

## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

### Akrūra's Vision

This chapter describes how Akrūra informed Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma of Kaṁsa's plans and his activities in Mathurā; what the gopīs cried out in distress when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā; and also the vision of Lord Viṣṇu's abode that Akrūra saw within the water of the Yamunā.

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma offered Akrūra great respect and comfortably seated him on a couch, he felt that all the desires he had reflected on while traveling to Vṛndāvana were now fulfilled. After the evening meal, Kṛṣṇa asked Akrūra whether his trip had been peaceful and whether he was well. The Lord also inquired about how Kaṁsa was behaving toward their family members, and finally He asked why Akrūra had come.

Akrūra described how Kaṁsa had been persecuting the Yādavas, what Nārada had told Kaṁsa and how Kaṁsa had been treating Vasudeva cruelly. Akrūra also spoke of Kaṁsa's desire to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā to kill Them on the pretext of Their seeing the bow sacrifice and engaging in a wrestling match. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed out loud when They heard this. They went to Their father, Nanda, and informed him of Kaṁsa's orders. Nanda then issued an order to all the residents of Vraja that they should collect various offerings for the King and prepare to go to Mathurā.

The young gopīs were extremely upset to hear that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would be going to Mathurā. They lost all external awareness and began to remember Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Condemning the creator for separating them from Him, they began to lament. They said that Akrūra did not deserve his name (a, "not"; krūra, "cruel"), since he was so cruel to be taking away their dearest Kṛṣṇa. "It must be that fate is against us," they lamented, "because otherwise the elders of Vraja would have forbidden Kṛṣṇa to leave. So let us forget our shyness and try to stop Lord Mādhava from going." With these words the young cowherd girls began to chant Kṛṣṇa's names and cry.

But even as they wept, Akrūra began taking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā in his chariot. The cowherd men of Gokula followed behind on their wagons, and the young gopīs also walked behind for some distance,

but then they became placated by Kṛṣṇa's glances and gestures and pacified by a message from Him that said "I will return." With their minds completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd girls stood as still as figures in a painting until they could no longer see the chariot's flag or the dust cloud being raised on the road. Then, chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories all the while, they despondently returned to their homes.

Akrūra halted the chariot at the bank of the Yamunā so Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could perform a ritual of purification and drink some water. After the two Lords had gotten back into the chariot, Akrūra took Their permission to bathe in the Yamunā. As he recited Vedic mantras, he was startled to see the two Lords standing in the water. Akrūra came out of the river and returned to the chariot — where he saw the Lords still sitting. Then he returned to the water to find out if the two figures he had seen there were real or not.

What Akrūra saw in the water was four-armed Lord Vāsudeva. His complexion was dark blue like a fresh raincloud, He wore yellow garments and He lay on the lap of thousand-hooded Ananta Śeṣa. Lord Vāsudeva was receiving the prayers of perfected beings, celestial serpents and demons, and He was encircled by His personal attendants. Serving Him were His many potencies, such as Śrī, Puṣṭi and Ilā, while Brahmā and other demigods sang His praises. Akrūra rejoiced at this vision and, joining his palms in supplication, began to pray to the Supreme Lord in a voice choked with emotion.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having been honored so much by Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra, seated comfortably on a couch, felt that all the desires he had contemplated on the road were now fulfilled.

Text 2:

My dear King, what is unattainable for one who has satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the shelter of the goddess of fortune? Even so, those who are dedicated to His devotional service never want anything from Him.

Text 3:

After the evening meal, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, asked Akrūra how Kaṁsa was treating their dear relatives and friends and what the King was planning to do.

Text 4:

The Supreme Lord said: My dear, gentle Uncle Akrūra, was your trip here comfortable? May all good fortune be yours. Are our well-wishing friends and our relatives, both close and distant, happy and in good health?

Text 5:

But, my dear Akrūra, as long as King Kaṁsa — that disease of our family who goes by the name “maternal uncle” — is still prospering, why should I even bother to ask about the well-being of our family members and his other subjects?

Text 6:

Just see how much suffering I have caused My offenseless parents! Because of Me their sons were killed and they themselves imprisoned.

Text 7:

By good fortune We have today fulfilled Our desire to see you, Our dear relative. O gentle uncle, please tell Us why you have come.

Text 8:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: In response to the Supreme Lord’s request, Akrūra, the descendant of Madhu, described the whole situation, including King Kaṁsa’s enmity toward the Yadus and his attempt to murder Vasudeva.

Text 9:

Akrūra relayed the message he had been sent to deliver. He also described Kaṁsa’s real intentions and how Nārada had informed Kaṁsa that Kṛṣṇa had been born as the son of Vasudeva.

