

## CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

### The Syamantaka Jewel

This chapter describes how Lord Kṛṣṇa recovered the Syamantaka jewel to allay false accusations against Him and married the daughters of Jāmbavān and Satrājit. By enacting the pastime involving the Syamantaka jewel, the Lord demonstrated the futility of material wealth.

When Śukadeva Gosvāmī mentioned that King Satrājit offended Lord Kṛṣṇa on account of the Syamantaka jewel, King Parīkṣit became curious to hear the details of this incident. Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī narrated the story.

King Satrājit received the Syamantaka gem by the grace of his best well-wisher, the sun-god, Sūrya. After fastening the gem to a chain, which he then hung around his neck, Satrājit traveled to Dvārakā. The residents, thinking he was the sun-god himself, went to Kṛṣṇa and told Him that Lord Sūrya had come to take His audience. But Kṛṣṇa replied that the man who had come was not Sūrya but King Satrājit, who looked extremely effulgent because he was wearing the Syamantaka jewel.

In Dvārakā Satrājit installed the precious stone on a special altar in his home. Every day the gem produced a large quantity of gold, and it had the additional power of assuring that wherever it was properly worshiped no calamity could occur.

On one occasion Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa requested Satrājit to give the gem to the King of the Yadus, Ugrasena. But Satrājit refused, obsessed as he was with greed. Shortly thereafter Satrājit's brother Prasena left the city to hunt on horseback, wearing the Syamantaka jewel on his neck. On the road a lion killed Prasena and took the jewel away to a mountain cave, where the king of the bears, Jāmbavān, happened to be living. Jāmbavān killed the lion and gave the jewel to his son to play with.

When King Satrājit's brother did not return, the King presumed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had killed him for the Syamantaka gem. Lord Kṛṣṇa heard about this rumor circulating among the general populace, and to clear His name He went with some of the citizens to find Prasena. Following his path, they eventually found his body and that of his horse lying on the road. Further

on they saw the body of the lion Jāmbavān had killed. Lord Kṛṣṇa told the citizens to remain outside the cave while He went in to investigate.

The Lord entered Jāmbavān's cave and saw the Syamantaka jewel lying next to a child. But when Kṛṣṇa tried to take the jewel, the child's nurse cried out in alarm, bringing Jāmbavān quickly to the scene. Jāmbavān considered Kṛṣṇa an ordinary man and began fighting with Him. For twenty-eight days continuously the two fought, until finally Jāmbavān grew weak from the Lord's blows. Now understanding that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Jāmbavān began to praise Him. The Lord touched Jāmbavān with His lotus hand, dispelling his fear, and then explained everything about the jewel. With great devotion Jāmbavān gladly presented the Syamantaka jewel to the Lord, together with his unmarried daughter, Jāmbavatī.

Meanwhile Lord Kṛṣṇa's companions, having waited twelve days for Kṛṣṇa to come out of the cave, returned to Dvārakā despondent. All of Kṛṣṇa's friends and family members became extremely sorrowful and began regularly worshiping Goddess Durgā to assure the Lord's safe return. Even as they performed this worship, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the city in the company of His new wife. He summoned Satrājīt to the royal assembly and, after recounting to him the entire story of the Syamantaka jewel's recovery, gave the jewel back to him. Satrājīt accepted the jewel, but with great shame and remorse. He went back to his home, and there he decided to offer Lord Kṛṣṇa not only the jewel but also his daughter so as to atone for the offense he had committed against the Lord's lotus feet. Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the hand of Satrājīt's daughter, Satyabhāmā, who was endowed with all divine qualities. But the jewel He refused, returning it to King Satrājīt.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having offended Lord Kṛṣṇa, Satrājīt tried as best he could to atone by presenting Him with his daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

Text 2:

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O brāhmaṇa, what did King Satrājīt do to offend Lord Kṛṣṇa? Where did he get the Syamantaka jewel, and why did he give his daughter to the Supreme Lord?

Text 3:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Sūrya, the sun-god, felt great affection for his devotee Satrājīṭ. Acting as his greatest friend, the demigod gave him the jewel called Syamantaka as a token of his satisfaction.

Text 4:

Wearing the jewel on his neck, Satrājīṭ entered Dvārakā. He shone as brightly as the sun itself, O King, and thus he went unrecognized because of the jewel's effulgence.

Text 5:

As the people looked at Satrājīṭ from a distance, his brilliance blinded them. They presumed he was the sun-god, Sūrya, and went to tell Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was at that time playing at dice.

Text 6:

[The residents of Dvārakā said:] Obeisances unto You, O Nārāyaṇa, O holder of the conch, disc and club, O lotus-eyed Dāmodara, O Govinda, O cherished descendant of Yadu!

Text 7:

Lord Savitā has come to see You, O Lord of the universe. He is blinding everyone's eyes with his intensely effulgent rays.

Text 8:

The most exalted demigods in the three worlds are certainly anxious to seek You out, O Lord, now that You have hidden Yourself among the Yadu dynasty. Thus the unborn sun-god has come to see You here.

Text 9:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Hearing these innocent words, the lotus-eyed Lord smiled broadly and said, "This is not the sun-god, Ravi, but rather Satrājīṭ, who is glowing because of his jewel."

Text 10:

King Satrājīṭ entered his opulent home, festively executing auspicious rituals. He had qualified brāhmaṇas install the Syamantaka jewel in the house's temple room.

Text 11:

Each day the gem would produce eight bhāras of gold, my dear Prabhu, and the place in which it was kept and properly worshiped would be free of calamities such as famine or untimely death, and also of evils like snake bites, mental and physical disorders and the presence of deceitful persons.

