

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter Seven

Punishment of Aśvatthāmā

The Son of Droṇa Punished

Section – VI

Exchange of Arguments Regarding

Killing of *Aśvatthāmā* (35 -58)

|| 1.7.49||

sūta uvāca

dharmyam nyāyām sakarunam
nirvyalīkam samam mahat
rājā dharmasuto rājñyāḥ
pratyanandad vaco dvijāḥ

Sūta said: O brāhmaṇas (dvijāḥ)! Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Dharma (rājā dharmasutah), agreed (pratyanandad) with the words of his queen (rājñyāḥ vacah), which were according to scripture (dharmyam), reasonable (nyāyām), merciful (sakarunam), without desire to harm others (nirvyalīkam), desirous of peace (samam) and generous (mahat).

The good quality of her words is seen in the previous six verses.

Her words were faithful to dharma: release him because the
brāhmāna is always our guru. (SB 1.7.43)

↳ dharmaya .

Her words were filled with correctness: his father taught you the
military arts. (SB 1.7.44)

↳ nyāyena .

↑ Se-kalyāṇa .

Her words were full of mercy: the wife is half the husband. (SB
1.7.45)

Her words expressed unwillingness to cause pain to others: do not cause suffering to the family of your guru. (SB 1.7.46)

↓
निरुत्थानम्.

Her words expressed sense of calmness, allaying suffering: do not let her cry like me. (SB 1.7.47)

→ समम्.

Her harsh words express generosity, desiring to benefit the hearer: the angry brāhmaṇas will destroy the kṣatriyas. (SB 1.7.48)

प्रमत्त

|| 1.7.50 ||

nakulaḥ saha devaś ca
yuyudhāno dhanañjayaḥ
bhagavān devakī-putro
ye cānye yāś ca yoṣitaḥ

Nakula and Sahadeva (nakulaḥ saha devaś ca), Sātyaki, Arjuna (yuyudhāno dhanañjayaḥ), Kṛṣṇa (bhagavān devakī-putraḥ), the women (yāś ca yoṣitaḥ) and others (ye ca anye), were also happy with her words (implied).

They all agreed with her words. Yuyudhāna means Sātyaki.

|| 1.7.51 ||

tatrāhāmarṣito bhīmas
tasya śreyān vadhaḥ smṛtaḥ
na bhartur nātmanaś cārthe
yo 'han suptān śiśūn vṛthā

At that time (tatra) angry Bhīma (amarsito bhīmah) spoke (āha). “He who has killed (yah ahan) the sleeping children (suptān śiśūn) without purpose (vṛthā), without benefit (na arthe) to his master (bhartuh) or to himself (ca ātmanah), should be killed (tasya śreyān vadhaḥ smṛtaḥ).”

|| 1.7.52 ||

niśamya bhīma-gaditam
draupadyāś ca catur-bhujah
ālokya vadanam sakhyur
idam āha hasann iva

Hearing (niśamya) the words (gaditam) of Bhīma (bhīma) and Draupadī (draupadyāś ca), Kṛṣṇa with four hands (catur-bhujah) looked (ālokya) towards his friend Arjuna (vidanam sakhyuh) while smiling (hasann iva) and spoke (idam āha).

Bhīma favored killing Aśvatthāmā and Draupadī favored releasing him.

The Lord assumed four arms to keep the two parties apart.

Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly as if saying, “O friend! Today I will test the sharpness of your intelligence.”

He smiled and did not laugh.

|| 1.7.53 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

brahma-bandhur na hantavya

ātatāyī vadhārhaṇaḥ

mayai vobhayam āmnātaṁ

paripāhy anuśāsanam

The Lord said: One should not kill (na hantavya) a fallen brāhmaṇa (brahma-bandhuh). But an aggressor (ātatāyī) should be killed (vadha arhaṇaḥ). Please follow (paripāhy) both of these instructions (ubhayam anuśāsanam) established in scripture (āmnātaṁ) made by me (mayā eva).

No brāhmaṇa should be killed.

But Manu has said that if an aggressor approaches with the desire to kill, he can be killed, even if he is learned in Vedānta.

Follow both of these instructions ordered by me, the maker of scriptures.

