

# Nishkam Bhakta Maharaj Prithu.

## Chapter 1.

By the Grace of Thakurji and the goodwill of Smt. Sarladevi Birla and Shri Basantkumar Birla, we have been given this opportunity to talk about Bhagwan in this holy Courtyard of Shri Laxminarayan Mandir. The subject of this discourse is the character of Maharaj Prithu in the Bhagwat.

Maharaj Prithu is described as an extraordinary *mahaapurusha* (great soul). Not only was he an ideal king, he was also a *nishkaama* (disinterested; free of selfish desires) *pre`mee* (filled with love) bhakta. Thus, a beautiful combination of the temporal and spiritual is seen in Maharaj Prithu's life. There is a need, in these times, to obtain an understanding of both these aspects of life.

As Shri Jajoo just pointed out, not only the common people, but even Sanyasis have become very commercial minded. This is an important point and a very distressing fact. Everyone is engrossed in chasing wealth, but the real goal of life – as given in the Bhagwat – is the same for all four Ashrams (stages of life) – the Brahmachari (celibate student), Grihastha (married householder), Vanaprastha (semi-retired person who turns to spirituality) and Sanyasi (a Monk who has taken the vows of renunciation).

*Dukha haanib sukhaavaaptih.*

The goal of every being in this world is to be free of *dukha* (sorrow; suffering) and experience enduring *sukha* (perfect happiness).

The life of Maharaj Prithu shows that he had attained this goal. Furthermore, all four *purushaartha* (principal human achievements) – Dharma, Artha (material success), Kama (obtaining the things a person wants) and Moksha liberation from the cycle of rebirth) – were prominent in his life.

Another outstanding aspect of Maharaj Prithu's life was that people of all Ashrams could learn something from his lifestyle.

The word 'prithu' means *prathayate` yashah*, meaning, a person who wins acclaim because of his actions; becomes famous by his own deeds. A good Grihastha can take inspiration from Maharaj Prithu's *karmayoga* (doing everything as a duty or a worship of Bhagwan) and lead a life that gives him a good name in society.

On the other hand, the Shastras say that a Sanyasi should give up *lokaishanaa* (the desire for fame). To do *tyaaga* (give up) *putraishanaa* (the desire for a son), *vittaishanaa* (the desire for wealth) and *lokaishanaa* is called 'Sanyas'. In the

character of Maharaj Prithu, we see an amazing combination of these three, which seems contradictory to the life of a Grihastha.

The Shastras have some statements that appear to be contradictory. A person read or hears them, but is unable to decide which he should follow. Not only common people, but even learned people find them confusing. I am reminded of a conversation respected Pundit Vishnukant Shastri had with Maharajshri.

One day, Shastriji recited two shlokas to my revered Gurdev Swami Akhandanand Saraswati, and asked, 'Which of these should I follow?' They were shlokas from the Neeti Shastra (the Shastra of right behavior).

*Adharmaa dhanamichchhaanti dhanam maanam cha madhyamaah,*

*Uttamaah maanamichchhaanti maanam hi mahataam dhanam.*

An *adhama* (lowly) person wants to earn money regardless of the method he uses. He feels no sorrow if he is shamed, or loses his peace of mind or his good reputation. He can do anything, just or unjust, to earn money.

A *madhyam* (middle level) person – *dhanam maanam cha madhyamaa* – wants money, but not at the cost of his good name.

The *uttam* (superior) person – *uttamah maana michchhanti* – desire only to be respected. They feel no regret if they have to sacrifice wealth for the sake of their good name or self-respect. Such people are considered the most superior of the three.

The other shloka Shastriji recited stated that fame and public acclaim should be given no importance.

*Pratishthaa shookaree vishthaa ghora rauravam,*

*Maanam chaiva suraapaanam trayam tyaktam sukhee bhae`t.*

*Pratishthaa* (fame) is like the *vishthaa* (dung) of a *shookara* (boar). Self respect and pride are akin to the Narak (Hell) called Raurav. The desire for respect is like being intoxicated. Therefore, a person should give up his self-respect, wanting to be respected, or having a good reputation; then he can experience sukha in his life.

'When such contradictory statements are seen in the Shastras, how does an individual decide which he should accept and which he should discard?' asked Shastriji.

Maharajshri gave a beautiful answer in just one sentence. 'The first shloka is for a Grihastha, and the second one is for a Sanyasi.' What a clear, straightforward clarification!

A desire for *yasha* (good name) should be present in the heart of a Grihastha, for him to be motivated towards doing good deeds. However, if a Sanyasi gets caught up in obtaining fame he will not be able to do *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress). The desire for *yash* will not allow him to rise above *de`haabhimaana* (identification with the gross physical body) and *de`haasakti* (attachment for the body). *Maana-sammaana* (respect and public acclaim) are connected to the physical form; the Atma is totally beyond them.

The Dharma of an ideal Grihastha is present in Maharaj Prithu's life. And, the *tyaaga* (renunciation) and *vairaagya* (emotional detachment) that give inspiration to a Sanyasi are also present.

Maharaj Prithu's life was divided largely in three aspects. The first was the form of a ruler who cared about his people. Maharaj Prithu's life shows us how an ideal King should rule.

The second is seen as a *nishkaama pre`mee* (a person who has love for Bhagwan without wanting any material benefit). Maharaj Prithu would do Yagnas (ritual fire sacrifices) and get Bhagwan's darshan (see with reverence) in the *yagna-sthala* (place where the Yagna is held). This reveals his *nishkama prema* (disinterested love for Bhagwan).

The third aspect remains even after getting Bhagwan's darshan, and that is when he gets the benefit of Satsang (hearing spiritual discourses) from the Sanakadi Rishis (the four enlightened sons of Brahmaji, sages, always five years old). Reading this raises a question: 'Is there a need for Satsang with Rishi-Munis, even after a person gets Bhagwan's darshan?'

It is said that to get Bhagwan's darshan is a great thing. Leave alone having a vision of Him when a person is in the waking state, it is considered a great good fortune to see Him even in a dream or in a trance. It fills the person with joy.

