

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

This chapter describes how Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, running as if in fear, went to Dvārakā. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the message of Rukmiṇī from the mouth of a brāhmaṇa and chose her as His wife.

King Mucukunda, shown mercy by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, offered obeisances and circumambulated Him. The King then left the cave and saw that humans, animals, trees and plants were all smaller than when he had fallen asleep. From this he could understand that the Age of Kali was at hand. Thus, in a mood of detachment from all material association, the King began worshiping the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to Mathurā, which was still under siege by the barbarian army. He destroyed this army, collected all the valuables the soldiers had been carrying, and set off for Dvārakā. Just then Jarāsandha arrived on the scene with a force of twenty-three akṣauhiṇīs. Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, acting as if fearful, left Their riches aside and ran far away. Because Jarāsandha could not appreciate Their true power, he ran after Them. After running a long way, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa came to a mountain named Pravarṣaṇa and proceeded to climb it. Jarāsandha thought They had hidden inside a cave and looked all over for Them. Unable to find Them, he built fires on all sides of the mountain. As the vegetation on the mountain slopes burst into flame, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma jumped off the peak. After reaching the ground unseen by Jarāsandha and his followers, They returned to the Dvārakā fort, which floated within the sea. Jarāsandha decided that Rāma and Kṛṣṇa had burned to death in the fire, and he took his army back to his kingdom.

At this point Mahārāja Parīkṣit asked a question, and Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī responded to it by beginning to narrate the history of the marriage of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī. Rukmiṇī, the young daughter of Bhīṣmaka, King of Vidarbha, had heard of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty, strength and other fine qualities, and she therefore made up her mind that He would be the perfect husband for her. Lord Kṛṣṇa also wanted to marry her. But although Rukmiṇī's other relatives approved of her marriage to Kṛṣṇa, her brother Rukmī was envious of the Lord and thus forbade her to marry Him. Rukmī wanted her to marry Śiśupāla instead. Rukmiṇī unhappily

took up her duties in preparation for the marriage, but she also sent a trustworthy brāhmaṇa to Kṛṣṇa with a letter.

When the brāhmaṇa arrived in Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa properly honored him with ritual worship and other tokens of reverence. The Lord then asked the brāhmaṇa why he had come. The brāhmaṇa opened Rukmiṇī's letter and showed it to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had the messenger read it to Him. Rukmiṇī-devī wrote: "Ever since I have heard about You, my Lord, I have become completely attracted to You. Without fail please come before my marriage to Śiśupāla and take me away. In accordance with family custom, on the day before my marriage I will visit the temple of goddess Ambikā. That would be the best opportunity for You to appear and easily kidnap me. If You do not show me this favor, I will give up my life by fasting and observing severe vows. Then perhaps in my next life I will be able to obtain You."

After reading Rukmiṇī's letter to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the brāhmaṇa took his leave so he might carry out his daily religious duties.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, thus graced by Lord Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda circumambulated Him and bowed down to Him. Then Mucukunda, the beloved descendant of Ikṣvāku, exited through the mouth of the cave.

Text 2:

Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the Age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north.

Text 3:

The sober King, beyond material association and free of doubt, was convinced of the value of austerity. Absorbing his mind in Lord Kṛṣṇa, he came to Gandhamādana Mountain.

Text 4:

There he arrived at Badarikāśrama, the abode of Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa, where, remaining tolerant of all dualities, he peacefully worshiped the Supreme Lord Hari by performing severe austerities.

Text 5:

The Lord returned to Mathurā, which was still surrounded by Yavanas. Then He destroyed the army of barbarians and began taking their valuables to Dvārakā.

Text 6:

As the wealth was being carried by oxen and men under Lord Kṛṣṇa's direction, Jarāsandha appeared at the head of twenty-three armies.

Text 7:

O King, seeing the fierce waves of the enemy's army, the two Mādhavas, imitating human behavior, ran swiftly away.

Text 8:

Abandoning the abundant riches, fearless but feigning fear, They went many yojanas on Their lotuslike feet.

Text 9:

When he saw Them fleeing, powerful Jarāsandha laughed loudly and then pursued Them with charioteers and foot soldiers. He could not understand the exalted position of the two Lords.

Text 10:

Apparently exhausted after fleeing a long distance, the two Lords climbed a high mountain named Pravarṣaṇa, upon which Lord Indra showers incessant rain.

Text 11:

Although he knew They were hiding on the mountain, Jarāsandha could find no trace of Them. Therefore, O King, he placed firewood on all sides and set the mountain ablaze.

Text 12:

The two of Them then suddenly jumped from the burning mountain, which was eleven yojanas high, and fell to the ground.

Text 13:

Unseen by Their opponent or his followers, O King, those two most exalted Yadus returned to Their city of Dvārakā, which had the ocean as a protective moat.

Text 14:

Jarāsandha, moreover, mistakenly thought that Balarāma and Keśava had burned to death in the fire. Thus he withdrew his vast military force and returned to the Magadha kingdom.

Text 15:

As ordered by Lord Brahmā, Raivata, the opulent ruler of Ānarta, gave Lord Balarāma his daughter Raivatī in marriage. This has already been discussed.