Text 10:

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, the vanquisher of heroic opponents, laughed when They heard Akrūra’s words. The Lords then informed Their father, Nanda Mahārāja, of King Kaṁsa’s orders.

Texts 11-12:

Nanda Mahārāja then issued orders to the cowherd men by having the village constable make the following announcement throughout Nanda's domain of Vraja: "Go collect all the available milk products. Bring valuable gifts and yoke your wagons. Tomorrow we shall go to Mathurā, present our milk products to the King and see a very great festival. The residents of all the outlying districts are also going."

Text 13:

When the young gopīs heard that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to the city, they became extremely distressed.

Text 14:

Some gopīs felt so pained at heart that their faces turned pale from their heavy breathing. Others were so anguished that their dresses, bracelets and braids became loose.

Text 15:

Other gopīs entirely stopped their sensory activities and became fixed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa. They lost all awareness of the external world, just like those who attain the platform of self-realization.

Text 16:

And still other young women fainted simply by remembering the words of Lord Śauri [Kṛṣṇa]. These words, decorated with wonderful phrases and expressed with affectionate smiles, would deeply touch the young girls' hearts.

Texts 17-18:

The gopīs were frightened at the prospect of even the briefest separation from Lord Mukunda, so now, as they remembered His graceful gait, His pastimes, His affectionate, smiling glances, His heroic deeds and His joking words, which would relieve their distress, they were beside themselves with anxiety at the thought of the great separation about to come. They gathered in groups and spoke to one another, their faces covered with tears and their minds fully absorbed in Acyuta.

Text 19:

The gopīs said: O Providence, you have no mercy! You bring embodied creatures together in friendship and love and then senselessly separate them before they fulfill their desires. This whimsical play of yours is like a child’s game.

Text 20:

Having shown us Mukunda’s face, framed by dark locks and beautified by His fine cheeks, raised nose and gentle smiles, which eradicate all misery, you are now making that face invisible. This behavior of yours is not at all good.

Text 21:

O Providence, though you come here with the name Akrūra, you are indeed cruel, for like a fool you are taking away what you once gave us — those eyes with which we have seen, even in one feature of Lord Madhudviṣa’s form, the perfection of your entire creation.

Text 22:

Alas, Nanda’s son, who breaks loving friendships in a second, will not even look directly at us. Forcibly brought under His control, we abandoned our homes, relatives, children and husbands just to serve Him, but He is always looking for new lovers.

Text 23:

The dawn following this night will certainly be auspicious for the women of Mathurā. All their hopes will now be fulfilled, for as the Lord of Vraja enters their city, they will be able to drink from His face the nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of His eyes.

Text 24:

O gopīs, although our Mukunda is intelligent and very obedient to His parents, once He has fallen under the spell of the honey-sweet words of the women of Mathurā and been enchanted by their alluring, shy smiles, how will He ever return to us unsophisticated village girls?

Text 25:

When the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas see the son of Devakī in Mathurā, they will certainly enjoy a great festival for their eyes, as will all those who see Him traveling along the road to the city.

After all, He is the darling of the goddess of fortune and the reservoir of all transcendental qualities.

Text 26:

He who is doing this merciless deed should not be called Akrūra. He is so extremely cruel that without even trying to console the sorrowful residents of Vraja, he is taking away Kṛṣṇa, who is more dear to us than life itself.

Text 27:

Hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa has already mounted the chariot, and now the foolish cowherds are hurrying after Him in their bullock carts. Even the elders are saying nothing to stop Him. Today fate is working against us.

Text 28:

Let us directly approach Mādhava and stop Him from going. What can our family elders and other relatives do to us? Now that fate is separating us from Mukunda, our hearts are already wretched, for we cannot bear to give up His association even for a fraction of a second.

Text 29:

When He brought us to the assembly of the rāsa dance, where we enjoyed His affectionate and charming smiles, His delightful secret talks, His playful glances and His embraces, we passed many nights as if they were a single moment. O gopīs, how can we possibly cross over the insurmountable darkness of His absence?

Text 30:

How can we exist without Ananta's friend Kṛṣṇa, who in the evening would return to Vraja in the company of the cowherd boys, His hair and garland powdered with the dust raised by the cows' hooves? As He played His flute, He would captivate our minds with His smiling sidelong glances.

Text 31:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After speaking these words, the ladies of Vraja, who were so attached to Kṛṣṇa, felt extremely agitated by their imminent separation from Him. They forgot all shame and loudly cried out, "O Govinda! O Dāmodara! O Mādhava!"