In that case, why is Satsang needed after Bhagwan's darshan/

It has been described that even after getting Bhagwan's darshan, faults like *krodha* (anger), *hinsaa* (violence), and *abhimaana* (pride, ego) are seen in a person's life. Even a great bhakta like Dhruv succumbed to anger and violence after he had got Bhagwan's *saakshaatkaara* (direct personal experience). The Pandavas saw Bhagwan Shri Krishna with great *shraddha* (reverence and faith) and bhakti. They considered it their great good fortune to get His darshan. But, didn't Duryodhan also get Shri Krishna's darshan? It did not change his thinking in any way!

Therefore, one very important need remains in the life of a person even after he gets Bhagwan's darshan, and that is, *mana kaa nirmaana* – that the *antahkarana* (fourfold mind comprising of the *mana* = emotional mind, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = state of mind; mental inclination, and *ahankaara* = subtle ego of individuality) must be changed. Regarding this, Maharajji used to say, 'You are

not to create the Ishwara, nor are you to create the world. What you have to do is to create your mana as it should be.'

It is perfectly true that Thakurji can achieve this by His *sankalpa* (mental resolve), but if the mana is not transformed even after getting Bhagwan's darshan, the only way to achieve this is through Satsang with Mahapurusha (great souls). So, the fruit of Bhagwan's darshan is to get Satsang, and only then is Bhagwan's darshan considered to be fulfilled completely.

It is a beautiful process – when the Ishwara meets us, He makes us meet a Sant (Mahapurusha, Mahatma), and when we meet a Sant, or Guru, he makes us meet the Ishwara. A Sant and the Ishwara are, thus, supplementary.

A very sweet point comes in the episode of Naradji when he goes to Vrindavan. Bhakti (depicted as a young woman) becomes *chaitanya* (filled with pure consciousness), but Gnan and Vairagya (her two aged sons) remain unconscious. Naradji made every effort to revive them, but to no avail. Then he started to think of Bhagwan. Bhagwan used the medium of an *aakaasha-vaanee* (a celestial voice), and gave him a command. 'Do satkarma (good deeds)! Do satkarma!' 'Maharaj, what does satkarma mean?' asked Naradji. 'Please explain it to me.' In answer to this, he heard:

*Tatte` karmaabhidhaasyanti saadhavah saadhubhooshanaah.*

*(Bhagwat Mahatmya 2. 32)*

'Naradji, the Sadhus will explain this to you.'

'You are telling me, so why don't You explain, Bhagwan?'

'Not I. Only My Sants will explain this.'

Bhagwan has such love for His Sants that He sends the people who go to Him back to His Sants first. It is the same lofty state in Maharaj Prithu's life, that ultimately he gets the Satsang of the Sanakadi Rishis.

The four Purushartha – Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha – came to Maharaj Prithu in the order and form as given in the Shastras. The second chapter of the first Canto explains them beautifully.

*Dharmasya hyaapavargasya naarthorthoyopakalpate` ,*

*Naarthasya dharmikaantasya kaamo laabhaaya hi smritah.*

*(1. 2. 6)*

Dharma should be connected to Moksha, not to Artha. And, Artha should be connected to Dharma, not to Kama.

There are many definitions of Dharma. In one place it is written, '*Ve`da praneeto dharmah* – a life lived according to the injunctions of the Vedas is

Dharma.’ Dharma is said to give *loka* (this world) and *paraloka* (realms after death, like Swarga), both.

*Yatobhyudayanih shre`yasasiddhah sa dharmah.*

*(Vaisheshik Darshan 1. 2)*

By following the laws of Dharma, a person can achieve *kalyaana* (great good fortune; Moksha) in worldly and Heavenly spheres.

The author of the Bhagwat does not consider worldly achievements to be the principal purpose of Dharma. Worldly benefits are the secondary purpose; the principal purpose of Dharma is to obtain Moksha.

Maharaj Prithu could have obtained Swarga, had he so desired, because a person can attain Swarga by doing Yagnas. Indra obtained Swarga by doing a hundred Yagnas, but Maharaj Prithu had no such desire, and so he did not proceed with the hundredth Yagna even after he had completed ninety nine Yagnas. Furthermore, having no *kaamanaa* (desire) for Swarga, he got Bhagwan’s darshan in the *yagna-sthala* (the place where the Yagna was held).

The Shruti (Vedic statement) says, ‘*Svarga kaamo yaje`t* – a person can get Swarga, or Bhagwan, whichever he desires, by doing Yagnas. However, if you want true peace in this life – if is real sukha you want – you should connect Dharma to Moksha, to be liberated from the cycle of rebirth. Don’t connect Dharma to Artha, meaning, material wealth.

Dharmic programs are organized on a large scale, but what is the intention behind them? Is it Moksha, sukha-shanti, or is it *vyaapaara* (a commercial interest)? The *vaktaa* (speaker) and the organizers agree on the terms of how much they will get, before proceeding with the organizing of the Katha (discourse) or Yagna.

Some eight or ten years back, a Yagna was held at Jabalpur. The Acharya (Master) from whom I had studied the Bhagwat has also been invited to participate. Due to some unavoidable reasons, he reached only after the Yagna was over.

‘How did the Yagna go?’ he asked the organizers.

‘Oh, the Yagna was all right, but we incurred a loss.’

Is a Yagna a factory where profit and loss are to be taken into consideration? Dharma, Bhagwan’s Katha, etc certainly give worldly benefits as well. The speaker gets fame as well as *dakshinaa* (monetary gifts). And, there are *vaktaa-shrotaa* (speaker –listeners) whose goal is to obtain Bhagwan, and they succeed in their goal. Dharma is like the *kalpa-vriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree).

Why is obtaining Moksha considered superior to obtaining Swarga? The situation of Swarga is separate from the situation of a human being in this world.

So, when the *punya* (spiritual merit that leads to good fortune, attained by doing good deeds) that takes a person to Swarga is used up, the person has to leave Swarga. But, what is Moksha?

*Mukte`rhitvaa anyatharoopam svaroope`navasthitih.*

To let go of all other forms and be established in our *sva-roopa* (own form or essence) is called 'Moksha'.

