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Krishna and Karnasa

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Relcostudio

Krishna and the uncle

IT WAS MIDNIGHT WHEN KRISHNA WAS BORN. OUTSIDE, IT WAS RAINING HEAVILY. THE YAMUNA RIVER CLOSE BY, WAS FLOODED. CLOUDS COVERED THE MOON, SO THERE WAS LITTLE LIGHT. INSIDE THE PRISON CELL, IT WAS WARM, AS DEVAKI HUGGED HER NEW BORN SON, WHO WAS SMILING AT HER. BUT DEVAKI AND HER HUSBAND VASUDEVA WERE TOO FRIGHTENED TO SMILE. THEY LOOKED NERVOUSLY AT THE LOCKED GATE OF THE PRISON. NO GUARDS SHOWED THEIR FACES. THIS MEANT THEY DID NOT KNOW YET THAT THE EIGHTH CHILD WAS BORN. THAT MEANT KAMSA, THE KING OF MATHURA, TOO DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE BIRTH.

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, KAMSA HAD BEEN A DEVOTED BROTHER TO DEVAKI. THEY WERE COUSINS AND VERY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER. ON THE DAY OF HER MARRIAGE, THE NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE WERE TAKEN IN A PROCESSION, AND KAMSA HIMSELF DROVE THE CHARIOT.

AMID THE JUBILATION, RISING OVER THE
BEATING OF DRUMS, A VOICE WAS HEARD,
LOUD AND CLEAR.



THE EIGHTH CHILD
OF DEVAKI WILL BE
THE DESTROYER
OF ALL EVIL IN THIS
WORLD.

EVERYONE WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THE DIVINE VOICE.
DEVAKI'S SON WOULD BRING IN THE GOOD TIMES.

ONLY ONE PERSON WAS SHAKEN TO HEAR THE DIVINE ORACLE—KAMSA. HIS FATHER, UGRASENA, USED TO WARN HIM TIME AND AGAIN, "YOU HAVE STRENGTH AND POWER. I ONLY WISH YOU PAY ATTENTION TO DHARMA. YOU MUST USE YOUR STRENGTH AND POWER FOR THE GOOD OF EVERYONE." KAMSA WOULD DISAGREE. "ONLY THE FITTEST WILL SURVIVE," HE WOULD ARGUE, "I ADORE STRENGTH AND POWER. I WANT TO INSPIRE FEAR IN PEOPLE SO THAT NO ONE WILL POSE A THREAT TO ME." NOW HE COULD SEE A THREAT TO HIM. KAMSA WINCED. "I MUST NIP IT IN THE BUD."

THUS, AS THE VOICE FROM THE HEAVENS HERALDED THE COMING OF THE DESTROYER OF EVIL, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, EVIL RAISED ITS HEAD IN KAMSA.





"THE VOICE SAID NO SUCH THING. BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND IF YOU HAVE REASONS TO HATE THE CHILD THAT WILL BE BORN TO HER ONE DAY. BUT YOU HAVE NO REASON TO HATE DEVAKI," POINTED OUT VASUDEVA. "SPARE HER LIFE. WE WILL HAND OVER TO YOU EVERY CHILD THAT WILL BE BORN TO US."

KAMSA RELUCTANTLY AGREED. BUT TO ENSURE THAT THE COUPLE WOULD NOT RUN AWAY, HE THREW THEM IN PRISON. WHEN UGRASENA TRIED TO STOP HIM, HE THREW THE OLD KING TOO INTO PRISON, AND OCCUPIED THE THRONE.

VASUDEVA WAS ALREADY MARRIED TO ROHINI. WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS TAKEN A PRISONER, ROHINI MOVED TO GOKULA, A VILLAGE ON THE OTHER BANK OF THE YAMUNA. SHE TOOK A HOUSE NEXT TO THE HOUSE OF NANDA, THE VILLAGE CHIEF AND A FRIEND OF VASUDEVA.

