

Canto Six - Chapter Thirteen

**King Indra Afflicted by
Sinful Reaction**

**Theme-1: Indra chased by
personified sinful reaction
(1-15)**

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.1 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vṛtre hate trayo lokā
vinā śakreṇa bhūrida
sapālā hy abhavan sadyo
vijvarā nirvṛtendriyāḥ

Śrī Śukadeva said: O charitable King (**bhūrida**)! When Vṛtrāsura was killed (**vṛtre hate**), except for Indra (**vinā śakreṇa**), the three worlds (**trayo lokā**) and the presiding deities (**sapālā**) were immediately pleased (**sadyo nirvṛta indriyāḥ**) and free from trouble (**vijvarā abhavan**).

The Thirteenth Chapter describes how Indra, fearing the reaction from killing a brāhmaṇa, lived in the stem of a lotus at Mānasa Sarovara and later attained relief by performing a horse sacrifice.

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

॥ 6.13.2 ॥

devarṣi-pitṛ-bhūtāni
daityā devānugāḥ svayam
pratijagmuḥ sva-dhiṣṇyāni
brahmeśendrādayas tataḥ

Thereafter (**tataḥ**), the sages, the Pitṛs, the Bhūtas, the demons, the followers of the devatās (**devarṣi-pitṛ-bhūtāni daityā devānugāḥ**), and the devatās headed by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and Indra (**brahmā īśa indra ādayah**), returned to their respective homes (**svayam pratijagmuḥ sva-dhiṣṇyāni**).

Indra was not fit to return to his abode. The moment he killed Vṛtrāsura he became distressed at killing a brāhmaṇa.

Thus though the verse says that Indra returned home, he actually went to Mānasa Sarovara, then performed a horse sacrifice, and finally returned home.

That should be understood by the word tataḥ (afterwards).

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.3 ||

śrī-rājovāca

indrasyānirvṛter hetuṁ
śrotum icchāmi bho mune
yenāsan sukhino devā
harer duḥkhaṁ kuto 'bhavat

The King said: O sage (**mune**)! I desire to hear (**śrotum icchāmi**) the reason for Indra's distress (**indrasya anirvṛter hetuṁ**). Why did Indra become unhappy (**kuto harer duḥkhaṁ abhavat**) by the killing of Vṛtrāsura (**yena**), while the devatās were happy (**devāh sukhino āsan**)?

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.4 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

vṛtra-vikrama-saṁvignāḥ
sarve devāḥ saharṣibhiḥ
tad-vadhāyārthayann indram
naicchad bhīto bṛhad-vadhāt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When all the sages and devatās (**sarve devāḥ saha rṣibhiḥ**) were disturbed by the extraordinary power of Vṛtrāsura (**vṛtra-vikrama-saṁvignāḥ**), they had assembled to ask Indra to kill him (**tad-vadhāya arthayann indram**). Indra, however, being afraid of killing a brāhmaṇa, did not want to kill him (**na icchad bhītah bṛhad-vadhāt**).

The devatās requested Indra to kill Vṛtrāsura.

Indra did not desire to kill him because he was afraid of killing a brāhmaṇa (bṛhad-vadhāt).

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.5 ||

indra uvāca

strī-bhū-druma-jalair eno
viśvarūpa-vadhodbhavam
vibhaktam anugṛhṇadbhir
vṛtra-hatyām kva mārjmy aham

Indra said: I received extensive sinful reactions killing Viśvarūpa (**enah viśvarūpa-vadha udbhavam**), but I was favored by the women, land, trees and water (**strī-bhū-druma-jalair anugṛhṇadbhir**), and therefore I was able to divide the sin among them (**vibhaktam**). But now, if I kill Vṛtrāsura, another brāhmaṇa, how shall I free myself from the sinful reactions (**vṛtra-hatyām kva mārjmy aham**)?

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.6 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

ṛṣayas tad upākarnya
mahendram idam abruvan
yājayaṣyāma bhadraṁ te
hayamedhena mā sma bhaiḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing this (**tad upākarnya**), the sages replied to King Indra (**ṛṣayah mahendram idam abruvan**), "Good fortune unto you (**bhadraṁ te**). Do not fear (**mā sma bhaiḥ**). We shall perform a horse sacrifice for you (**hayamedhena yājayaṣyāma**)."

