

CHAPTER FIFTY

Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

This chapter relates how Lord Kṛṣṇa defeated Jarāsandha seventeen times in battle and then constructed the city of Dvārakā.

After Kāṁsa was killed, his two queens, Asti and Prāpti, went to the home of their father, Jarāsandha, and sorrowfully described to him how Kṛṣṇa had made them widows. Upon hearing this account, King Jarāsandha became angry. He vowed to rid the earth of all the Yādavas, and he gathered an immense army to lay siege to Mathurā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw Jarāsandha attacking, the Lord considered the reasons for His descent to this world and then decided to destroy Jarāsandha’s army, which was a burden to the earth.

Two effulgent chariots suddenly appeared, equipped with drivers and furnishings, together with all the Lord’s personal weapons. Seeing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed Lord Baladeva, “My dear brother, Jarāsandha is now attacking Mathurā-purī, so please mount Your chariot and let Us go destroy the enemy’s army.” The two Lords took up Their weapons, mounted Their chariots and went forth from the city.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa came before His opponent’s army, He sounded His conchshell, striking fear into His enemies’ hearts. King Jarāsandha surrounded Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with his soldiers, chariots and so on, and the women of the city, having climbed up to the roofs of the palaces, became extremely unhappy because they could not see the Lords. Then Kṛṣṇa twanged His bow and started to rain down a torrent of arrows upon the enemy soldiers. Soon Jarāsandha’s unfathomable army had been annihilated.

Then Lord Baladeva arrested Jarāsandha and was about to bind him up with ropes when Śrī Kṛṣṇa had Baladeva release the King. Lord Kṛṣṇa reasoned that Jarāsandha would assemble another army and return again to fight; this would facilitate Kṛṣṇa’s goal of removing the earth’s burden. Released, Jarāsandha returned to Magadha and vowed to perform austerities with the aim of avenging his defeat. The other kings advised him that his defeat was only a reaction of his karma. Thus informed, King Jarāsandha withdrew to his kingdom with a heavy heart.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa rejoined the citizens of Mathurā, who began rejoicing, singing songs of triumph and arranging victory celebrations. The Lord brought all the warriors' jewelry and ornaments that had been picked up from the battlefield and presented them to Mahārāja Ugrasena.

Jarāsandha attacked the Yādavas in Mathurā seventeen times, and each time his armies were totally destroyed. Then, as Jarāsandha prepared to attack for the eighteenth time, a warrior named Kālayavana, who had been searching for a worthy opponent, was sent by Nārada Muni to fight the Yādavas. With thirty million soldiers Kālayavana laid siege to the Yādava capital. Lord Kṛṣṇa looked upon this attack with concern, for He knew that with Jarāsandha's arrival imminent, there was a serious danger that the simultaneous attack of these two enemies might endanger the Yādavas. Therefore the Lord constructed a wonderful city within the sea as a safe haven for the Yādavas; then He brought them all there by His mystic power. This city was fully populated with members of all four social orders, and within it no one felt the pangs of thirst and hunger. The various demigods, headed by Indra, each offered as tribute to Lord Kṛṣṇa the same opulences they had originally obtained from Him to establish their positions of authority.

Once He saw His subjects safely settled, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa took permission from Lord Baladeva and went out of Mathurā unarmed.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Kaṁsa was killed, O heroic descendant of Bharata, his two queens, Asti and Prāpti, went to their father's house in great distress.

Text 2:

The sorrowful queens told their father, King Jarāsandha of Magadha, all about how they had become widows.

Text 3:

Hearing this odious news, O King, Jarāsandha was filled with sorrow and anger, and he began the greatest possible endeavor to rid the earth of the Yādavas.

Text 4:

With a force of twenty-three akṣauhiṇī divisions, he laid siege to the Yadu capital, Mathurā, on all sides.

Texts 5-6:

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa, 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 Jarāsandha'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.

Texts 7-8:

[The Supreme Lord thought:] Since it is such a burden on the earth, I will destroy Jarāsandha's army, consisting of akṣauhiṇīs of foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, which the King of Magadha has assembled from all subservient kings and brought together here. But Jarāsandha himself should not be killed, since in the future he will certainly assemble another army.

Text 9:

This is the purpose of My present incarnation — to relieve the earth of its burden, protect the pious and kill the impious.

