

# BHAGAVATAM – Krishna Leelas 11

(Jarasandha and Sisupala Vadha)



When people are beset by troubles, Lord Vishnu incarnates as a human to relieve them of their difficulties. That is why Lord Krishna incarnated 5,000 years ago. During Krishna's time, there were lots of good people, but there were also many evil kings who were causing a lot of suffering.

One day, Lord Krishna was sitting in his assembly hall with all his counselors. A Brahmin messenger came and said that he was sent by over twenty thousand kings who had been made prisoners by Magadha King Jarasandha. In those days, a Kingdom consisted of a city/state, and that was why there were so many Kings. The Brahmins were people of the priestly class. He told Krishna that the Kings requested Krishna to come and rescue them. Krishna said that they will get their freedom soon.

### **Jarasandha Vadha**

Jarasandha, the King who had imprisoned the Kings, was very powerful. He got his birth in the most curious way. He was the son King Brihadratha of Magadha. He had two wives, who he loved equally. His only sorrow was that he had no children. One time a sage named Chandakaushika came and visited the King. He was so happy with the loving service he got from King Brihadratha that he gave him a mango. He told him to have his wife eat the mango, and she would get a son.

Brihadratha loved both his wives equally, so he gave each of them half of the mango. Soon, both the wives became pregnant, and gave birth to two halves of a child each. Everyone was horrified to see these two lifeless halves, and king ordered to throw them in the forest. There lived a demoness, named Jara in the forest. Sensing the human flesh, she found the two halves of the child, and held each of these in her two palms. Incidentally when she brought both of her palms together, the two pieces miraculously joined together giving rise to a living child. Jara panicked when the child cried loudly, and she didn't feel eating that living child. She realized that this must be the son of the King Magadha, and wanting a reward, took the child to the palace. The King was overjoyed, and named the child Jarasandha in order to honor Jara.

Jarasandha grew up and became a very powerful king. He defeated many kings, and made them promise their allegiance to making him emperor. He made them captive in his jails. He had two beautiful daughters, and gave both of them in marriage to Kamsa, the king of Mathura. When Krishna killed Kamsa, Jarasandha was very angry with Krishna. Jarasandha made war on Krishna but was always defeated.

Lord Krishna had five cousins, the Pandavas, who had acquired a kingdom, Indraprastha. The Pandavas loved and respected Krishna. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, asked Krishna's permission to perform the Rajasuya Yagna. This would make him emperor over all of India. Krishna said, "Yudhishtira, before you can do so, you have to subdue all the kings of the earth."

Yudhishtira was very pleased that the Lord has given His consent. He sent his four brothers to the four corners of the earth, and they vanquished all the kings and brought back immense wealth for the treasury. The only king who remained unconquered was Jarasandha. Krishna knew Jarasandha would be killed by Yudhishtira's younger brother Bhima. Bhima was very strong and he alone had the strength and the stature to equal Jarasandha's. Krishna also knew that Jarasandha never refused a Brahmin anything. So, Krishna planned that Arjuna, Bhima, and Himself would dress up like Brahmins, and go to Magadha to challenge Jarasandha for a wrestling match.

Upon reaching Magadha, they presented themselves before the king as poor Brahmins, and asked his favor. Jarasandha was not only a brave warrior, but also clever and shrewd. He noticed that their hands bore arrow marks, their bearing was regal, and their voices were confident. Besides, one of them, Lord Krishna, looked very familiar. But he thought to himself, "What is the use of pampering this worthless body, unless a Kshatriya (warrior) can win fame in this world?" So he turned to Brahmins and said, "Ask what you will. I know you are not Brahmins. Still, I will give you whatever you ask for, even if it be my own head."

Then the Brahmins threw off their disguise, and Krishna said, "We are not Brahmins, king. These are two of the Pandavas, Bhima and Arjuna. I am Krishna! We have come here to request you for single combat, and you can pick your opponent from us." Jarasandha laughed and said that he will fight, but not with Krishna as He was a cowherd and He did not match his dignity and social standing. He then refused to fight with Arjuna as he was too small for him, Bhima seemed mighty and a worthy opponent for him, so he chose Bhima.

Bhima and Jarasandha fought for thirteen days, both equally matched. On the fourteenth day, Bhima looked at Krishna in a dejected mood for help. Now Krishna who knew the story of Jarasandha's birth, picked up a twig from the floor, broke it into two halves, and threw the two halves far away from each other. Bhima got the message. Bhima tore Jarasandha into two parts, but both the parts moved towards each other and joined again. Jarasandha got up again to fight. This time Krishna asked Bhima to throw the two parts of Jarasandha's body in opposite directions so that they might not join. Bhima did the same, and it was the end of Jarasandha. Krishna then placed Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, on the throne, and liberated all the kings, who were in Jarasandha's jails, fulfilling his promise to release them.

### **The Rajasuya and Sisupala Vadha**

Now Yudhishtira was fully qualified to perform the great Rajasuya yagna. He sent out invitations to all the great Rishis; to his relatives; to his Gurus; to the many gods and their consorts, as well as to the numerous ruling kings of the earth. Elaborate preparations were made for the Rajasuya. The rites were conducted according to the Vedic law.