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

॥ 6.13.7 ॥

hayamedhena puruṣaṁ
paramātmānam īśvaram
iṣṭvā nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ
mokṣyase 'pi jagad-vadhāt

By worshipping the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa (**iṣṭvā**
īśvaram nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ), Paramātmā (**puruṣaṁ**
paramātmānam), with a horse sacrifice (**hayamedhena**),
you will be freed from all the sins in the universe
(**mokṣyase api jagad-vadhāt**).

॥ 6.13.8-9 ॥

brahma-hā pitṛ-hā go-ghno
mātr-hācārya-hāghavān
śvādaḥ pulkasako vāpi
śuddhyeran yasya kīrtanāt

tam aśvamedhena mahā-makhena
śraddhānvito 'smābhir anuṣṭhitena
hatvāpi sabrahma-carācaram tvam
na lipyase kiṁ khala-nigraheṇa

One who has killed a brāhmaṇa, a cow, his father (**brahma-hā pitṛ-hā go-ghno**), mother or guru (**mātr-hā ācārya-hā aghavān**), a dog-eater or an outcaste (**śvādaḥ pulkasako vāpi**), can be immediately freed from all sinful reactions simply by chanting about Nārāyaṇa (**śuddhyeran yasya kīrtanāt**). After killing even brāhmaṇas (**hatvāpi sa brahma-cara acaram**), what to speak of a low rascal (**kiṁ khala-nigraheṇa**), by our performing a horse sacrifice (**tam aśvamedhena mahā-makhena śraddhānvito asmābhir anuṣṭhitena**) you will not be touched by any sin (**tvam na lipyase**).

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

|| 6.13.10 ||

śrī-śuka uvāca

evam sañcodito viprair
marutvān ahanad ripum
brahma-hatyā hate tasminn
āsasāda vṛṣākapim

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Encouraged by the words of the sages (**evam sañcodito viprair**), Indra killed Vṛtrāsura (**marutvān ahanad ripum**), and when he was killed (**hate tasminn**), the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa (**brahma-hatyā**) took shelter of Indra (**āsasāda vṛṣākapim**).

When Vṛtra was killed (tasmin hate) the sin fell upon Indra (vṛṣākāpim).

Because of committing sin on the strength of an atonement, the reaction was very strong.

Without experiencing suffering, the atonement would not give relief by itself.

Therefore they did not perform the horse sacrifice for Indra immediately.

The sages, because of advising him to commit the sin on the strength of the atonement also suffered misfortune, the result of the offense, for a long time.

This suffering came from Nahuṣa, who took over Indra's post.

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

॥ 6.13.11 ॥

tayendraḥ smāsaḥat tāpaṁ
nirvṛtir nāmum āviśat
hrīmantam vācyatām prāptam
sukhayanty api no guṇāḥ

Following the advice of the devatās (**tayā**), Indra suffered (**indraḥ sma asaḥat tāpaṁ**), and attained no happiness (**nirvṛtir na amum āviśat**). Good qualities cannot give happiness (**guṇāḥ na sukhayanty**) to a person who has shame and infamy (**hrīmantam vācyatām prāptam**).

Asahat should asahata (he endured). Amum refers to Indra.

“Why could a person with qualities like determination not be happy?”

Those qualities cannot give happiness to a person who has done a shameful act and is criticized for killing a brāhmaṇa.

|| 6.13.12-13 ||

tām dadarśānudhāvāntīm
cāṇḍālīm iva rūpiṇīm
jarayā vepamānāṅgīm
yakṣma-grastām asṛk-paṭām

vikīrya palitān keśāms
tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti bhāṣiṇīm
mīna-gandhy-asu-gandhena
kurvatīm mārḡa-dūṣaṇam

Indra saw a caṇḍāla woman (**dadarśa cāṇḍālīm iva rūpiṇīm**), trembling because of old age (**jarayā vepamāna aṅgīm**), afflicted with tuberculosis (**yakṣma-grastām**), covered with blood (**asṛk-paṭām**), and breathing an unbearable, fishy odor (**mīna-gandhy-asu-gandhena**) that polluted the entire street (**kurvatīm mārḡa-dūṣaṇam**). With gray hair flying about (**vikīrya palitān keśān**), she pursued him (**tām anudhāvāntīm**), calling, "Wait! Wait! (**tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti bhāṣiṇīm**)"

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

॥ 6.13.14 ॥

nabho gato diśaḥ sarvāḥ
sahasrākṣo viśāmpate
prāg-udīcīm diśam tūrṇam
praviṣṭo nṛpa mānasam

O King (**viśām pate**)! Indra (**sahasrākṣah**) first fled to the sky (**nabho gatah**), then to all directions (**diśaḥ sarvāḥ**). At last he went to the northeast (**prāg-udīcīm diśam**) and quickly entered the Mānasa Sarovara (**tūrṇam praviṣṭo mānasam**).