Text 10:

I also assume other bodies to protect religion and to end irreligion whenever it flourishes in the course of time.

Text 11:

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī 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.

Text 12:

The Lord's eternal divine weapons also appeared before Him spontaneously. Seeing these, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the senses, addressed Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Texts 13-14:

[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.

Text 15:

After Lord Kṛṣṇa had thus invited His brother, the two Dāśārhas, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, wearing armor and displaying Their resplendent weapons, drove out of the city in Their chariots. Only a very small contingent of soldiers accompanied Them.

Text 16:

As Lord Kṛṣṇa came out of the city with Dāruka at the reins of His chariot, He blew His conchshell, and the enemy soldiers' hearts began to tremble with fear.

Text 17:

Jarāsandha looked at the two of Them and said: O Kṛṣṇa, 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.

Text 18:

You, Rāma, 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.

Text 19:

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.

Text 20:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Just as the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, the son of Jarā marched toward the two descendants of

Madhu and with his huge assemblage of armies surrounded Them and Their soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers.

Text 21:

The women stood in the watchtowers, palaces and high gates of the city. When they could no longer see Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's chariots, identified by banners marked with the emblems of Garuḍa and a palm tree, they were struck with grief and fainted.

Text 22:

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, Śārṅga, which both gods and demons worship.

Text 23:

Lord Kṛṣṇa took arrows from His quiver, fixed them on the bowstring, 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.

Text 24:

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.

Texts 25-28:

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.

Text 29:

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.

Text 30:

Jarāsandha, with his chariot lost and all his soldiers dead, was left with only his breath. At that point Lord Balarāma forcibly seized the powerful warrior, just as one lion takes hold of another.

Text 31:

With the divine noose of Varuṇa and other, mortal ropes, Balarāma began tying up Jarāsandha, who had killed so many foes. But Lord Govinda still had a purpose to fulfill through Jarāsandha, and thus He asked Balarāma to stop.

Texts 32-33:

Jarāsandha, 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 self-abnegation. They told him, “Your defeat by the Yadus was simply the unavoidable reaction of your past karma.”

Text 34:

All of his armies having been killed, and himself neglected by the Personality of Godhead, King Jarāsandha, son of Bṛhadratha, then sadly returned to the kingdom of the Magadhas.

Texts 35-36:

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 Mathurā, 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.

Texts 37-38:

As the Lord entered His city, conchshells and kettledrums sounded, and many drums, horns, vīṇās, flutes and mṛdaṅgas 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.

Text 39:

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.

Text 40:

Lord Kṛṣṇa then presented to the Yadu king all the wealth that had fallen on the battlefield — namely, the countless ornaments of the dead warriors.

Text 41:

Seventeen times the King of Magadha met defeat in this very way. And yet throughout these defeats he fought on with his akṣauhiṇī divisions against the forces of the Yadu dynasty who were protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Text 42:

By the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛṣṇis would invariably annihilate all of Jarāsandha’s forces, and when all his soldiers had been killed, the King, released by his enemies, would again go away.

Text 43:

Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a barbarian warrior named Kālayavana, sent by Nārada, appeared on the battlefield.

Text 44:

Arriving at Mathurā, 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 Vṛṣṇis were his equals.

Text 45:

When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa saw Kālayavana, Kṛṣṇa thought about the situation and said, “Ah, a great danger now threatens the Yadus from two sides.

Text 46:

“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.

Text 47:

“If powerful Jarāsandha comes while We two are busy fighting Kālayavana, Jarāsandha may kill Our relatives or else take them away to his capital.

Text 48:

“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.”

Text 49:

After thus discussing the matter with Balarāma, 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.

Texts 50-53:

In the construction of that city could be seen the full scientific knowledge and architectural skill of Viśvakarmā. There were wide avenues, commercial 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 Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadus.

Text 54:

Lord Indra brought Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Sudharmā assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the laws of mortality. Indra also gave the pārijāta tree.

Text 55:

Lord Varuṇa 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.

Text 56:

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.

Text 57:

After transporting all His subjects to the new city by the power of His mystic Yoga-māyā, Lord Kṛṣṇa consulted with Lord Balarāma, who had remained in Mathurā to protect it. Then, wearing a garland of lotuses but bearing no weapons, Lord Kṛṣṇa went out of Mathurā by its main gate.