In a big yagna, there is one person who is chosen to oversee the whole yagna and is most honored. The time came for them to choose who would occupy the seat of honor. This was a very delicate task that could cause severe embarrassment and serious repercussions as many chiefs, kings, Rishis, and gods were present. After much consultation, Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandavas, rose and said, "Sri Krishna is the one who deserves respect more than anybody else. He is the essence in all sacrifices. I suggest that Sri Krishna be shown the highest respect, that He should be worshipped first."

All the good, wise, and holy men were very pleased with this suggestion. When Yudhishtira was about to offer the worship to Sri Krishna, some of the Kings present got angry, because many of them disliked Krishna. Sisupala was a cousin of Sri Krishna, but he was a friend of both Kamsa and Jarasandha. Trembling with uncontrollable rage, Sisupala shouted in thundering voice, "You people who are supposed to be wise and old but are stupid to be making Sri Krishna the head of the sacrifice! Do you not see before you all these great kings, and the Rishis who have become sinless through their intense tapas? Do you not see the great souls before you who have their minds constantly fixed on Brahman? How can you ignore them all and offer the highest worship to this cowherd? He is not born of a high

caste, nor does his clan possess any tradition or virtue.” Thus he went on raving and ranting like this for quite some time.

Krishna did not react at all to this volley of insults. He uttered not a single word but sat there, calm and cool. Yudhisthira was very upset to see the end of his Rajasuya Yagna end with so much anger and disharmony. But Krishna remained calm and cool and urged restraint.

What had happened was that, when Sisupala was born, he had three eyes. Everyone came to see the remarkable baby. But one thing happened that worried his mother very much. A voice from heaven said “Krishna will kill this child.” She was the child of Krishna’s aunt. When Krishna came to visit her, she begged him never to harm the child. Krishna said “Madam, if he insults me 100 times, I will never harm him.”

While Sisupala was raving on and on, continuously insulting Krishna, Krishna was counting the insult. When the 101’s insult came, Krishna took his weapon, his chakra, a spinning whirlygig, and cut off Sisupala’s head. Then a most curious thing happened. A big light came out of Sisupala’s body, and was seen to enter Krishna. It turns out the Sisupala was one of the Lord Vishnu’s gatekeepers, who had been cursed by some Rishis to become a demon in three births. This was because they would not let the Rishis in to see Lord Vishnu. His three births were over so he returned to Lord Vishnu after Lord Vishnu killed him. By killing him, Lord Vishnu also liberated him! Just like with Kamsa, who thought constantly of Krishna with hatred, ven thinking of Krishna with hatred had purified him!

The Rajasuya Yagna was completed without any further hindrance by honoring the Lord Sri Krishna.

### Questions:

- Why did Lord Vishnu incarnate as Lord Krishna?
- What is a Brahmin?
- What did a Kingdom consist of in ancient days?
- Who’s son was Jarasandha?
- Why was King Brihadartha unhappy?
- What did Brihadartha do with the mango he received from the saint?
- How do saints have the power to give a son?
- What went wrong?
- How was it fixed?
- How Jarasandha get his name?
- Who was Yudhisthira?
- Why did he want to do the rajasuya yagna?
- What did Yudhisthira have to do before performing the yagna?
- What is a Kshatriya?
- Were Krishna, Arjuna and Bhima Kshatriya’s or Brahmins?
- How long did Bhima and Jarasandha fight?
- How was he finally finished off by Bhima?
- Do the twenty thousand kings get released?
- Was it right for Jarasandha to imprison them?
- What relationship was Sisupala to Lord Krishna?
- Did he like Lord Krishna?

- Why or why not?
  - What promise did Lord Krishna make to Sisupala's mother?
  - Who was given the seat of honor at the Rajasuya sacrifice?
  - What happened to Sisupala when he died?
  - Who was Sisupala really?
- Is it possible that evil people like Sisupala are really good people in a bad birth?
- Are all people really good people deep down inside?

## **MahaLakshmi Ashtakam**

**Namstestu Mahamaye Shripithe Surapujite  
SankhaChakra GadhaHaste MahaLakshmi Namostute (1)**

**Namaste Garudarudhe Dolasura Bhayankari  
SarvaPapaHare Devi MahaLakshmi Namostute (2)**

**Sarvajne Sarvavarade SarvadushtaBhayankari  
Sarv dukhahare Devi Mahalakshmi Namostute (3)**

**SidhiBudhiPrade Devi BhuktiMukti Pradayini  
Mantramurte Sada Devi Mhalakshmi Nmostute (4)**

**AdyantaRahite Devi AdiShakti Maheshwari  
Yogaje yogaSambhute MahaLakshmi Namostute (5)**

**SthulaSukshme MahaRaudre MahaShakti Mahodari  
MahaPapaHare Devi MahaLakshmi Namostute (6)**

**PadmasanaSthite Devi ParabrahmaSwarupini  
Paramesi Jaganmatarmahalakshmi Namostute (7)**

**SwetambaraDhare Devi NanalamkaraBhushite  
JagatstHITE Jaganmatarmahalakshmi Namostute (8)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Pq1RoMJP4>

## Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

A Q L E U

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S A K T

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T H M C A

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Coloring exercise