First he went into the sky.

Seeing her chasing him, he went in all direction, but she followed.

Then he went in the northeast direction and quickly entered Mānasa Sarovara.

Theme-1: Indra chased by personified sinful reaction (1-15)

॥ 6.13.15 ॥

sa āvasat puṣkara-nāla-tantūn
alabdha-bhogo yad ihāgni-dūtaḥ
varṣāṇi sāhasram alakṣito 'ntaḥ
sañcintayan brahma-vadhād vimokṣam

Always thinking of relief from the sinful reaction for killing a brāhmaṇa (**sañcintayan brahma-vadhād vimokṣam**), Indra, invisible to everyone (**sah alakṣitaḥ**), lived for one thousand years (**varṣāṇi sāhasram āvasat**) in the subtle fibers of the stem of a lotus (**puṣkara-nāla-tantūn**) without food (**alabdha-bhogah**), since the messenger of Agni could not deliver his share of sacrifice in the water (**yad agni-dūtaḥ iha**).

He lived unseen in the fibers of the lotus stem.

He did not get any food, because the messenger of Agni did not deliver his share of the sacrifices, since he could not enter the water.

It is not difficult for Agni to enter water, since he delivers to Varuṇa, who is situated in the water, his share.

However, this water was difficult to enter because the followers of Śiva were guarding it.

And thus, the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa, which followed him everywhere, could also not enter the water.

He remained invisible to all people for a thousand years.

**Theme-2: Indra relieved of
sin, reinstated in his position
(16-23)**

Theme-2: Indra relieved of sin, reinstated in his position (16-23)

॥ 6.13.16 ॥

tāvat triṇākam nahuṣaḥ śaśāsa
vidyā-tapo-yoga-balānubhāvaḥ
sa sampad-aiśvarya-madāndha-buddhir
nītas tiraścām gatim indra-patnyā

As long as King Indra lived in the water (**tāvat**), Nahuṣa ruled the heavenly kingdom (**triṇākam nahuṣaḥ śaśāsa**), due to his knowledge, austerity and mystic power (**vidyā-tapo-yoga-bala anubhāvaḥ**). Nahuṣa, however, became blinded by pride in his wealth (**sah sampad-aiśvarya-mada andha-buddhih**), and took the body of a snake (**tiraścām gatim nītaḥ**) because of the instruction of Indra's wife (**indra-patnyā**).

Tri-nākam means Svarga.

“How can a human rule Svarga?” Nahuṣa was endowed with knowledge, austerity and yogic power.

This means he was capable of enlisting all powers and was capable of protecting Svarga.

Why then did Indra again rule Svarga?

Nahuṣa's intelligence became blind with pride in his wealth.

He had to take a snake's body because of Indra's wife.

Nahusa one time spoke to Indra's wife. "I am now Indra. Therefore you should serve me."

When he told her this, she spoke to Brhaspati.

He said, "Tell him that you will worship him if he comes carried by brahmanas. Then he will fall down because of a brahmana's curse."

She informed Nahuṣa, and he came, carried by Agastya and other sages.

Saying “Go quickly (sarpa)” Nahuṣa touched Agastya with his foot. He was then cursed by the angry sage and became a snake (sarpa).

Theme-2: Indra relieved of sin, reinstated in his position (16-23)

॥ 6.13.17 ॥

tato gato brahma-giropahūta
ṛtambhara-dhyāna-nivāritāghaḥ
pāpas tu digdevatayā hataujās
taṁ nābhyabhūd avitaṁ viṣṇu-patnyā

When the reaction to the offense of committing sin on the strength of atonement was destroyed (**tato nivārita aghaḥ**) by meditation on the Lord (**ṛtambhara-dhyāna**), he was invited back to Svarga by the brāhmaṇas (**brahma-girā upahūta**). The sin of killing a brāhmaṇa (**pāpas tu**), depleted of its strength by Śiva, guardian of the northeast (**dig devatayā hata ojāh**), could not overcome him (**taṁ na abhyabhūd**), since he was also protected by Lakṣmī, who lives in the lotus (**avitaṁ viṣṇu-patnyā**).

