

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter Seventeen

The Punishment of Kali

Punishment and Reward of Kali

Section – I

**Mahārāja Parīkṣit being an
ideal king, appropriately
chastises Kali (1-16)**

|| 1.17.1 ||

sūta uvāca

tatra go-mithunam rājā
hanyamānam anāthavat
daṇḍa-hastam ca vrsalam
dadr̥ṣe nr̥pa-lāñchanam

Sūta said: At Kurukṣetra (tatra) the King (rājā) saw (dadr̥ṣe) the śūdra (vṛṣalam) dressed as a king (nr̥pa-lāñchanam) beating (hanyamānam) an unprotected (anāthavat) cow and a bull (go-mithunam) with a stick held in his hand (daṇḍa-hastam).

In the seventeenth chapter the questions and answers between Parīkṣit and Dharmā, and the punishment and mercy received by Kali are described.

Hanyamānām means “beating.”

The śūdra wore the markings of a king, which broke the custom followed in Satya, Treta and Dvāpara yugas.

|| 1.17.2 ||

vṛṣam mṛṇāla-dhavalam
mehantam iva bibhyatam
vepamānam padaikena
sīdantaṁ śūdra-tāḍitam

The śūdra was beating (śūdra-tāḍitam) the bull (vṛṣam), white like a water lily (mṛṇāla-dhavalam), fearful (bibhyatam), trembling (vepamānam), weak (sīdantaṁ) and standing on one leg (padaikena), who appeared to be urinating (mehantam iva).

Mehantam iva means “as if urinating.”

This means that Dharma, standing on one leg, was at every
moment flowing away.

It is a metaphor to express a perishing condition.

Trembling of the bull indicated that the bull did not create an
opposition to the actions of Kali.

|| 1.17.3 ||

gām ca dharma-dughām dīnām
bhr̥śam śūdra-padāhatām
vivatsām āśru-vadanām
kṣāmām yavasam icchatīm

He saw the cow (gām ca), giver of ghee for sacrifice (dharma-dughām), without a calf (vivatsām), suffering greatly (dīnām), as she was being kicked by the śūdra (śūdra-padāhatām). The thin cow (kṣāmām), with tears in her eyes (āśru-vadanām), desired the share of sacrifice (yavasam icchatīm).

Dharma-dughām means giver of ghee for sacrifice.

She (the earth) was without a calf (vivatsām) because the grains, the child of the earth, had been destroyed.

She had tears in her eyes because of the destruction of dharma.

She was thin (**kṣāmām**) because sacrifices were not performed.

She desired the share of sacrifice (**yavasam**).

|| 1.17.4 ||

papraccha ratham ārūḍhaḥ
kārtasvara-paricchadam
megha-gambhīrayā vācā
samāropita-kārmukaḥ

Situated in his chariot (ratham ārūḍhaḥ), with his bow poised (samāropita-kārmukaḥ), in a voice deep as thunder (megha-gambhīrayā vācā), he questioned (papraccha) the śūdra dressed in gold (kārtasvara-paricchadam).

Kārtasvara means gold.

He had his bow ready in case the śūdra tried to flee.

|| 1.17.5 ||

kas tvam mat-charaṇe loke
balād dhamṣy abalān balī
nara-devo 'si veṣeṇa
naṭavat karmaṇādvijaḥ

Who are you (kaḥ tvam), having power (balī)? You attack (hamṣy) the weak (abalān) with force (balād) in the world under my protection (mat-śaraṇe loke). Like an actor (naṭavat), you appear to be a king (nara-devaḥ asi) by dress (veṣeṇa), but by actions (karmaṇā) you are a śūdra (advijaḥ).

“Who are you to commit violence in my presence?”

↓ PM

“I am a king.” → Kali

“Since I am the king, how can you be the king?” → PM

→ Kali

“I am king because I am wearing the dress of a king, and acting like one.”

“No!” → PM

You are a śūdra by your actions.

A real actor imitates the actions of another as truly as possible.”

|| 1.17.6 ||

yas tvam kṛṣṇe gate dūram
saha-gāṇḍīva-dhanvanā
śocyo 'sy aśocyān rahasi
praharan vadham arhasi

Since Kṛṣṇa has departed (yas kṛṣṇe gate dūram) with Arjuna (saha-gāṇḍīva-dhanvanā), you are in pitiable position (tvam śocyah asy). By beating (praharan) innocent creatures (aśocyān) in a solitary place (rahasi), you deserve to be killed (vadham arhasi).

“Just as ^{Kali} you are king of your country, I am king of this time.
Thus you do not have power over me.”

The King answers in this verse.

^{PM}
“Before Kṛṣṇa departed out of sight with Arjuna, where were
you?”

Kali

“I was present, but I did not have power because of fear of them. But I have fear of no one today.”

PM

“True. You are worthy of lamentation. You desire to die today.”

|| 1.17.7 ||

tvam vā mr̥ṇāla-dhavalah
pādair nyūnah padā caran
vṛṣa-rūpeṇa kim kaścid
devo naḥ parikhedayan

You are white like a water lily (tvam vā mr̥ṇāla-dhavalah), and move around on one leg (padā caran) without the other legs (pādair nyūnah) in the form of a bull (vṛṣa-rūpeṇa). Are you some devata (kim kaścid devah) coming to afflict us by such an appearance (naḥ parikhedayan)?

“Let that be. I will think of your first offense for a moment.”

Thinking in this way the King then inquired from the bull.

Are you some devatā who has come to produce lamentation
for us?

I have not seen such thinness and suffering even in my
dreams.

|| 1.17.8||

na jātu kauravendrānām
dor daṇḍa-pariram bhite
bhū-tale 'nupatanty asmin
vinā te prāṇinām śucaḥ

Except for your tears (vinā te), the tears of living beings (prāṇinām śucaḥ) have never fallen (na jātu anupatanty) on the earth (asmin bhū-tale) which was ruled by the Kuru kings (kauravendrānām) and well protected by arms of punishment (dor daṇḍa-pariram bhite).

