cut off, and thus he approached Lord Cakrayudha [Krishna] and spoke to Him as follows.

[Sri Rudra said:] You alone are the Absolute Truth, the supreme light, the mystery hidden within the verbal manifestation of the Absolute. Those whose hearts are spotless can see You, for You are uncontaminated, like the sky. The sky is Your navel, fire Your face, water Your semen, and heaven Your head. The cardinal directions are Your sense of hearing, herbal plants the hairs on Your body, and water-bearing clouds the hair on Your head. The earth is Your foot, the moon Your mind, and the sun Your vision, while I am Your ego. The ocean is Your abdomen, Indra Your arm, Lord Brahma Your intelligence, the progenitor of

mankind Your genitals, and religion Your heart. You are indeed the original *puruṣa*, creator of the worlds. Your current descent into the material realm, O Lord of unrestricted power, is meant for upholding the principles of justice and benefiting the entire universe. We demigods, each depending on Your grace and authority, develop the seven planetary systems. You are the original person, one without a second, transcendental and self-manifesting. Uncaused, you are the cause of all, and You are the ultimate controller. You are nonetheless perceived in terms of the transformations of matter effected by Your illusory energy transformations. You sanction so that the various material qualities can fully manifest. O almighty one, just as the sun, though hidden by a cloud, illuminates the cloud and all other visible forms as well, so You, although hidden by the material qualities, remain self-luminous and thus reveal all those qualities, along with the living entities who possess them.

Their intelligence bewildered by Your *māyā*, fully attached to children, wife, home and so on, persons immersed in the ocean of material misery sometimes rise to the surface and sometimes sink down. One who has attained this human form of life as a gift from God, yet who fails to control his senses and honor Your feet, is surely to be pitied, for he is only cheating himself. That mortal who rejects You his true Self, dearest friend, and Lord for the sake of sense objects, whose nature is just the opposite, refuses nectar and instead consumes poison. I, Lord Brahma, the other demigods and the pure-minded sages have all surrendered wholeheartedly unto You, our dearest Self and Lord. Let us worship You, the Supreme Lord, to be freed from material life. You are the maintainer of the universe and the cause of its creation and demise. Equiposed and perfectly at peace, You are the true friend, Self and worshipable Lord. You are one without a second, the shelter of all the worlds and all souls.

This Banasura is my dear and faithful follower, and I have awarded him freedom from fear. Therefore, my Lord, please grant him Your mercy, just as You showed mercy to Prahlada, the lord of the demons.

[The Supreme Lord said:] My dear lord, for your pleasure We must certainly do what you have requested of Us. I fully agree with your conclusion.



I will not kill this demonic son of Vairocāni, for I gave Prahlaḍa Maharaja the benediction that I would not kill any of his descendants. It was to subdue Banasura's false pride that I severed his arms. And I slew his mighty army because it had become a burden upon the earth. This demon, who still has four arms, will be immune to old age and death, and he will serve as one of your principal attendants. Thus he will have nothing to fear on any account.

Thus attaining freedom from fear, Banasura offered obeisances to Lord Krishna by touching his head to the ground. Bana then seated Aniruddha and His bride on their chariot and brought them before the Lord. At the front of the party Lord Krishna then placed Aniruddha and His bride, both beautifully adorned with fine clothes and ornaments, and surrounded them with a full military division. Thus Lord Krishna took His leave of Lord Shiva and departed. The Lord then entered His capital. The city was lavishly decorated with flags and victory arches, and its avenues and crossways were all sprinkled with water. As conchshells, anakas and dundubhi drums resounded, the Lord's relatives, the brahmanas and the general populace all came forward

to greet Him respectfully. Whoever rises early in the morning and remembers Lord Krishna's victory in His battle with Lord Shiva will never experience defeat.

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 63 » Verses 1-53 » The Supreme Personality of Godhead
» By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda

LORD SHIVA VERSES LORD KRISHNA
Disciples of His Divine Grace
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Previously the Shiva-jvara felt himself to be unlimitedly powerful and thus attempted to burn Sri Krishna. But now he himself has been burned, and understanding that Sri Krishna is the Supreme Lord, he humbly approaches to bow down and offer praise to the Absolute Truth. According to the acharyas, the word *sarvātmānam* indicates that Lord Sri Krishna is the Supersoul, the giver of consciousness to all living beings. Krishna confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15): *mat-ṭaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*. "From Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness." In his commentary Srīla Viṣvānātha Cakravartī emphasizes that the Shiva-jvara has real-

