

8 Shrutadeva and Bahulashva

In the city of Mithila, in the kingdom of Videha lived two great devotees of the Lord Shrutadeva and Bahulashva.

Shrutadeva was a poor brahmana. He was constantly engaged in devotional service to the Lord. He was peaceful, learned and lived a very simple life. By the will of the Lord, he obtained each day just enough to take care of himself and his family. He was very satisfied with whatever he got.

The ruler of the kingdom was named Bahulashva. He had palaces. He was a pure devotee of the Lord and regularly worshiped the Lord in His deity form.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was pleased with both of them. He mounted his chariot and travelled to Videha with a group of sages. Among the sages, were Narada, Vyas, Asita, Maitreya and others. In every city and town which the Lord passed, the people came forward to worship Him. They brought gifts and flowers to please Him. The Lord glanced all around with affection and had a smiling, beautiful lotus like face.

Gradually, He reached Videha. In the cities and villages of Videha, hundreds of people lined up and greeted Him joyfully. Both the king of Mithila, Bahulashva and Shrutadev fell at the Lord's lotus feet. At exactly the same time, both came forward with folded hands and invited the Lord to be his guest along with the brahmana sages.

Wanting to please both of them, the Lord accepted both their invitations. Thus, He simultaneously went to both the houses and neither could see Him entering the other's house.

In this way, the Lord and His companions were present in both the houses although both the brahmana and the king thought He was present in his house only. This opulence of the Lord is described as Vaibhava Prakasha.

When Lord Krishna and the sages arrived at King Bahulashva's palace, seats of honour were laid out for them. When they were all seated, the king bowed down and washed their feet with love and devotion. He sprinkled the washed water on his own head and also those of his family members.

Then he worshipped the Lord and the sages with fragrant sandalwood paste, flower garlands, fine clothes, ornaments, incense, lamps. He also gave ornamented cows and bulls in charity.

He had arranged a grand feast for his guests. After everyone had eaten to their satisfaction, he held the Lord's lotus feet in his lap and happily massaged them with tears in his eyes. He offered beautiful prayers to the Lord. Afterwards, he begged the Lord and the sages to stay in Mithila for some days to bestow good fortune on the people.

Meanwhile, Shrutadeva received the Lord in his little hut with great enthusiasm. He danced with great joy waving his shawl. He laid out mats of grass and straw. He was so poor that he had to borrow mats from his neighbours.

Shrutadeva washed the lotus feet and sprinkled himself and his family with the wash water. He offered fruits, water, fragrant clay, tulasi leaves, kusha grass and lotus flowers.

He offered them simple prasad. Afterwards Shrutadeva massaged the Lord's feet and offered sincere prayers. He said "O Lord, you are the Supreme Soul and we are your servants, how can I serve You?"

The Lord heard Shrutadeva's prayers and then he glorified the sages who had come with Him. He said " My dear Brahmana, you should know that these great sages have come here just to bless you. One can gradually become purified by seeing, touching and worshipping temple deities, places of pilgrimage and holy rivers. But one can immediately achieve the same result simply by receiving the merciful glance of these exalted sages.

In this way, both the devotees served the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the best way they could. The Lord stayed for some time with His two great devotees, Shrutadeva and Bahulasva. He was equally pleased with both of them and they attained the ultimate destination of their lives.





Activity Time

Discussion:

In this story we saw that Krishna performed a wonderful pastime called 'Vaibhav Prakash Lila'. He divided Himself into two just to please His devotees.

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna has many wonderful qualities. We cannot even count them. We are all parts and parcels of Krishna. Therefore we also possess some of His qualities.

Let us take an example to understand this: have you ever tasted ocean water? Even the tiniest drop tastes salty. Why? Because it is a part of the big ocean. The drop is of the same quality as the ocean, but it can never be the same in quantity. In the same way we all possess a tiny part of Krishna's vast opulences. Everything we have is meant for His service. We are eternally His servants.

We often see a person who may be rich and famous or intelligent and beautiful. However we can never see a person who possesses all these qualities in full. What to speak of possessing these qualities in full, even the little which we have is temporary.

KRISHNA is called Bhagavan. "Bhaga" means 'opulence' and 'van' means 'one who possesses'.

Only Krishna is :

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| 1. All wealthy | 2. All strong |
| 3. All famous | 4. All beautiful |
| 5. All knowledgeable | 6. All renounced |

Anyone who possesses all the opulences in full is ALL ATTRACTIVE. In Sanskrit "Krishna" means all attractive. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one can be equal to or greater than Krishna.

Many of these opulences are displayed in His pastimes.



Make a 'wonderful Krishna' poster.

Take a large sheet of chart paper. In the middle write 'Wonderful Krishna', take pictures of Krishna's pastimes like 'Kaliya', 'Damodar' and 'Govardhana'. Write some lines about each pastime. Use colourful sketch pens or paints to decorate the poster.