Dharma

“You may be a king, but we have become miserable now.”

The king then speaks with fiery pride.

Except for your tears, tears have not fallen in the land which was well protected (**parirambhite**) by arms of punishment.

|| 1.17.9||

mā saurabheyātra śuco
vyetu te vrsalād bhayam
mā rodīr amba bhadram te
khalānām mayi śāstari

O son of Surabhī (saurabheya)! Do not lament (mā śucah)!
Do not fear (mā vyetu te bhayam) the śūdra (vrsalād)! O
mother (amba)! Do not weep (mā rodīh)! Since I am here
(mayi atra) as the punisher of sinners (khalānām śāstari), you
will have good fortune (bhadram te).

He then spoke consoling words to the bull who was showing the weeping cow his miserable condition.

O son of Surabhi! Do not lament (śucaḥ for śocaḥ).

Do not have fear, I will kill him now.

He then speaks to the cow.

Mayi śāstari means “while I am living as the punisher.”

|| 1.17.10-11||

yasya rāṣṭre prajāḥ sarvās trasyante sādhy asādhubhiḥ
tasya mattasya naśyanti kīrtir āyur bhago gatiḥ

eṣa rājñām paro dharmo hy ārtānām ārti-nigrahaḥ
ata enam vadhiṣyāmi bhūta-druham asattamam

O cow (sādhy)! The inattentive ruler (mattasya) in whose state (yasya rāṣṭre) all the citizens (prajāḥ sarvāḥ) suffer from criminals (trasyante asādhubhiḥ) loses (naśyanti) his fame, lifespan, fortune and progress (tasya kīrtiḥ āyur bhagah gatiḥ). This is the highest duty (eṣah paro dharmah) of the kings (rājñām), to punish those who cause suffering to others (ārtānām ārti-nigrahaḥ). Therefore I will kill (ata vadhiṣyāmi) that sinful killer (enam asattamam bhūta-druham).

Please
“But if you kill him because of us, then we become implicated
in killing. Do not do that.”

PM
He replies.

“I must kill him for my benefit. It is not because of your
request.”

|| 1.17.12||

ko 'vr̥scat tava pādāms trīn
saurabheya catus-pada
mā bhūvaṃs tvādr̥śā rāṣṭre
rājñām kṛṣṇānuvartinām

Son of Surabhī (saurabheya)! You have four legs (catus-pada). Who has cut off (kaḥ avr̥scat) three of your legs (tava pādāms trīn)? There should never be (mā bhūvaṃs) such a condition (tvādr̥śā) in the state (rāṣṭre) ruled by kings following Kṛṣṇa (rājñām kṛṣṇa anuvartinām).

|| 1.17.13 ||

ākhyāhi vṛṣa bhadraṁ vaḥ
sādhūnām akṛtāgasām
ātma-vairūpya-kartāram
pārthānām kīrti-dūṣaṇam

O bull (vṛṣa)! May you, ^(vaḥ) who is innocent (sādhūnām) and of pure character (akṛtāgasām), have good fortune (bhadraṁ ~~vaḥ~~)! Tell me (ākhyāhi) who has disfigured you (ātma-vairūpya-kartāram), who has spoiled the fame (kīrti-dūṣaṇam) of the Pāṇḍavas (pārthānām).

PM

“If you tell me, I will kill that person.”

Bull → Dhritrashtra

“I have nothing to say.”

PM

“O bull! You, who are good natured and offenseless, are auspicious in happiness and in suffering. But tell me the criminal who is spoiling the fame of the Pāṇḍavas. Who is the person who disfigured you by cutting off your legs?”

|| 1.17.14||

jane 'nāgasy agham̐ yuñjan
sarvato 'sya ca mad-bhayam
sādhūnām bhadram eva syād
asādhu-damane kr̥te

He who commmits violence (agham̐ yuñjan) against the innocent (anāgasy jane) must certainly fear me (asya ca mad-bhayam) in all ways (sarvatah). By punishing the sinful (asādhu-damane kr̥te), the innocent will be peaceful (sādhūnām bhadram eva syād).

By telling me who he is, he will have fear of me.

But even if you do not tell, under all conditions, he will fear me.

He who harms the innocent will fear me by all causes (sarvatah).

|| 1.17.15||

anāgaḥsv iha bhūteṣu
ya āgas-kṛn niraṅkuśaḥ
āhartāsmi bhujam sāksād
amartyasyāpi sāṅadam

I will cut off (āhartāsmi) the arms (bhujam sāksād) along with the armbands (sa aṅadam) of the person who (yah) without regard for rules (niraṅkuśaḥ) commits violence (āgas-kṛt) against the innocent beings (anāgaḥsu iha bhūteṣu), even if he is a devata (amartyasyāpi).

Dharma

“What happens if there is someone stronger than you?”

PM

Even if the person is a devatā, I will cut off his arms at the
root—with the armbands.

Actually there is no person among men and devatās who is as
strong as me.

|| 1.17.16||

rājño hi paramo dharmah
sva-dharma-sthānupālanam
śāsato 'nyān yathā-śāstram
anāpady utpathān iha

The highest duty (paramo dharmah) of the king (rājñah) is to protect (anupālanam) those who follow the rules given to them (sva-dharma-stha) in the scriptures (yathā-śāstram), and to punish (śāsato) the sinful (anyān) who deviate from the scriptures (utpathān) when there is no emergency (anāpady).

Dharmā

“What is the use in punishing one person and not punishing another person?”

This verse answers.

He punishes those who are sinful (**anyān**).