The Vakyapadi has a beautiful shloka about this:

*Nashte`poorve` vikalpe`tu yaavad anyasnodayah,*

*Nirvikalpaka chaitanyam spashtam taavadvibhaasate`.*

By the Grace of Bhagwan, one sankalpa has been fulfilled, and no new sankalpa has arisen. This is the intermediate moment in which a person can be turned inward fully, and experience the shanti and *nerve`da* (disregard for worldly things) that can be considered to be of the same level as *brahma-saakshaatkaara* (a direct personal experience of the Brahman).

When the mana becomes free of desires and stops wandering in the outside world, that is experiencing the sukha of the Atma-sakshatkara (the Atma and the Brahman are one).

Shri Vamdevji Maharaj, who was supremely *virakta* (full of renunciation and possessions) used to say that the *e`kaagrataa* (single minded focus; concentration) of the mana is very important.

There are many people who are addicted to TV serials. They will stop all other activities to watch their favorite serials. Yet, supposing they were to get some bad news while watching a serial they liked, would they enjoy seeing it any more? Their pleasure will be gone. Their mind will be focused on the bad news. Why is that? It is because their mind is no longer focused on the serial. The bad news distracted it. This is why it is important for a sadhak to practice staying in solitude.

Anyone who is used to the hustle and bustle of this world thinks it is very boring to sit alone, but a sadhak finds solitude more and more enjoyable. The reason is that a sadhak is never alone. Pujya Ramkinkarji Maharaj used to say that nobody can stay absolutely alone; and a bhakta is never alone, because his Bhagwan is with him every moment of his life. You may say that this is mere imagination, or – from the viewpoint of Vedanta – you may say that it is a *nirvikalpa* state, when the person feels that his Atma is the only thing that exists. In both states, there is no feeling that sukha can be obtained from anything in the outside world. Instead

of expecting sukha from any external object, the person obtains anand from the unbroken flow of *rasa* (sweetness) within.

The meaning of this is that the mana is a sincere servant. People complain that the mana is very *chanchala* (restless; fickle); it does not settle anywhere. Arjuna said the same thing to Bhagwan.

*Chanchala hi manah Krishna pramaatheebalavaddridam,  
Tasyaaham nigraham manye` vaayoriva sudushtaram.  
(Gita 6. 34)*

The mind is as restless as the wind.

Bhagwan said, ‘The mind is restless because of our habits. It troubles us when we mislead it. If we train it to go on the right path, it becomes more and more helpful, and a more devoted servant than any other.’

That is why it is said:

*Mana e`va manushyaanaam kaaranam bandhamokshayoh.*

The mana is the cause of *bandhana* (bondage) and also of Moksha.

Someone may say, ‘The Guru is said to be the *kaarana* (cause) of Moksha. How can you say that the mana is the cause?’

The fact is that both statements are correct. The Guru is the external cause, and the mana is the internal cause. If the Guru tells us the method, but the mana refuses to accept it, will any change come into our life? No. Therefore, Moksha can be obtained only when the mana accepts the Guru’s teaching. This is called *aatma-kripaa* (the Grace of the Atma, or the Self). Atma-kripa, along with Guru-kripa, is essential.

Even people who don’t have any *pratyaksha* (known) urge for Moksha certainly want shanti in their life. Shanti is also Moksha, in a *paroksha* (unseen) form. Therefore, a desire for shanti should be present, also, along with a desire for Artha, when a person does Dharma.

What should Artha be connected to? In general, Artha is understood to be material wealth, but this is a limited viewpoint. Even the body is *sampatti* (wealth), and so is the buddhi. All of them should be used for good purposes, for Dharma, rather than for *kaamanaa poorti* (fulfilling petty personal desires).

The purpose of Dharma is *jeevana-shuddhi* (to make our life pure). Most people use Artha to increase their comfort and pleasure, but when they get engrossed in this, they find a lack of shanti in their life. The desire for comfort and pleasure is endless. Even people who have huge houses, factories, and a big staff do not experience shanti. The air-conditioning ensures a cool room, but a heater burns in

their heart. So, a person should free himself from *kaamanaa* (desires), *aashaa* (expectations), and *vaasanaa* (lust; yearning for worldly objects). To achieve this, it is essential to use Artha for doing Dharma.

There is an episode in the Bhagwat about Devhuti, the mother of Bhagwan Kapildev. Her husband, Kardam Rishi used his spiritual powers to create an air plane, the like of which no one ever had before, and no one ever will. But, did she obtain *tripti* (satisfaction) from it? This is what she says, regarding all the luxuries of that air plane:

*Nirvinnaa nitaraam bhoomannasadindriyatarshanaat,  
Ye`na sambhaavyamaane`na prapannaandham tamah prabho.*

(1. 25. 7.)

‘Prabho! I am fed up of trying to satisfy these wicked *indreeya* (senses). They have never said that they have had enough, and wanted no more.’

That is why the author of the Bhagwat says:

*Naarthasya dharmikaantasya kaama kaabhaaya hi smritah.*

(1. 2. 9.)

‘Artha is meant to be used for Dharma. The fruit of Artha is not to fulfill desires and indulge the senses.’

And, ‘The meaning of *kaama poorti* (fulfilling desires) means to procure what is needed. It does not mean fulfilling avid desires and indulging the senses.’ *Vaasanaa poorti* (satisfying lust) is when someone says, ‘I will wear only a Pashmina shawl, worth one and a half lakhs, when it is cold.’ Any warm shawl or blanket can serve to keep you warm; why the insistence on something luxurious? Similarly, when a person feels hungry he should not be fussy about the food; he should satisfy his hunger with whatever is available. That is why it is said:

*Kaamasya ne`ndriyapreetilaabho jeev`ta yaavataa,  
Jeevasya tatvajignaasaa naartho yashche`ha karmabhih.*

(Bhagwat 1. 2. 10)

The purpose of Kama is not to satisfy the senses; its purpose is to keep the body healthy, meaning, to sustain life. And, the purpose of life is *tattva jignaasaa* (Tattva = the essence of the Brahman; jignasa = the wish to know). The purpose of life is to know the essence of the Brahman.

A sadhak feels the cold and the heat, hunger and thirst, like anyone else. He will certainly try to find a solution for these, so that these discomforts don’t become an obstacle in his sadhana. Even in Sanyas Dharma it is said, ‘A Sanyasi may or

may not have the right to do other things, but he has the right to ask for *bhikshaa* (begged food).’ The reason is, how will a Sanyasi do *bhagvat-chintana* (think about Bhagwan) if he does not eat and remain fit? It is also stated that if a Sanyasi cannot get bhiksha, he can do some work in exchange of food. In the story of Jada Bharat, we see that he did not beg for food; he did labor in exchange of food.