Text 12:

On one occasion Lord Kṛṣṇa requested Satrājīt to give the jewel to the Yadu king, Ugrasena, but Satrājīt was so greedy that he refused. He gave no thought to the seriousness of the offense he committed by denying the Lord's request.

Text 13:

Once Satrājīt's brother, Prasena, having hung the brilliant jewel about his neck, mounted a horse and went hunting in the forest.

Text 14:

A lion killed Prasena and his horse and took the jewel. But when the lion entered a mountain cave he was killed by Jāmbavān, who wanted the jewel.

Text 15:

Within the cave Jāmbavān let his young son have the Syamantaka jewel as a toy to play with. Meanwhile Satrājīt, not seeing his brother return, became deeply troubled.

Text 16:

He said, "Kṛṣṇa probably killed my brother, who went to the forest wearing the jewel on his neck." The general populace heard this accusation and began whispering it in one another's ears.

Text 17:

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard this rumor, He wanted to remove the stain on His reputation. So He took some of Dvārakā's citizens with Him and set out to retrace Prasena's path.

Text 18:

In the forest they found Prasena and his horse, both killed by the lion. Further on they found the lion dead on a mountainside, slain by Ṛkṣa [Jāmbavān].

Text 19:

The Lord stationed His subjects outside the terrifying, pitch-dark cave of the king of the bears, and then He entered alone.

Text 20:

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the most precious of jewels had been made into a child's plaything. Determined to take it away, He approached the child.

Text 21:

The child's nurse cried out in fear upon seeing that extraordinary person standing before them. Jāmbavān, strongest of the strong, heard her cries and angrily ran toward the Lord.

Text 22:

Unaware of His true position and thinking Him an ordinary man, Jāmbavān angrily began fighting with the Supreme Lord, his master.

Text 23:

The two fought furiously in single combat, each determined to win. Contending against each other with various weapons and then with stones, tree trunks and finally their bare arms, they struggled like two hawks battling over a piece of flesh.

Text 24:

The fight went on without rest for twenty-eight days, the two opponents striking each other with their fists, which fell like the cracking blows of lightning.

Text 25:

His bulging muscles pummeled by the blows of Lord Kṛṣṇa's fists, his strength faltering and his limbs perspiring, Jāmbavān, greatly astonished, finally spoke to the Lord.

Text 26:

[Jāmbavān said:] I know now that You are the life air and the sensory, mental and bodily strength of all living beings. You are Lord Viṣṇu, the original person, the supreme, all-powerful controller.

Text 27:

You are the ultimate creator of all creators of the universe, and of everything created You are the underlying substance. You are the subduer of all subduers, the Supreme Lord and Supreme Soul of all souls.

Text 28:

You are He who impelled the ocean to give way when His sidelong glances, slightly manifesting His anger, disturbed the crocodiles and timingila fish within the watery depths. You are He who built a great bridge to establish His fame, who burned down the city of Laṅkā, and whose arrows severed the heads of Rāvaṇa, which then fell to the ground.

Texts 29-30:

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O King, Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed the king of the bears, who had understood the truth. The lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, touched Jāmbavān with His hand, which bestows all blessings, and spoke to His devotee with sublime compassion, His grave voice deeply resounding like a cloud.

Text 31:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is for this jewel, O lord of the bears, that we have come to your cave. I intend to use the jewel to disprove the false accusations against Me.

Text 32:

Thus addressed, Jāmbavān happily honored Lord Kṛṣṇa by offering Him his maiden daughter, Jāmbavatī, together with the jewel.

Text 33:

After Lord Śāuri had entered the cave, the people of Dvārakā who had accompanied Him had waited twelve days without seeing Him come out again. Finally they had given up and returned to their city in great sorrow.

Text 34:

When Devakī, Rukmiṇī-devī, Vasudeva and the Lord's other relatives and friends heard that He had not come out of the cave, they all lamented.

Text 35:

Cursing Satrājīṭ, the sorrowful residents of Dvārakā approached the Durgā deity named Candrabhāgā and prayed to her for Kṛṣṇa's return.

Text 36:

When the citizens had finished worshipping the demigoddess, she spoke to them in response, promising to grant their request. Just then Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had achieved His purpose, appeared before them in the company of His new wife, filling them with joy.

Text 37:

Seeing Lord Hṛṣīkeśa return as if from death, accompanied by His new wife and wearing the Syamantaka jewel on His neck, all the people were roused to jubilation.

Text 38:

Lord Kṛṣṇa summoned Satrājīṭ to the royal assembly. There, in the presence of King Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa announced the recovery of the jewel and then formally presented it to Satrājīṭ.

Text 39:

Hanging his head in great shame, Satrājīṭ took the gem and returned home, all the while feeling remorse for his sinful behavior.

Texts 40-42:

Pondering over his grievous offense and worried about the possibility of conflict with the Lord's mighty devotees, King Satrājīṭ thought, "How can I cleanse myself of my contamination, and how may Lord Acyuta become satisfied with me? What can I do to regain my good fortune and avoid being cursed by the populace for being so short-sighted, miserly, foolish and avaricious? I shall give my daughter, the jewel of all women, to the Lord, together with the Syamantaka jewel. That, indeed, is the only proper way to pacify Him."

Text 43:

Having thus intelligently made up his mind, King Satrājīit personally arranged to present Lord Kṛṣṇa with his fair daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

Text 44:

The Lord married Satyabhāmā in proper religious fashion. Possessed of excellent behavior, along with beauty, broad-mindedness and all other good qualities, she had been sought by many men.

Text 45:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead told Satrājīit: We do not care to take this jewel back, O King. You are the sun-god's devotee, so let it stay in your possession. Thus We will also enjoy its benefits.