

## Sudhanva

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Scriptures describe many *yogas* or ways to unite with God. (Thus, one who is attached to God is called a *yogee*.) The 18 chapters of the Gita have a *yoga* attached to each section, such as *bhakti-yoga* (*yoga* through devotion) and *karma-yoga* (*yoga* through selfless service). Krishna Bhagwan introduced the concept of *sambandha-yoga*. The type of affinity that a father has for his son, for example, when created with God's devotees, explains *sambandha-yoga*. Krishna Bhagwan illustrated such a relationship with Arjun.

The Pandav brothers were performing the *ashvamedha-yagnya* which consists of sending a ceremonial horse around the world. Upon seeing the horse, the other kings either pay homage to the king who sent the horse, or they stop it and challenge the army sent by the king. If the horse circles the earth, the *yagnya* is complete. When the horse came to Sudhanva, a great devotee of Krishna Bhagwan, he was pleased that he would get the opportunity to invite Krishna Bhagwan to his kingdom. But Sudhanva's mother wrongfully advised him that as a warrior he should fight. Thus Sudhanva promised his mother that he would defeat the Pandavs. Realizing the horse had been captured, Arjun, Krishna Bhagwan and the Pandav army soon reached Sudhanva's kingdom. Arjun questioned Krishna Bhagwan, "What type of devotee is this?" Krishna Bhagwan however explained the glory of Sudhanva. Further, Krishna Bhagwan told Arjun that he had no chance of defeating Sudhanva because of his weapons mastery. Before the battle, Sudhanva offered respects by aiming an arrow on the ground by Krishna Bhagwan's feet. His second arrow produced a garland from the skies. With the commencement of war, in a short while, Arjun's army was reduced to half. Krishna Bhagwan remained witnessing the battle.

But then Sudhanva had the thought to defeat Arjun. This thought should not have come. As a devotee of Krishna Bhagwan, Sudhanva should have understood the relationship between Arjun and Krishna Bhagwan. He recited the mantra, "If in my life, Krishna Bhagwan was most precious to me, let this arrow behead Arjun." Krishna Bhagwan told Arjun to step back and countered the arrow by reciting, "If Arjun is more dear to me than all my queens, let the arrow break away." Sudhanva then released a second arrow saying, "If I have valued Krishna Bhagwan more dear than

my own body throughout my life, then let this arrow behead Arjun." Krishna Bhagwan responded, "In my entire life, if Arjun's well-being was more dear to me than my own, let the arrow break apart." Finally Sudhanva put all of his good deeds in the final arrow. Krishna Bhagwan saw this, and thus said, "If I have looked wrong or at fault in the eyes of the world for my devotee's sake, and if all of the seemingly irreligious things I have done for their sake actually becomes a great deed, let the arrow turn back and kill Sudhanva." With this utterance, Sudhanva was beheaded by the arrow.

Second version

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Hamsadhvaja, the king of Campapuri is a great devotee of Krishna. He calculates that if he captures the horse, Arjuna will follow. If he defeats Arjuna, Krishna will follow. Then he can, may be, capture Krishna himself. He orders that whoever is unwilling to take part in the war should be killed by immersion in boiling oil. The misdeed of Sudhanva

Fifth son of Hamsadhvaja, Sudhanva, while preparing to go to war meets his wife Prabhavati who convinces him to make love before going to war. He obliges. It is noticed that he is late for the war. No exemption. He is put into boiling oil. Sudhanva prays to Krishna and is not hurt. Sudhanva to the war-front Sudhanva fights and defeats Vrshadhvaja. Sudhanva fights and defeats Pradyumna, Krtavarma, Anuslava, Satyaki and Niladhvaja. Arjuna and Sudhanva fight. Defeated Arjuna thinks about Krishna. Krishna instantly appears on the battle scene from Hastinapura. After a fierce fight filled with miracles, Sudhanva is beheaded but his headless body continues to fight. Krishna takes the head and throws it up. Siva captures it and adds it to his collection on Mundamala. Between Arjuna and Suratha Another son of Hamsadhvaja, Suratha fights with Arjuna. Suratha is beheaded after a fierce fight. Krishna asks Garuda to deposit the head in Ganga. Before the head falls in Ganga, Nandikeswara captures it and adds to Siva's collection. Hamsadhvaja ceases to be enemy  
Hamsadhvaja joins the victors.