Pujya Udiya Baba had a similar experience once. He went to a house for bhiksha. It was the house of a bhakta who had asked him repeatedly to have bhiksha at his house. The man had a brother who was a *naastika* (atheist). By chance, Baba’s bhakta was not at home when Baba went. Baba called out ‘Narayana’ from the doorstep, and the brother came in response to Baba’s call.

‘You are strong and healthy,’ he said. ‘Why don’t you work, instead of begging for your food?’

Baba was a straightforward Mahapurusha. He smiled and said, ‘I am quite willing to work, my brother, but where will I get work?’

‘Why can’t you get work? Cut some hay for my cattle!’

Baba gladly picked up the chopper and began to chop hay. A little later, the other brother – who was an *aastika* (believer of Bhagwan) – came home and was shocked to see Baba sitting there, chopping hay. He understood the matter, and fell at Baba’s feet. ‘Maharaj! Forgive my brother! He has committed a great *aparaadha* (offence).’

Baba was quite unperturbed. ‘My brother, what is the purpose of this body? At least it was put to some good use. And then, where is the offence in chopping hay for cows?’

The indication is that the body should be kept healthy, and fit for doing Bhagwan’s bhajan (remembering Him with love), and this is the only way that Purushartha of Kama can lead to Moksha.

A Mahatma has written a book, ‘*The`haro, Aur De`kho*’ (Stop And See). He writes, ‘Where are you going in this blind race? Even animals and birds build their nests and lairs, have babies, and rear them. Are you also using your life only for this?’

Pujya Rotiram Baba used to say jokingly, ‘You people work hard to build a house. You do the puja of purification before you move in. However, even before you did the puja, creatures like mosquitoes, flies and lizards who moved into the house you built! If this is your only goal in life, these creatures obtained it effortlessly. The fact is that the goal of life is *jeevasya tattva jignaasaa* – to experience the Paramatma who is in the swarup of the Param Tattva (supreme essence), and the vehicle that carries you towards this query is the Dharmapath (the path of Dharma).’

The four Purushartha are organized so beautifully in Maharaj Prithu's life, that he is remembered as the *aadi raajaa* – the first Raja. Historically, it is Manu who is the Adi Raja. Manu's son was Uttanapad. Uttanapad's son was Dhruv, and Dhruv's son was Anga. Anga's son was Bena. Maharaj Prithu was created by churning Bena's corpse. Thus, he is not actually the Adi Raja, but he is referred to as such, because the tradition of being an ideal King started with him.

Raja Bena was born as the result of a *putre`shthi Yagna* (a Yagna done with the wish to get a son). Maharaj Anga was a bhakta of Bhagwan, but he was childless. He did the Putreshthi Yagna and got Bena as a result. However, Bena was very wicked and cruel even as a child. He would set fire to people's houses. He derived sadistic pleasure from killing people. He would have people thrown into a well to drown. He would strangle his companions. This was sport for him.

Raja Anga tried his utmost to explain to Bena to amend his ways, but Bena was unmoved. Being a bhakta, Anga was soft hearted. There was a laxity of punishment under his rule. He accepted Bena's wicked character with a different viewpoint.

*Kadapatyam varam manye` sadapatyaachchhuchaam padaat,  
Nirvidye`ta grihaanmartyo yatkle`shanivahaa griha.  
(Bhagwat 4, 14, 46).*

'Prabho! You have blessed me by giving me a wicked son. It is very painful to leave a good son, but when a son is wicked, raaga for him leaves automatically.'

Maharaj Anga gave up the *moha* (blind attachment caused by deluded thinking and lack of detachment), of son and Kingdom. He went away quietly into the forest, to live in solitude and think about Bhagwan. This kind of *samarpana* (total surrender) to Bhagwan is seen very rarely.

Pujya Gurudev would narrate this story: A number of passengers were in a ferry, crossing a river. The boat developed a leak in midstream. The passengers panicked. Everyone started bailing out water in whichever way they could. A Mahatma was also in the boat. He remained tranquil, but instead of throwing water out of the boat, he started filling his *kamadalu* (vessel carried by Monks) from the river and pouring water into the boat. The other passengers tried to stop him, but he paid no heed to their protests. Thinking that this was not the time to start quarrelling, they left him to do what he wanted.

The leak was filled up and the boat crossed midstream safely. As soon as it was clear that they were safe, the Mahatma started to bail out water like the others. When they reached the bank, the anger of the other passengers blew up. 'Babaji, when we were in danger of sinking, you added water to the water inside the boat, increasing our chances of drowning! When it was clear that the boat was safe,

you started bailing out the water, as we were doing. Why did you behave in this mad way?’

‘What you say is correct,’ said the Mahatma. ‘Whatever I did was with the thought that I should support Bhagwan in whatever He wants. When the boat started to sink, I was trying to help it sink; when it became clear that Bhagwan wants it to reach safely, I did what I could to help it reach safely.’

Only total dedication to Bhagwan can make a person think on these lines. Only a person who has surrendered himself completely and unquestioningly to Bhagwan can depend wholly on Him for everything. Only such a person understands the Satya that it is the Ishwara who does everything and makes everyone do what He wants.

Goswami Tulsidasji asks Bhagwan for such *nirbharaa bhakti* (bhakti in which he depends totally on Bhagwan for everything, considering this to be his duty. Only such a person understands the Satya that is the Ishwara who does everything and makes everyone do what He wants.

*Bhaktim prayachchha raghupungava nirbharaama me`*

*Kaamaadi dosha rahitam kuru manasan cha.*

*(Ramchairitamanas 5. 2)*

‘Prabhu! Let me not wish for anything for myself. Let me want only what You want, and depend completely on You!’