IN MATHURA, KAMSA PUT DEVAKI'S LITTLE SONS TO DEATH AS SOON AS THEY WERE BORN. BUT WHEN DEVAKI'S SEVENTH CHILD WAS ABOUT TO BE BORN, DEVI YOGAMAYA DECIDED TO SAVE THE CHILD. THE CHILD ABOUT TO BE BORN WAS MIRACULOUSLY TRANSFERRED TO ROHINI, WHO DELIVERED THE BABY THE VERY NEXT DAY IN GOKULA.

UNAWARE OF THE TRICK PLAYED ON HIM, KAMSA THOUGHT THAT DEVAKI'S SEVENTH CHILD WAS DEAD. HE WISHED THE EIGHTH CHILD TOO WOULD MEET SUCH AN END. BUT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE CHANCES. HE POSTED MORE GUARDS TO KEEP A WATCH ON DEVAKI. THE GUARDS WERE TOLD THAT HE SHOULD BE INFORMED AS SOON AS THE EIGHTH CHILD WAS BORN. HE WOULD COME TO THE PRISON, PICK UP THE BABY AND WOULD KILL IT WITH HIS OWN HANDS.

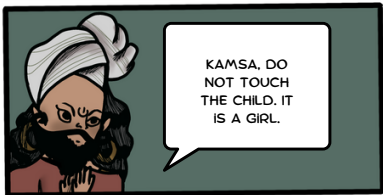
NOW THAT THE EIGHTH SON WAS BORN, DEVAKI SHIVERED WITH FEAR. VASUDEVA ANXIOUSLY LOOKED AT THE PRISON GATE, FEARING THAT KAMSA WOULD WALK IN AT ANY MOMENT.

Yogamaya warns Kamsa

MATHURA SLEPT BLISSFULLY UNDER THE SPELL OF DEVI YOGAMAYA ON THE NIGHT THAT KRISHNA WAS BORN. BUT VASUDEVA, KRISHNA'S FATHER, DID NOT FEEL BLISSFUL. HE WAS FULLY FOCUSSED ON GETTING HIS EIGHTH SON TO SAFETY. HE HAD CARRIED HIS SON TO THE VILLAGE OF GOKULA IN A BASKET, AND LEFT HIM AT HIS FRIEND NANDA'S HOUSE. HE HAD PLACED HIS SON NEXT TO NANDA'S WIFE YASHODA, AND HAD LEFT WITH HER NEW BORN BABY GIRL.



BACK IN MATHURA, VASUDEVA ENTERED THE PRISON. HE LOWERED THE BASKET AND GENTLY PLACED THE FEMALE CHILD NEXT TO HIS WIFE DEVAKI. THE CHILD CRIED AND THE SPELL WAS BROKEN. THE GUARDS WOKE UP AND INFORMED KAMSA. AS KAMSA APPROACHED THE CHILD, VASUDEVA TRIED TO STOP HIM.




DEVAKI HELD THE CHILD CLOSE TO HER. KAMSA SNATCHED THE CHILD FROM HER. THE NEXT MOMENT, TO HIS SHOCK, THE CHILD FLEW OUT OF HIS HANDS AND ESCAPED FROM THE WINDOW. AS KAMSA RAN OUT, CHASING THE CHILD, WHICH HAD REACHED THE SKY, THE VOICE OF DEVI YOGAMAYA WAS HEARD LOUDLY.

YOU FOOL, THE DESTROYER OF EVIL, THE EIGHTH CHILD OF DEVAKI IS BORN ELSEWHERE.



KAMSA SUDDENLY FELT WEAK IN HIS LEGS.



ARE THE DEVAS
PLOTTING
AGAINST ME?

HE WAS AFRAID FOR HIS LIFE. "THE
DESTROYER OF EVIL IS BORN
ELSEWHERE," HE MUTTERED AS HE
COLLAPSED.

GRADUALLY, KAMSA RECOVERED. HE STOOD UP AND CLENCHED HIS FISTS. LOOKING UP AT THE SKY, AND SHAKING HIS FISTS IN RAGE, HE THUNDERED, "I'LL FIND DEVAKI'S EIGHTH SON WHEREVER HE IS, AND I'LL DESTROY HIM."

