

CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE

Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

This chapter relates how Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after freeing the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha, mercifully gave them His audience and bestowed royal gifts upon them.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa freed the 20,800 kings Jarāsandha had imprisoned, they immediately fell to the ground to pay Him obeisances. Then they stood with joined palms and began to pray to Him. Seeing their imprisonment as an act of mercy by the Lord to smash their false pride, the kings prayed only to be granted whatever would facilitate their perpetual remembrance of His lotus feet.

The Lord assured the kings that their prayer would be fulfilled. He instructed them, “Worship Me by performing Vedic sacrifices, and protect your subjects in accordance with the principles of religion. Fixing your minds on Me, beget progeny, and remain always equipoised in happiness and distress. Thus at the end of your lives you will surely attain Me.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa then saw to it that the kings were properly bathed and dressed, and He had Sahadeva offer them flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, fine clothing and other things suitable for kings. After having them adorned with jewels and golden ornaments, He seated them on chariots and sent them off to their respective kingdoms. In accordance with the orders the Lord had given them, they began to carry out their various duties once again.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna then departed for Indraprastha, where they met with King Yudhiṣṭhira and related to him everything that had happened.

Texts 1-6:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Jarāsandha had defeated 20,800 kings in combat and thrown them into prison. As these kings emerged from the Giridronī fortress, they appeared dirty and shabbily dressed. They were emaciated by hunger, their faces were dried up, and they were greatly weakened by their long imprisonment.

Text 7:

The ecstasy of beholding Lord Kṛṣṇa having dispelled the weariness of their imprisonment, the kings stood with joined palms and offered words of praise to that supreme master of the senses.

Text 8:

The kings said: Obeisances to You, O Lord of the ruling demigods, O destroyer of Your surrendered devotees' distress. Since we have surrendered to You, O inexhaustible Kṛṣṇa, please save us from this terrible material life, which has made us so despondent.

Text 9:

O master, Madhusūdāna, we do not blame this King of Magadha, since it is actually by Your mercy that kings fall from their royal position, O almighty Lord.

Text 10:

Infatuated with his opulence and ruling power, a king loses all self-restraint and cannot obtain his true welfare. Thus bewildered by Your illusory energy, he imagines his temporary assets to be permanent.

Text 11:

Just as men of childish intelligence consider a mirage in the desert to be a pond of water, so those who are irrational look upon the illusory transformations of Māyā as substantial.

Texts 12-13:

Previously, blinded by the intoxication of riches, we wanted to conquer this earth, and thus we fought one another to achieve victory, mercilessly harassing our own subjects. We arrogantly disregarded You, O Lord, who stood before us as death. But now, O Kṛṣṇa, that powerful form of Yours called time, moving mysteriously and irresistibly, has deprived us of our opulences. Now that You have mercifully destroyed our pride, we beg simply to remember Your lotus feet.

Text 14:

Never again will we hanker for a miragelike kingdom — a kingdom that must be slavishly served by this mortal body, which is simply a source of disease and suffering and which is declining at every moment. Nor, O

almighty Lord, will we hanker to enjoy the heavenly fruits of pious work in the next life, since the promise of such rewards is simply an empty enticement for the ears.

Text 15:

Please tell us how we may constantly remember Your lotus feet, though we continue in the cycle of birth and death in this world.

Text 16:

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, Hari, the son of Vasudeva. That Supreme Soul, Govinda, vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to Him.

Text 17:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the kings, now freed from bondage, glorified the Supreme Lord. Then, my dear Parīkṣit, that merciful bestower of shelter spoke to them in a gentle voice.

Text 18:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: From now on, my dear kings, you will have firm devotion to Me, the Supreme Self and the Lord of all that be. I assure you this will come to pass, just as you desire.

Text 19:

Fortunately you have come to the proper conclusion, my dear kings, and what you have spoken is true. I can see that human beings' lack of self-restraint, which arises from their intoxication with opulence and power, simply leads to madness.

Text 20:

Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Veṇa, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and many other rulers of demigods, men and demons fell from their elevated positions because of infatuation with material opulence.

Text 21:

Understanding that this material body and everything connected with it have a beginning and an end, worship Me by Vedic sacrifices, and with clear intelligence protect your subjects in accordance with the principles of religion.

Text 22:

As you live your lives, begetting generations of progeny and encountering happiness and distress, birth and death, always keep your minds fixed on Me.

Text 23:

Be detached from the body and everything connected to it. Remaining self-satisfied, steadfastly keep your vows while concentrating your minds fully on Me. In this way you will ultimately attain Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Text 24:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed the kings, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all the worlds, engaged male and female servants in bathing and grooming them.

Text 25:

O descendant of Bharata, the Lord then had King Sahadeva honor them with offerings of clothing, jewelry, garlands and sandalwood paste, all suitable for royalty.

Text 26:

After they had been properly bathed and adorned, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw to it that they dined on excellent food. He also presented them with various items befitting the pleasure of kings, such as betel nut.

Text 27:

Honored by Lord Mukunda and freed from tribulation, the kings shone splendidly, their earrings gleaming, just as the moon and other celestial bodies shine brilliantly in the sky at the end of the rainy season.

Text 28:

Then the Lord arranged for the kings to be seated on chariots drawn by fine horses and adorned with jewels and gold, and pleasing them with gracious words, He sent them off to their own kingdoms.

Text 29:

Thus liberated from all difficulty by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of personalities, the kings departed, and as they went they thought only of Him, the Lord of the universe, and of His wonderful deeds.

Text 30:

The kings told their ministers and other associates what the Personality of Godhead had done, and then they diligently carried out the orders He had imparted to them.

Text 31:

Having arranged for Bhīmasena to kill Jarāsandha, Lord Keśava accepted worship from King Sahadeva and then departed with the two sons of Pṛthā.

Text 32:

When they arrived at Indraprastha, the victorious heroes blew their conchshells, bringing joy to their well-wishing friends and sorrow to their enemies.

Text 33:

The residents of Indraprastha were very pleased to hear that sound, for they understood that now the King of Magadha had been put to rest. King Yudhiṣṭhira felt that his desires were now fulfilled.

Text 34:

Bhīma, Arjuna and Janārdana offered their respects to the King and informed him fully about what they had done.

Text 35:

Upon hearing their account of the great favor Lord Keśava had mercifully shown him, King Dharmarāja shed tears of ecstasy. He felt such love that he could not say anything.