Truly, the bhakta who leaves himself totally in Bhagwan’s hands is fortunate. The same feeling is seen in Hanumanji’s visit to Ashok Vatika (The Park in which Ravana had imprisoned Sitaji). Sitaji blessed Hanumanji saying,

*Ajara amara gunanidhi suta hovu, karahun bahuta raghunaayaka chohu.*

*(Ramcharitamanasa 5. 16.)*

That means, ‘I have received nirbhara bhakti,’ thought Hanumanji. He became immersed in anand. This was in spite of the fact that when he first met Shri Rama, Bhagwan told him, ‘Hanuman, don’t consider yourself insignificant, because *tain mama priya lachimana te`in doonaa* – you are twice as dear to Me as Laxman.’ This did not delight Hanumanji as much as the blessings of Mother Sita.

When Sitaji saw Hanumanji’s condition, she asked, ‘My son, why are you overcome with emotion?’

‘Mother, you have told me that Bhagwan Rama will have prema for me; I know that your words can never be untrue. So, my responsibility is over. It is no Bhagwan’s responsibility to have prema for me.’

Maharaj Anga left his palace to do Bhagwan's bhajan, and he did bhajan till he obtained Bhagwan. Even after doing a Yagna, he got a destructive, sadistic, wicked son like Bena. The reason for this was that Raja Anga's wife, Sunitha, was the daughter of Mrityu Devta – the Devta of Death. The part of Bena that came from his mother affected his nature. However, he also had some good qualities, since he had been born as the fruit of a Yagna. These good qualities appeared in the form of Maharaj Prithu, after Bena died childless, and the Mahatmas churned his corpse to create a son. Maharaj Prithu's life shows us certain ideals. We will discuss them tomorrow.

Come; let us begin the story of an exceptional person like Maharaj Prithu. He was an ideal for a Grihastha and also a *virakta* (a man of renunciation; a Sanyasi). The story of his birth is quite unique.

Maharaj Anga had a son called Bena, who was cruel and wicked. After Maharaj Anga went away to the forest, the Mahatmas asked his Queen who should be crowned King. See the *mamataa* (attachment) of a mother – Sunitha said that Bena should be crowned King. The Mahatmas crowned him and Bena became the King.

The Mahatmas gave Bena an *upade`sha* (teaching; sermon) when they crowned him. ‘The Raja is the *eeshvara roopa* (form of the Ishwara), so he should do nothing that is prompted by *raaga-dve`sha* (attachment-hatred) once he is seated on the throne. He should always adhere to the Satya (truth; justice) and Dharma, and look after his people.’

Then the Mahatmas returned to their Ashrams to do their *saadhana-bhajana* (efforts for spiritual progress and think lovingly about Bhagwan).

In those times, Mahatmas did not give updesha to anybody, unless the person was eligible by his lineage to rule the Kingdom. Great importance was attached to the person having the right qualities for being made the King. Bena did not have the capacity to absorb the teaching. He interpreted it in his own way, and the tragic result of this was seen almost immediately. He made a public declaration, ‘The Raja is the Ishwara, so now I am the Ishwara. Therefore, no other Devi-Devta is to be worshipped henceforth. Whoever does a Yagna-Havan (the rituals of offering oblations into the sacred fire) will make the offerings in my name.’

*Na yashtavyam na daatavyam na hotavyam dvijaah kvachit,  
Iti nyavaarayaddharmam bhe`reeghoshe`na sarvashah.  
(4. 14. 6)*

This announcement created a debacle for the populace. They feared Bena’s punishment if the made offerings to the Devi-Devtas, and they were not willing to say, ‘*Be`naaya svaahaa*’ instead of ‘*Indraaya svaahaa*’. As a result, all Dharmik rituals ceased. However, one fact that was seen was that thieves and dacoits no longer troubled the people.

Bena was a stern ruler/ When the thieves and dacoits heard that he had become the King, they went and hid. The example given says:

*Nililyurdasyavah sadhah sarpatrastaah ivaasvavah.  
(4. 14. 3)*

Just as mice scatter at the appearance of a black snake, the *chor-daakoo* went into hiding during Bena's rule.

Even if we accept that sternness is a virtue in a King, it fails to balance Bena's vices. The biggest flaw in Bena's character was that he was a *naastika* (atheist), considering himself to be the only Ishwara.

The Mahatmas heard about Bena's atrocities, and the discontinuation of religious rituals. They came to Bena and tried to explain how wrong his behavior was. When they spoke of behaving in keeping with Dharma, and looking after the people, Bena rebuked them sharply.

*'Baalishaa vata yooyam vaa adharma` dharmamaaninah.* You are fools! Your buddhi has become *adharmika* (contrary to Dharma), because I am the Ishwara, and you are telling me that I am an atheist! Since I am the Raja, all the Devtas are my *ansha* (part), and I am entitled to get the *agrapoojaa* (foremost worship). So, do my puja!

The Mahatmas understood, 'Being made King has made Bena arrogant. He is calling his Gurus "fools"! He thinks, "So what of they are Mahatmas – I am the King, and therefore, only I know and understand everything; not they!"' Bena felt that he was greater than anyone else.

Maharajshri would say jokingly, 'Some people think I am an authority on the Bhagwat. This can also be an indication that I know nothing about the other works of our Shastras.'

The Mahatmas realized that it would be disastrous if he continued to rule the land. They became angry and grunted, *'Hantyaama! Hantyaama!* Let the wicked King die!' The power of their anger was such that Bena died instantly. The intervention of the Mahatmas is amazing.

It may be questioned whether Mahapurushas, Acharyas, or Mahatmas should intercede in social matters or not. Opinions differ. The fact is, the Mahapurushas are of two categories – one is the *avadhoota* (ascetics) and the other is the Acharyas. The Avadhoots never intercede in social matters, because from their viewpoint, whatever happens is by Bhagwan's will. *Bhakti-pradhaana mahaapurusha* (the Mahapurushas in whom Bhakti is predominant) see everything as Bhagwan's *leelaa* (frolic). For them every person is a puppet, playing a role in a play.

The Vedanta-pradhan (dominated by the principle of Vedanta, which is essentially non-dual) see everything as a mutation of their own Atma. They see the *sansaara* (interactive world) as a dream. And, in a dream, it makes no difference whether there is Dharma or adharma. Social upliftment or downfall has no meaning for them.