He went back to Svarga by the words of Brahmā and the brāhmaṇas, who said, “We will have you perform a horse sacrifice.”

Ṛtambharaḥ means “one who preserves truth, Viṣṇu.”

The offense of committing sin on the strength of atonement is called aghaḥ in this verse.

The sin of killing a brāhmaṇa is called pāpaḥ.

Masculine gender instead of neuter is poetic license.

Śiva is the guardian of the northeast direction. Lakṣmī resides in the lotuses of Mānasa Sarovara.

Theme-2: Indra relieved of sin, reinstated in his position (16-23)

॥ 6.13.18 ॥

taṁ ca brahmarṣayo 'bhyetya
hayamedhena bhārata
yathāvad dīkṣayāṁ cakruḥ
puruṣārādhanena ha

O King (**bhārata**)! The brāhmaṇa sages approached him (**brahmarṣayah taṁ abhyetya**) and had him properly perform a horse sacrifice (**hayamedhena yathāvad dīkṣayāṁ cakruḥ**) with worship of the Supreme Lord (**puruṣa ārādhanena ha**).

॥ 6.13.19-20 ॥

athejyamāne puruṣe
sarva-devamayātmani
aśvamedhe mahendreṇa
vitate brahma-vādibhiḥ

sa vai tvāṣṭra-vadho bhūyān
api pāpa-cayo nṛpa
nītas tenaiva śūnyāya
nīhāra iva bhānunā

When the sages performed the horse sacrifice (**brahma-vādibhiḥ vitate aśvamedhe**) and Indra worshipped the Supreme Lord (**mahendreṇa ijyamāne sarva-deva maya ātmani puruṣe**), the sin of killing Vṛtrāsura (**tvāṣṭra-vadho pāpa-cayo**) was completely destroyed (**śūnyāya nītaḥ**), like the sun dissipating fog (**nīhāra iva bhānunā**).

Theme-2: Indra relieved of sin, reinstated in his position (16-23)

॥ 6.13.21 ॥

sa vājimedhena yathoditena
vitāyamānena marīci-miśraiḥ
iṣṭvādhiyajñam puruṣam purāṇam
indro mahān āsa vidhūta-pāpaḥ

After worshiping the Supreme Lord, controller of sacrifices (**iṣṭvā adhiyajñam puruṣam purāṇam**), by means of a horse sacrifice (**vājimedhena**) executed properly by Marīci and other sages (**marīci-miśraiḥ yathoditena vitāyamānena**), Indra was cleansed of his sin (**indrah vidhūta-pāpaḥ**) and was again respected (**mahān āsa**).

॥ 6.13.22-23 ॥

idaṁ mahākhyānam aśeṣa-pāpmanām
prakṣālanam tīrthapadānukīrtanam
bhakty-ucchrayam bhakta-janānuvarṇanam
mahendra-mokṣam vijayam marutvataḥ

paṭheyur ākhyānam idaṁ sadā budhāḥ
śṛṅvanty atho parvaṇi parvaṇīndriyam
dhanyam yaśasyam nikhilāgha-mocanam
ripuñjyam svasty-ayanam tathāyusaḥ

Intelligent persons (**budhāḥ**) should read this great narration (**paṭheyur sadā idaṁ mahā ākhyānam**) about the purification and victory of Indra (**mahendra-mokṣam vijayam marutvataḥ**), which destroys all sins (**aśeṣa-pāpmanām prakṣālanam**) and glorifies the Supreme Lord (**tīrthapada anukīrtanam**), bhakti, and the devotees (**bhakty-ucchrayam bhakta-jana anuvarṇanam**). On sacred days they should hear this narration (**śṛṅvanty parvaṇi parvaṇi**) which brings alert senses (**indriyam**), wealth, fame (**dhanyam yaśasyam**), freedom from all sins (**nikhila agha-mocanam**), victory (**ripuñjyam**), good fortune and long life (**svasty-ayanam tathā āyusaḥ**).

Bhakty-ucchrayam means “endowed with the excellence of bhakti.”

The story describes the victory of Indra (marutvataḥ).

Indriyam means “quickness of the sense.”

Āyusaṃ means “giving long life.”