WHEN DEVAKI HEARD HIM, SHE BROKE DOWN. "WAS ALL THIS FOR NOTHING? WILL MY CHILD NEVER BE SAFE?"

VASUDEVA CONSOLED HER,



DO NOT BE AFRAID, DEVAKI. KAMSA CANNOT HARM YOUR SON FOR HE IS THE PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE, LORD VISHNU HIMSELF.

DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA JOINED THEIR HANDS, CLOSED THEIR EYES AND PRAYED.

Krishna and the death of Kamasa

Kamasa was threatened by Krishna when he was born so Kamsa and his demoniac associates began an all-out purge, ordering the murder of all male children born within the previous ten days. Kamsa also harassed all saintly persons and brahmanas. He knew that the devotees are the heart and soul of his enemy, Lord Krishna, so he tried to attack Him by persecuting His closest servitors and putting a stop to all religious activities.

Lord Krishna, however, was not at all fearful. He simply enjoyed His childhood pastimes in Vrndavana, giving pleasure to His friends, His mother and father, and the cowherd men and women. Kamsa, however, tried repeatedly to disrupt Krishna's pastimes. First he sent a witch named Putana, who had already killed many babies by her black arts. She tried to kill Krishna when He was only a few months old. She smeared poison on her breast, appeared in Vrndavana as a beautiful young woman, and took permission from mother Yasoda to give Krishna her breast to suck. Baby Krishna, however, not only sucked her breast milk, but sucked out her life as well.



After Putana, Kamsa sent many demons, among them Ţrnavarta and Aghasura. Ţrnavarta appeared in the shape of a whirlwind and tried to kidnap Krishna and destroy Him high in the sky. Aghasura, the brother of Putana, came before Krishna and His friends as a giant serpent. But Krishna nonchalantly killed these ferocious demons one after another. Krishna's father, Nanda, and other elders of the village were concerned about the constant attacks upon Krishna, so they moved their entire village community to a more suitable place, where they hoped to be free from attack. But more demons came; a giant horse, an enormous bull, a pack of ^{*****}, and many others. Child Krishna killed them all, assisted by His brother, Balarama.



When Krishna was sixteen years old, Kamsa discovered for certain that Krishna in Vrndavana was Devaki's eighth child. Narada told Kamsa of Krishna's true identity and related how He had killed all the demons without difficulty. In desperation, Kamsa formed his final plot: he arranged for a big wrestling match at Mathura and sent Akrura, Krishna's uncle, to Vrndavana to invite Krishna and all His relatives and neighbors to attend the gala affair.

Akrura was actually a great devotee of Krishna. So when he arrived in Vrndavana, he confided to Krishna that the wrestling match was an elaborate plan to kill Him and His brother. Krishna and Salarama mildly laughed at this. They invited all the townsmen to go to Mathura, and They Themselves set out with Akrura.

Krishna's arrival in Mathura was supposed to be His entrance into an ominous trap, but Krishna very blissfully and lightheartedly entered the city. And when the news spread that Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had come, all the residents of Mathura spontaneously turned out to see Him. The real festival in Mathura became the festival of seeing Krishna. All the young girls were very eager to see Krishna, but out of modesty they went to the roofs of the houses to catch a glimpse of Him. The people had heard about Krishna and His activities, but only now did they have the chance to see Him. They became ecstatic and rushed from whatever they were doing to see Krishna passing through the streets. People talked back and forth about how beautiful Krishna was, and they praised the great fortune of the gopis and other devotees of Vrndavana who were able to see Krishna every day.

There are two kinds of human beings—devotees and demons—and in Mathura Krishna encountered both. While Krishna and Salarama were walking through the streets of Mathura, They met a washerman carrying various garments. Krishna asked the washerman for some clothing and promised to award him all good fortune. This is the basis of Krishna consciousness: the devotee offers whatever he has to the Lord, and the Lord, although not in need, accepts the offering to help awaken the devotee's original relationship of service to Him. Unfortunately, this washerman thought himself a servant not of Krishna but of Kamsa. Not only did he refuse to give Krishna clothing, but he called Him impudent. "Don't ask for things that are the King's property," he said, "or You will be punished." Krishna became very angry with this servant of Kamsa and killed him, using only His hand as a weapon.