Texts 16-17:

O hero among the Kurus, the Supreme Lord Himself, Govinda, married Bhīṣmaka's daughter, Vaidarbhī, who was a direct expansion of the goddess of fortune. The Lord did this by her desire, and in the process He beat down Śālva and other kings who took Śiśupāla's side. Indeed, as everyone watched, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī just as Garuḍa boldly stole nectar from the demigods.

Text 18:

King Parīkṣit said: The Supreme Lord married Rukmiṇī, the beautiful-faced daughter of Bhīṣmaka, in the Rākṣasa style — or so I have heard.

Text 19:

My lord, I wish to hear how the immeasurably powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa took away His bride while defeating such kings as Māgadha and Śālva.

Text 20:

What experienced listener, O brāhmaṇa, could ever grow satiated while listening to the pious, charming and ever-fresh topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which cleanse away the world's contamination?

Text 21:

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: There was a king named Bhīṣmaka, the powerful ruler of Vidarbha. He had five sons and one daughter of lovely countenance.

Text 22:

Rukmī was the first-born son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmabāhu, Rukmakeśa and Rukmamālī. Their sister was the exalted Rukmiṇī.

Text 23:

Hearing of the beauty, prowess, transcendental character and opulence of Mukunda from visitors to the palace who sang His praises, Rukmiṇī decided that He would be the perfect husband for her.

Text 24:

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Rukmiṇī possessed intelligence, auspicious bodily markings, magnanimity, beauty, proper behavior and all other good qualities. Concluding that she would be an ideal wife for Him, He made up His mind to marry her.

Text 25:

O King, because Rukmī envied the Lord, he forbade his family members to give his sister to Kṛṣṇa, although they wanted to. Instead, Rukmī decided to give Rukmiṇī to Śiśupāla.

Text 26:

Dark-eyed Vaidarbhī was aware of this plan, and it deeply upset her. Analyzing the situation, she quickly sent a trustworthy brāhmaṇa to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 27:

Upon reaching Dvārakā, the brāhmaṇa was brought inside by the gatekeepers and saw the primeval Personality of Godhead sitting on a golden throne.

Text 28:

Seeing the brāhmaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the brāhmaṇas, came down from His throne and seated him. Then the Lord worshiped him just as He Himself is worshiped by the demigods.

Text 29:

After the brāhmaṇa had eaten and rested, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the goal of saintly devotees, came forward, and while massaging the brāhmaṇa's feet with His own hands, He patiently questioned him as follows.

Text 30:

[The Supreme Lord said:] O best of exalted brāhmaṇas, are your religious practices, sanctioned by senior authorities, proceeding without great difficulty? Is your mind always fully satisfied?

Text 31:

When a brāhmaṇa is satisfied with whatever comes his way and does not fall away from his religious duties, those very religious principles become his desire cow, fulfilling all his wishes.

Text 32:

An unsatisfied brāhmaṇa wanders restlessly from one planet to another, even if he becomes King of heaven. But a satisfied brāhmaṇa, though he may possess nothing, rests peacefully, all his limbs free of distress.

Text 33:

I repeatedly bow My head in respect to those brāhmaṇas who are satisfied with their lot. Saintly, prideless and peaceful, they are the best well-wishers of all living beings.

Text 34:

O brāhmaṇa, is your King attending to your welfare? Indeed, that king in whose country the citizens are happy and protected is very dear to Me.

Text 35:

Whence have you come, crossing the impassable sea, and for what purpose? Explain all this to Us if it is not a secret, and tell Us what We may do for you.

Text 36:

Thus questioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who incarnates to perform His pastimes, the brāhmaṇa told Him everything.

Text 37:

Śrī Rukmiṇī said [in her letter, as read by the brāhmaṇa]: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of Your

beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You, O Kṛṣṇa.

Text 38:

O Mukunda, You are equal only to Yourself in lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youthfulness, wealth and influence. O lion among men, You delight the minds of all mankind. What aristocratic, sober-minded and marriageable girl of a good family would not choose You as her husband when the proper time has come?

Text 39:

Therefore, my dear Lord, I have chosen You as my husband, and I surrender myself to You. Please come swiftly, O almighty one, and make me Your wife. My dear lotus-eyed Lord, let Śiśupāla never touch the hero's portion like a jackal stealing the property of a lion.

Text 40:

If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious works, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the demigods, brāhmaṇas and gurus, then may Gadāgraja come and take my hand, and not Damaghoṣa's son or anyone else.

Text 41:

O unconquerable one, tomorrow when my marriage ceremony is about to begin, You should arrive unseen in Vidarbha and surround Yourself with the leaders of Your army. Then crush the forces of Caidya and Magadhendra and marry me in the Rākṣasa style, winning me with Your valor.

Text 42:

Since I will be staying within the inner chambers of the palace, You may wonder, "How can I carry you away without killing some of your relatives?" But I shall tell You a way: On the day before the marriage there is a grand procession to honor the royal family's deity, and in this procession the new bride goes outside the city to visit Goddess Girijā.

Text 43:

O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Lord Śiva hanker to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain

Your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.

Text 44:

The brāhmaṇa said: This is the confidential message I have brought with me, O Lord of the Yadus. Please consider what must be done in these circumstances, and do it at once.