The Acharya category of Mahapurusha also believe that whatever happens is by Bhagwan's wish, but they do try to set right the wrong trends in society. Can it be said that Shankaracharyaji was not free of *avidyaa* (nescience; lack of right understanding)? Can anyone say that he had not obtained *brahma-saakshaatkaara* (a direct personal experience of the Brahman)? Countless *saadhaka* (spiritual seekers) reached the stage of Avadhoota by merely reading his works. Yet, Shankaracharya Bhagwan did intercede in social matters.

The Ishwara chooses the people through whom He wants to bring changes in the world; and He gives them the *shakti* (power) to achieve. The angry grunt of the Mahatmas resulted in Bena's death. The strength behind this is the shakti of the Ishwara who abides in all beings. This is what is called '*aatmabala*' – the power of the Atma, or *sankalpa-shakti* – the power of a mental resolve. The Acharyas have this shakti.

Once, an Acharya was doing a *pravachana* (discourse) in Baroda. During the discourse, he used a derogatory word for an Acharya of another *sampradaaya* (Sect). After the talk was over, a journalist came up to him and asked him, 'Will the social evils you spoke of be removed by abusing any individual? The person you targeted renders considerable service to society. People from large societies follow his example, and try to help him in the good work he has undertaken. Instead of criticizing him, why don't you do some social work? There are many activities, like giving food, education, and health care to the poor that you could also undertake. Why aren't you involved with some good activity?'

The Acharya responded by saying, 'I have neither the funds nor any other means to undertake such activities. Nor do I have the necessary manpower. It is not possible for me to do social work.'

'I accept that you lack funds and manpower,' said the reporter, 'but, Maharaj, you have the power of your own *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress), don't you? Why don't you use your *sankalpa-shakti* to change society for the better?'

'I do not use *sankalpa-shakti* for petty matters,' said the Acharya haughtily.

'Maharaj, if these are petty matters, why do you abuse that Acharya? You should not even think about what he does!' said the reporter. The Acharya tried to pretend he was distracted by some important thoughts!

The Mahapurusha retain their *nishthaa* (faith), *garimaa* (gravity), and *sadhutaa* (saintly qualities) even when they intercede to improve social trends.

The Mahatmas left after Bena died, but the anti-social elements who had kept themselves hidden during Bena's rule surfaced, and began to terrorize the people. There was panic in the land. A good and able King was needed urgently.

The Mahatmas came again to the Palace and asked Sunitha whether Bena's body had been preserved, or whether it was destroyed. When she told them she had

had it preserved, they were relieved, because they had come with the hope of creating a new King from Bena's corpse.

It was the mother's mamata that she first got her unfit son to be made King, and then she had his corpse preserved. The Shastras have much to say on the importance of mothers. Mothers have unlimited love for their children. It is said that there may be a bad son, but there can never be a bad mother.

*Kuputro jaayate` kvachidapi kumaataa na bhavati.*

Explaining the importance of a mother, an astonishing thing has been said in the Shastras. If a man becomes a Sanyasi and his father comes before him, it is the father's duty to bow down to his Sanyasi son. However, if his mother comes before him, it is the Sanyasi son's duty to bow down to her.

Many people have the false impression that our Shastras criticize women, but it is not so. The Shastras have no *nindaa-stuti* (criticism-eulogizing) of women or men; it is the good or bad qualities that are praised or criticized. I will give you a few examples.

Shabari (an old, low-caste woman who had great bhakti for Shri Rama) is praised. Sulochana (the wife of Ravana's son, Meghnad) is also praised. Many other female characters are given great respect, but Supernakha (Ravana's sister who was wicked) is bound to be criticized. Kaikeyi could never get much praise, in spite of the fact that she was Maharaj Dashrath's Queen, and Bharat's mother. Ravana was known to be a great scholar of the Vedas and a mighty warrior. He had attained great *siddhi* (supernatural powers). He was born in a Brahmin lineage, but he could only get criticism. Thus, it is the qualities in them, and not the men or women, who are praised or criticized.

Bena's mother took the Mahatmas to the room where his corpse was preserved. Mahatmas have enormous capabilities. The Mahatmas of yore were able, like today's doctors, to do *vishle`shana* (analysis) of the subtle body. It is described that the Mahatmas did *manthana* (churning) of Bena's thigh. A dwarf with a dark complexion emerged. This was the result of Bena's paapa-karma.

Then the Mahatmas did manthan of Bena's arms. A pair arose – a man and a woman. It was Shri Hari (Vishnu Bhagwan) and Laxmiji, who came in the forms of Maharaja Prithu and Maharani Archi. Laxmiji is never separated from Vishnu Bhagwan. It may be asked, 'How can a Mahapurusha like Prithu be created from a *paapee* (sinner) like Bena?'

Maharajshri used to say that not a single person can be found in this world who has no faults, only good qualities; and not a single person can be found who has only faults and no good qualities. Every individual is combination of good and bad qualities, although the proportions differ. The Ishwara alone is free of faults.

A gentleman called Laxmichand used to come to Maharajshri. In the course of some discussion, he said, 'I never tell a lie.'

Maharajshri smiled when he heard this. 'Laxmichand, this is the biggest lie,' he said. 'It is possible that you speak the truth ninety-nine percent of the time, but somewhere – either jokingly, or to protect yourself, or for somebody's good – you will have had to take recourse to an untruth.'

It seems that falsehood also has a place in life, otherwise, its utility and acceptance would not have a place in the Bhagwat.

This is surprising to read, but it is true that the Bhagwan mentions six occasions when a person can speak a falsehood without incurring paapa. This is also given in the Manusmriti.

*Streeshu narmavivaaha`cha vrityarthe`praana sankate`,  
Go braahmaanarthe`hinsaayaam naanritam syaajjugupsitam.  
(Bhagwat 8. 16. 43.)*

This shloka comes in the episode of Raja Bali and Vaman Bhagwan. It says that an untruth told to get away from *kulataa* (immoral) women), a lie told as a joke, a prevarication to get a young girl married, or a falsehood said to save your life or livelihood, does not give paapa. A lie is pardonable if said to save a cow or a Brahmin's life.

The Shastras have defined truth-falsehood, paapa-punya, Dharma-adharma, and *hinsaa-ahinsaa* (violence-non-violence) depending on the circumstances, person, purpose, time, and place.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna says in the Gita:

*Tasmaachchhaastram pramaanam te`kaaryaakaaryavyasthitau.  
(17. 24.)*

It is the Shastras that decide which action should be done and which should not be done.