ized in many ways Lord Krishna's supremacy over his own master, Lord Shiva. Thus the Shiva-jvara addresses Krishna as *ananta-śakti*, "possessor of unlimited potency"; *pareśa*, "the supreme controller"; and *sarvātmā*, "the Supersoul of all beings"—even of Lord Shiva. The words *kevalam jñapti-mātram* indicate that Lord Krishna possesses pure omniscience. According to our limited understanding, we act in this world, but Lord Krishna, with His unlimited understanding, performs infinite works of creation, maintenance and annihilation. As Srila Jiva Gosvami points out, even the functions of the gross elements, such as air, depend on Him. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8.1) confirms this: *bhīśāsmād vātaḥ-pavate*. "Out of fear of Him, the wind blows." Thus, Lord Sri Krishna is the ultimate object of worship for all living beings.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 63 » Verse: 26 » The Supreme Personality of Godhead » Puport the disciples of By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN KALI-YUGA

Brajsundar Das

The institution of marriage is another victim of age of Kali. Today, marriage is often seen as a mere legal formality, with some people dismissing it as "just a piece of paper." They forget the spiritual purpose of marriage and treat it merely as a physical relationship. Many avoid the responsibilities and commitments of marriage, opting instead for casual relationships.

Such people argue that "sex is natural." While this may be true, they ignore the fact that pregnancy and childbirth are also natural. For a child, it is natural to have a loving father and mother who remain together throughout their lives. Studies confirm that children thrive when cared for by both parents. Therefore, it is clear that sex should be accompanied by the commitment of marriage.

But hypocrites twist this logic to justify unrestricted relationships. Ironically, they use unnatural contraceptives to avoid the natural outcome of sex—pregnancy. These contraceptives, which do not grow on trees, are far from natural. This con-

tradition highlights the foolishness and hypocrisy of modern society.

In this age, people also neglect simple practices that elevate the human spirit. One example is the use of religious ornaments. Vaishnavas, for instance, wear tilaka on their bodies, which is sanctified with the holy name of God. Such practices remind us of our spiritual purpose and connection with the divine. However, in Kali-yuga, even these basic formalities are discarded without thought.

In conclusion, Kali-yuga is marked by hypocrisy, ignorance, and a loss of values. Yet, by following genuine spiritual practices, such as those prescribed in the Vedic tradition, one can rise above the confusion of this age and live a life of purity, devotion, and true happiness. Let us reflect on these truths and strive for a better, more spiritual society.

— Editorial

THE MOST POWERFUL ENERGY

Srila Bhakti Tirtha Swami

Sexual energy is the most powerful energy we have. In order to grow spiritually, we must learn to master it. Despite this society's emphasis on sexual activity, underneath it all everyone simply wants to give and receive love, not lust. When we express our sexuality with love, we can raise our level of consciousness; but when we are under the sway of lust, sexuality can lower our consciousness. We can become divine beings or mindless beasts.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada

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Our failure to understand the spiritual aspects of sexuality and procreation has become a serious problem. Gradually the planet is becoming overpopulated with lower-level beings, simply because people engage in sexual activity without being accountable. Self-centered persons who use others as pleasure units cannot expect to give birth to selfless, compassionate, devoted souls. How can such unions produce anything divine? No highly evolved soul would be attracted to such a situation. We must all be more thoughtful about our sexual conduct. We can easily become distracted by material comforts, and even by sex life itself, to the point that we forget about the importance of genuine love. We must learn to be more loving to one another and more skilled at developing strong, lasting relationships. An enduring relationship, in the form of a committed, loving marriage, provides an invaluable opportunity for a man and a woman to express their sexuality in a spiritual context.

In a marriage, husbands and wives should view their partners as gifts from God. Spouses who think in this way, understanding that the Lord has entrusted someone to their care, will be careful to treat their partners in a nurturing manner that pleases the Lord. Marriages established and maintained on such a foundation are extremely loving and sweet, and the children of such a union grow up in a wonderfully supportive atmosphere. When the couple does join in sexual union, both parties should want the encounter and consider it divine. The experience then becomes an inspiring, profound expression of love. Each time they come together, the man and woman should remember that the ultimate expression of sexuality is the birth of a child. For this reason, they should not use contraceptives or resort to abortion, because these are interferences with the sacred purpose of sexuality. Contraception is not natural, although it is an accepted practice today. We must be careful not to confuse sociological considerations with spiritual ones. A man and a woman may not want to conceive a child because they lack the financial means to support a new family member, or because they do not feel psychologically ready. But these circumstances are different from the



spiritual realities of the situation. Spiritually, when a man and a woman give themselves to each other in sexual union, they must be ready for the natural consequences. Their spiritual consciousness should take priority, guiding them to understand the use of contraceptives from a spiritual perspective rather than a material one.

— *Spiritual Warrior 2, Transforming Lust into Love* » by Srila Bhakti Tirtha Swami