A little later Krishna and Salarama met a florist who was exactly the opposite of the washerman. He was very submissive and simply prayed to be eternally engaged in devotional service to Krishna. The florist gave Krishna a very beautiful garland at his home, and thus his desire was fulfilled.

Krishna and Salarama also met a young hunchback woman carrying sandalwood paste. Her duty had been to bring sandalwood to King Kamsa daily, but when she saw the personal beauty of Krishna and Salarama, she voluntarily offered the sandalwood paste to Them. In return, Krishna transformed her from a hunchback into a beautiful young woman by touching her with His hand. One may take these extraordinary encounters to be fictitious or imaginary, but they are the actual historic activities the Personality of Godhead performed while present on earth some 5,000 years ago. The great authorities in Krishna consciousness who are passing down the narrations of Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam do not doubt these facts. Mundane scholars and people in general may doubt them, but they cannot understand the science of God as presented in Vedic literature. One who is not rendering service to the Personality of Godhead through a bona fide spiritual master can only whimsically speculate about what God can or cannot do.

As Krishna and Salarama approached the sacrificial arena in Mathura, They saw a big display where a giant bow was being guarded by state soldiers. Krishna walked right past the guards, picked up the bow and broke it.

The sound of the bow's cracking reverberated throughout the land and sky and even reached the palace of Kamsa. The guards rushed Krishna and Salarama, but the two brothers immediately killed them and left the arena.

Thereafter, Krishna continued to visit various places in Mathura, and the citizens turned out to see Him, astonished at His extraordinary beauty and opulence. In

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Srila Prabhupada writes, "The two brothers strolled carefree in the street, not caring for the law and order of Kamsa." In this way They hinted at the severe danger awaiting Kamsa.

When Kamsa heard the bow break and heard how the guards had been killed, he partially realized the power of the Supreme Lord. He understood that the eighth child of Devaki had come to kill him. That night he could not rest at all, for both awake and dreaming he had inauspicious visions. He looked in the mirror but could not see his head. He saw stars in the sky double. He saw holes in his shadow, heard a buzzing sound in his ears, and had ghastly dreams of ghosts, poison and murder. Thus he understood that his death was sure. But when morning finally came, he busily arranged for the wrestling match. In his last hours, with death so near, rather than pray to the Supreme Lord for mercy, Kamsa anxiously planned how to avert what he knew was certain.

All those who share Kamsa's demoniac mentality are like that. They can see that material nature will eventually kill them, just as it has killed everyone else in history. Yet they act as if they will never die. A great devotee once called this the most wonderful phenomenon: people see the hand of death take away all their predecessors, but they think that they themselves will not die. The

Kamsas of this world are always busy planning how to enjoy this life, even up till the second they are snatched away by death. So many modern cities have been built all over the world, but no one who lives in them has any guarantee that he won't be kicked out today or tomorrow by death. Ignoring the next life only insures that we will have to take another birth to suffer miseries again and again. Kamsa was like a man trying to raise his temperature when he already has a high fever; when the fever reaches 107 degrees, a man dies. Kamsa could not see that all his plans to survive would be vanquished, nor did he care to hear about the next life. Like a typical politician, on the morning of his death Kamsa busied himself making plans for this temporary world.

After bathing and performing other morning duties, Krishna and Salarama heard drums playing at the wrestling arena, and They prepared to go see the fun. But when They arrived at the gateway of the arena, a big elephant with a rider blocked Their path.

This was another of Kamsa's schemes.

Krishna told the elephant's caretaker to immediately clear the path, but the man became angry and provoked the elephant to charge Krishna. Krishna moved around the elephant, dragged it by its tail, tripped it and finally killed both the elephant and its rider. Krishna and Salarama then proceeded into the arena, where everyone at once became attracted to Them. The audience was completely attentive to Krishna and Salarama. The residents of Vrndavana were all reciting Their pastimes, and others, seeing Them for the first time, began to praise Their qualities.