Text 32:

But even as the gopīs cried out in this way, Akrūra, having at sunrise performed His morning worship and other duties, began to drive the chariot.

Text 33:

Led by Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men followed behind Lord Kṛṣṇa in their wagons. The men brought along many offerings for the King, including clay pots filled with ghee and other milk products.

Text 34:

[With His glances] Lord Kṛṣṇa somewhat pacified the gopīs, and they also followed behind for some time. Then, hoping He would give them some instruction, they stood still.

Text 35:

As He departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the gopīs were lamenting, and thus He consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: “I will return.”

Text 36:

Sending their minds after Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs stood as motionless as figures in a painting. They remained there as long as the flag atop the chariot was visible, and even until they could no longer see the dust raised by the chariot wheels.

Text 37:

The gopīs then turned back, without hope that Govinda would ever return to them. Full of sorrow, they began to spend their days and nights chanting about the pastimes of their beloved.

Text 38:

My dear King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, traveling as swiftly as the wind in that chariot with Lord Balarāma and Akrūra, arrived at the river Kālindī, which destroys all sins.

Text 39:

The river’s sweet water was more effulgent than brilliant jewels. After Lord Kṛṣṇa had touched it for purification, He drank some from His hand.

Then He had the chariot moved near a grove of trees and climbed back on, along with Balarāma.

Text 40:

Akrūra asked the two Lords to take Their seats on the chariot. Then, taking Their permission, he went to a pool in the Yamunā and took his bath as enjoined in the scriptures.

Text 41:

While immersing himself in the water and reciting eternal mantras from the Vedas, Akrūra suddenly saw Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa before him.

Texts 42-43:

Akrūra thought, “How can the two sons of Ānakadundubhi, who are sitting in the chariot, be standing here in the water? They must have left the chariot.” But when he came out of the river, there They were on the chariot, just as before. Asking himself “Was the vision I had of Them in the water an illusion?” Akrūra reentered the pool.

Texts 44-45:

There Akrūra now saw Ananta Śeṣa, the Lord of the serpents, receiving praise from Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and demons, who all had their heads bowed. The Personality of Godhead whom Akrūra saw had thousands of heads, thousands of hoods and thousands of helmets. His blue garment and His fair complexion, as white as the filaments of a lotus stem, made Him appear like white Kailāsa Mountain with its many peaks.

Texts 46-48:

Akrūra then saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead lying peacefully on the lap of Lord Ananta Śeṣa. The complexion of that Supreme Person was like a dark-blue cloud. He wore yellow garments and had four arms and reddish lotus-petal eyes. His face looked attractive and cheerful with its smiling, endearing glance and lovely eyebrows, its raised nose and finely formed ears, and its beautiful cheeks and reddish lips. The Lord’s broad shoulders and expansive chest were beautiful, and His arms long and stout. His neck resembled a conchshell, His navel was deep, and His abdomen bore lines like those on a banyan leaf.

Texts 49-50:



He had large loins and hips, thighs like an elephant's trunk, and shapely knees and shanks. His raised ankles reflected the brilliant effulgence emanating from the nails on His petallike toes, which beautified His lotus feet.

Texts 51-52:

Adorned with a helmet, bracelets and armlets, which were all bedecked with many priceless jewels, and also with a belt, a sacred thread, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, the Lord shone with dazzling effulgence. In one hand He held a lotus flower, in the others a conchshell, discus and club. Gracing His chest were the Śrīvatsa mark, the brilliant Kaustubha gem and a flower garland.

Texts 53-55:

Encircling the Lord and worshiping Him were Nanda, Sunanda and His other personal attendants; Sanaka and the other Kumāras; Brahmā, Rudra and other chief demigods; the nine chief brāhmaṇas; and the best of the saintly devotees, headed by Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparicara Vasu. Each of these great personalities was worshiping the Lord by chanting sanctified words of praise in his own unique mood. Also in attendance were the Lord's principal internal potencies — Śrī, Puṣṭi, Gīr, Kānti, Kīrti, Tuṣṭi, Ilā and Ūrjā — as were His material potencies Vidyā, Avidyā and Māyā, and His internal pleasure potency, Śakti.

Texts 56-57:

As the great devotee Akrūra beheld all this, he became extremely pleased and felt enthused with transcendental devotion. His intense ecstasy caused His bodily hairs to stand on end and tears to flow from his eyes, drenching his entire body. Somehow managing to steady himself, Akrūra bowed his head to the ground. Then he joined his palms in supplication and, in a voice choked with emotion, very slowly and attentively began to pray.