Since Aśvatthāmā is still considered a brāhmaṇa, and since he is not an aggressor since he does not have a weapon in his hands, he should not be killed.

That is my opinion.

I told you previously to kill the fallen brāhmaṇa, but that was only to test you.

Therefore, do not kill the fallen brāhmaṇa, but free him.

Then I have said that the knower of dharma does not kill the enemy who is frightened or without a chariot, and also I have said it is best to kill him.

But do not be the cause of killing him.

His killing should take the form of being bound up.

That is the real meaning of my words.

|| 1.7.54||

kuru pratiśrutam satyam
yat tat sāntvayatā priyām
priyam ca bhīmasenasya
pāñcālyā mahyam eva ca

You must fulfill (kuru satyam) your promise (pratiśrutam) to Draupadī (priyām) so that she is pacified (yat tat sāntvayatā). You must also act to please (~~priyam ca~~) Bhīma (bhīmasenasya), Draupadī (pāñcālyā), me and others (mahyam eva ca).

You made a promise to bring Draupadī the head of Aśvatthāmā.

Thus you should cut off his head.

You should also please Bhīma.

You should also please Draupadī who does not want him killed.

You should also please me and others because they are dear to me
(indicated by ca).

|| 1.7.55||

sūta uvāca

arjunaḥ sahasājñāya

harer hārdam athāsinā

maṇim jahara mūrdhanyam

dvijasya saha-mūrdhajam

Sūta said: Suddenly understanding (atha sahasā ajñāya) Kṛṣṇa's intention (harer hārdam), Arjuna (arjunaḥ) cut off (asinā jahāra) the jewel (maṇim) on Aśvatthāmā's head along (dvijasya mūrdhanyam) with his hair (saha-mūrdhajam).

Understanding Kṛṣṇa's intention (**hārdam**) Arjuna then acted.

“I made the promise to cut off his head. Kṛṣṇa has said that I have to fulfill that promise. He has also said I should please Draupadī. Therefore I cannot cut off his head. It is not impossible. I should fulfill both directions. Therefore somehow I must do that.”

This was what he discerned.

He then cut off the jewel on his head (maṇiṁ mūrdhanyam)
along with his hair.

The jewel is situated on his head and thus represents his head.

Thus it also means “head.”

Therefore cutting off his jewel is cutting off his head.

But in the literal sense, his head will not be cut off.

Thus Aśvatthāmā was killed and not killed.

|| 1.7.56||

vimucya raśanā-baddham
bāla-hatyā-hata-prabham
tejasā maṇinā hīnam
śibirān nirayāpayat

Aśvatthāmā, who had lost his effulgence (hata-prabham) by killing the children (bāla-hatyā), was further deprived (hīnam) of his jewel and energy (tejasā maṇinā). Arjuna released him (vimucya) from the bondage of the ropes (raśanā-baddham) and led him (nirayāpayat) from the camp (śibirān).

Thus being insulted, the humiliated Aśvatthāmā was
simultaneously killed and not killed by the intelligence of
Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

|| 1.7.57||

vapanam dravinādānam
sthānān niryāpaṇam tathā
eṣa hi brahma-bandhūnām
vadho nānyo 'sti daihikaḥ

The method of killing (eṣa hi vadhah) the fallen brāhmana (brahma-bandhūnām) is by shaving his head (vapanam), taking away his wealth (dravinādānam), and taking away his living place (sthānān niryāpaṇam tathā). One should not physically kill him (na anyah asti daihikaḥ).

One should execute dharma according to the scriptures as the verse indicates.

|| 1.7.58||

putra-śokāturāḥ sarve
pāṇḍavāḥ saha kṛṣṇayā
svānām mṛtānām yat kṛtyam
cakrur nirharaṇādikam

Then all the Pāṇdavas (sarve pāṇḍavāḥ) and Draupadī (saha kṛṣṇayā), lamenting for their sons (putra-śoka āturāḥ), performed (cakruh) the death rites (yat kṛtyam) for their dead relatives (svānām mṛtānām) and carried them for burning (nirharaṇa ādikam).

Nirharaṇa means “going for burning.”