Suddenly, a musical fanfare announced the start of the wrestling match. The famous champion wrestlers Canura and Mustika approached Krishna and Salarama, and Canura said, "We have heard all about You. The King desires to see You display Your wrestling abilities." Krishna replied that although He and Salarama liked to play and sometimes They wrestled with Their cowherd friends, They were not professional wrestlers. Krishna said plainly that a match of professional wrestlers against young boys would not be equal, and this would disturb the audience. But the wrestlers insisted that Krishna and Salarama were not ordinary boys, and so the match began.

Many members of the audience called out their disapproval, for Krishna and His brother appeared to be delicate boys of tender age, whereas the wrestlers were mountainous strongmen, trained in the art of crushing opponents. In Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Srila Prabhupada specifically describes what the members of the audience said. "But my dear friends," someone spoke out, "just look at the face of Krishna. There are drops of perspiration on His face from chasing His enemy, and His face appears like a lotus flower with drops of water. And do you see how the face of Lord Salarama has turned especially beautiful? There is a reddish hue on His white face because He is engaged in a strong wrestling match with Mustika." Another spectator exclaimed, "Even in front of the King this wrestling match is going on between incompatible sides." Thus the members of the audience were very attracted to Krishna, but at the same time they saw great danger and felt anxiety for Him. Even Krishna's very intimate devotees, such as His mother and father, were also very anxious because they too did not know the unlimited strength of Krishna and Salarama.

Lord Krishna is actually all-powerful, and there is nothing to fear when He is fighting a conditioned living being of the material world. Krishna is declared throughout the Vedas to be the Absolute Truth, the source from whom everything comes and upon whom everything rests. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that He alone existed before creation. He is now the only ultimate reality, and after annihilation only He will remain. But by Krishna's internal spiritual energy, called yoga-maya, He acts in different relationships with His servitors according to how they approach Him.

Krishna is the reservoir of all personal feelings, so we should not be surprised that He reveals Himself differently in various relationships. To the mass of people at the wrestling arena He appeared as the most beautiful personality, but to the wrestlers He appeared like a thunderbolt. The ksatriyas (warriors) saw Him as the strongest ruler, while the females saw Him as the most attractive male. The cowherd men from Vrndavana saw Him as their own kinsman, while the yogis saw Him as the Supersoul in everyone's heart. Kamsa also saw Krishna uniquely—as Death Personified.

Kamsa was always fearful that Krishna would someday kill him. Thus he spent his whole life absorbed in thoughts of how to kill Krishna. Because he was always thinking of Krishna, Kamsa was Krishna conscious. But because he thought of Krishna unfavorably, he is not considered a devotee of the Lord. He was not practicing bhakti (devotional service). To be always thinking, like Kamsa, of how to avoid submitting to the Lord's supreme will is the principal engagement of a whole class of men, including modern educators, scientists, politicians and philosophers. By hearing about Kamsa, we can clearly understand why such a mentality is self-defeating.

Krishna and Salarama engaged the wrestlers in the standard wrestling holds and maneuvers for some time, but when the anxious protests of the audience grew too great, Krishna simply spun one wrestler in the air, Salarama hit the other, and the famous wrestlers were dead. Other wrestlers came forward, but the two brothers killed them immediately, and the remaining wrestlers ran from the arena. Musicians spontaneously beat their drums, and the crowd cheered the victory of Krishna and Salarama.

]Kamsa was enraged. He announced that Krishna and Balarama should be driven from the city of Mathura, Their riches plundered, and Krishna's father killed. Krishna could not tolerate such talk. He jumped over the high wall protecting King Kamsa and stood before him face to face. Kamsa tried defending himself with a sword, but Krishna grabbed him and dragged him down from the throne. After throwing him on the ground, Krishna killed Kamsa by punching him with His fist. Krishna then dragged Kamsa around the arena the way a lion drags an elephant after killing it, just to assure His parents, relatives and all pious people that Kamsa was actually dead. Then after balarama and Krishna went to the prison and freed them from the prison.