*Sadguna* (good qualities) were present in Bena's life, because a Yagna was the cause of his birth. The Mahatmas created Maharaj Prithu and Maharani Archi from the dormant seeds of the *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions) of the Yagna. Every individual has good and bad tendencies. The seeds that sprout depend on the kind of association the person gets. Satsang gives rise to *sadguna* and *dusang* (association with the wrong kind of people) gives rise to *durguna* (bad tendencies).

The Devtas were very happy to see Maharaj Prithu and Maharani Archi. They showered flowers from the Heavens, and started to play their *dundubhee*

(kettledrums). They descended to earth in order to be present for the Crowning ceremony. It is described that every Devtas gave a gift to Raja Prithu.

*Tasmai jahaara dhanado haimam veera varaasanam,  
Varunah salilasnaavamaapatram shashiprabham.  
(4. 15. 14.)*

Kubera, the wealthiest Devta, gave a golden throne. Varun (the Devta of water) gave a ceremonial umbrella so that gentle rain would always shower on Maharaj Prithu's realm. Vayu (the Devta of the wind) gave a *chanvara* (fly whisk). Indra (the King of Swarga) gave a crown. Other Devi-Devtas gave beautiful gifts. Everyone blessed the Royal couple.

Bhagwan Vishnu told His *charka* (Discus) to serve Maharaj Prithu should the need arise. Bhagwan Shankar gave his *trishula* (trident), and Amba (the Primordial Mother) gave a shield. Bhoodevi (Goddess Earth) gave sandals that enabled Maharaj Prithu to arrive at his destination without having to travel. The Rishis gave *amogha* (invincible) *aashirvaada* (blessings). Then, the professional eulogizers – the Suta, Magadha, the Vandijan (professional eulogizers) – came to eulogize Maharaj Prithu. An unexpected scene followed, just as they folded their hands and were about to commence.

*Staavakaanshabhipre`tya prithurvainyah prataapavaana,  
Me`ghanirhaadayaa vaachaa pragasannidamabraveeta.  
(4. 15.2)*

Maharaj Prithu spoke in a low, deep voice, asking them to stop.

*Bho soota he` maadadha, saumyabandilloke`dhunaa spashta gunasya me`  
syaata.*

‘O Suta, O Magadha, O Vandijan, You want to eulogize me?’

‘Yes, Maharaj,’ they said. ‘This is our profession.’

‘But you would be knowing that a person should be praised only when he has done something praiseworthy. I have just been created. I have done nothing to justify your praises. Therefore –

*Kimaashrayaon mein stava e`sha yojyataam maa mayyabhoovan vittathaa giro  
vah.  
(4. 15. 22.)*

How will you praise me? If you praise me without having anything to praise, won't your words be false?’

The Vandijan were used to singing false praises, like ‘*Indraayastvam, varunostvam va naarayanastvam* – you are Indra, you are Varuna, or you are Narayana,’ and other similar sentences were ready on their tongue. It was their job to praise and be rewarded. This was their livelihood. They were silent when they heard Maharaj Prithu’s words.

‘O Magadha and others. If you wish to speak of the good things that will be done by me in future, that will not be appropriate either, because it is possible that I shall be unable to do all you speak of. Then your speech will become a falsehood, and I will be the subject of dishonor. If I do good things in future, you can praise me then, because

*Satyuttamashlokagunaanuvade` jugupsitam na stavayanti sabhyaah.*

(4. 15. 23.)

Sabhya (cultured people) praise Bhagwan Narayana instead of praising the possible good deed of any individual.’

The word ‘sabhya’ is broken up in Sanskrit as – *sabhaayaam योग्या इति सभ्याह*. That means a person who is fit to sit in a *sabhaa* (gathering of refined people) is called ‘sabhya’. This indicated that anyone who flatters an ineligible person is not sabhya. A person who gives false praise can never obtain the experience of Narayana in his life, because those who obtain Narayana never offer false praise or flattery.

In conclusion, Maharaj Prithu said, ‘People with good qualities who have achieved anything worthwhile feel shame and embarrassment if anyone tries to flatter them.’

Maharaj Prithu had humility and magnanimity. He stopped the Vandijan from singing his praises, and commented humorously,

*Kaemabhih kathamaatmaanam gaapayishyaama baalavata.*

(4. 15. 26.)

‘I haven’t done anything yet, so why should I listen to your *gaapayishyaama* (idle chatter)?’

Brahmaji, Shankarji, and other Devtas – even Narayana Bhagwan – were present in the Sabha (Court) of Maharaj Prithu, yet he spoke to the Vandijan with courtesy, using respectful terms. This shows how *vyavahaara kushala* (skillful in interaction) he was.

Many of us have seen this skill when we were with Maharajshri. This is why, whenever anyone speaks of him, not only do Shrimati and Shri Birla have tears

in their eyes, but even humble villagers who knew him are deeply moved. Such great love from so many can be won only by a person who gets Bhagwan's darshan in every person he sees, and who has got the *bodha* (realization) of the *aatma-svaroop*a (that everyone is his own Atma). Maharaj Prithu had this *drishti* (vision) from the day he was born.

The inclination to be praised is common, but those who get addicted to listening to praises also get cheated. The Bhagwat has a story about a King called Paundrak whose flatterers eulogized him as *vaasudev* (the one who abide in all hearts; Shri Krishna). Paundrak actually started to believe that he was Vasudev. He compared himself with Shri Krishna, and stated that he was the real Vasudev and Shri Krishna was an imposter! Then he remembered that he had only two arms, whereas Vasudev is four-armed. He spoke about this to his followers.

Flatterers are adept at convincing people. They told Paundrak, 'The original Narayana has four arms only when He is in Vaikuntha. When He comes to earth, He has only two arms. You also had four arms when you were in Vaikuntha. However, if you so desire, we can make two wooden arms and attach them to your shoulders. This is a *leelaa-jagat* (an illusionary world of frolic) – you can do any leela you like.'

Paundrak approved, and two wooden arms were attached to his shoulders. This made him so arrogant that he sent a message to Shri Krishna, saying, 'I am the real Vasudev. You call yourself Vasudev, but that doesn't make you the true Vasudev. So, give up this name and surrender to me; else prepare for war.'

The people in Shri Krishna's Sabha had a hearty laugh when Paundrak's emissary delivered this message. 'Go and tell your Master that I am ready to fight whenever he wants,' Shri Krishna told the messenger.

Paundrak arrived with a huge Army. He had two wooden arms attached to his shoulders. Bhagwan laughed at this spurious four-armed figure. 'Come! Come!' He said. 'You wanted a fight, so we will have a fight. It will soon be clear as to who the authentic Vasudev is, and who is the fraud.' A fierce battle ensued, and Paundrak died at Shri Krishna's hands. This was the result of Paundrak's addiction to flattery.

We should always be alert if anyone lavishes praise or flatters us. We should never succumb to the temptation of listening to sweet talk of those who want to mislead us.

The Vandijans were happy at Maharaj Prithu's words.

*Tushtuvustushtamanasastadvaagamritase`vayaa.*  
(4.16. 1a)

These words were as sweet as *amrita* (nectar) to them.

All the Mahatmas who had participated in creating Prithu were standing there. The Vandijan looked at them, and, inspired by their approval, began to praise Prithu. Some commentators have interpreted the word *munchoditaah* as *yogabale`nahridiprakaashitah* – the Mahatmas used their *yogashakti* (the power of their Yoga), and foreknowledge of the great deeds Maharaj Prithu would do, to manifest in the hearts of the Vandijan. The Vandijan began to praise Maharaj Prithu.

*E`sha dharmabhritaam shre`shtha lokam dharmam`nuvartayan,  
Goptaa cha dharmase`toonaam shaastaa tatparipanthinaam.*

(4. 16. 4)

‘You will be the most outstanding of the *dharmadhaaree* (those who uphold Dharma). You will protect the laws of Dharma and punish the people who go against Dharma.’

The essence of Dharma inherent in Maharaj Prithu is manifested here. He had no wish to be praised or flattered, but if that was what the Mahatmas wanted, he would submit to their wishes. The Gurujan (elders who are like a Guru) were happy, because it is right and proper that the King is praised. Maharaj Prithu was a King truly worthy of praise.

The Vandijan used the word *dharmabrita*. This is a beautiful word, indicating both *dhaarana* (upholding) and *poshana* (nurturing). The meaning is, one upholds Dharma and also induces others to follow it. A person who just tells others to follow Dharma without following it himself, is cannot be called Dharmabrita.

The Vandijan said that under Maharaj Prithu’s rule Dharma was accompanied by justice and punishment. Stringent punishment would be included in the rule of a Dharmabrita Monarch. It is seen, mostly, that severe punishment is difficult for people who adhere to – and make others adhere to – Dharma. However, the Vandijan praised Maharaj Prithu’s unique qualities, indicating –

*Naadandyam dandayatye`sha sutamaatmadvishaamapi,  
Dandyatyaatmajamapi dandyam dharmapathe`sthitah.*

(4. 16. 13.)

‘If even the son of your enemy is a Dharmatma (one who adheres to Dharma) not eligible for punishment, you will never punish him, and if even your own son does something wrong, you will punish him. You will have neither prejudice nor partiality.’

This is the essence for a Raja who has an *ansha* (portion) of Bhagwan's qualities in him. When a King punishes someone, not because of personal considerations but for the good of society, it is truly praiseworthy.

A strange contradiction is seen in Kansa's life. He was very fond of his sister, Devki, and he trusted Vasudeva's integrity. These are seen clearly in the beginning, because he did not imprison them after hearing the *aakaashavaani* (celestial voice) announce that Devki's eighth child would be the cause of his death. Nor did he kill their first-born when Vasudeva kept his word and brought the baby to Kansa. On the contrary, he was moved at Vasudeva's gesture, and returned the baby, saying 'I will be harmed by the eighth child, not the first; so please take him back.' A wicked man like Kansa appears to have goodness and magnanimity.

Naradji exposed Kansa's real nature. He went to Kansa and asked, 'Why did you give Vasudeva's son back?'

'Devarshi,' said Kansa. 'It is not this one, but the eighth child, who I have to fear.'

'Have you understood the correct meaning of the akashvani?' asked Naradji. 'The Devtas speak in riddles. The hidden meaning of their words must be understood correctly.'

'Maharaj, please be compassionate and tell me the real meaning.'

Naradji picked up a lotus flower with eight petals. 'Can you tell me which is the first petal and which is the eighth?' he asked.

Kansa was perplexed. 'Maharaj, any one of them can be the first or the eighth,' he said.

'It is the same regarding Vasudeva's children,' said Naradji. 'Any child could be the first or the eighth.' You may be killed by any one of them. Don't you know that all the people of Mathura – including Devki and Vasudeva – are Avatars of Devtas?'

Kansa fell at Naradji's feet and said, 'Who would give me *kalyaana* (great good fortune; Moksha), if I didn't have a Guru like you?' Kansa had Ugrasena, Vasudeva and Devki put into jail. He started to kill every baby born to Vasudeva and Devki. Naradji's purpose was the Kansa's paapas should accumulate rapidly, so he would be killed as soon as possible.

A strange point is seen here.

When Bhagwan came as Vasudeva's eighth's son, Vasudeva – whose word Kansa trusted totally – carried Him secretly to Gokul. This seems against Dharma, since he broke his word. Will this be called *adharm*a (that, which is contrary to Dharma)? No, indeed not! This is the essence of Dharma. It is *bhaagvata dharma* – the Dharma recommended by Bhagwan.

A bhakta takes the support of Satya to obtain Bhagwan. Once he has obtained the Ishwara, will he try to display his adherence to Dharma by giving up the Ishwara? No bhakta can do that!

Maharaj Dashrath is also accused on letting Shri Rama be banished to the forest, just for the sake of remaining true to his pledge. It is intriguing that, as Manu, in his previous birth, he had asked Bhagwan for this boon:

*Suta vishayika tava pada rati hovu, mohi bada moodha kahai kina kovu.*

*(Ramcharitamanas 1. 150. 5)*

(Let me have absolute love for Your feet when You come as my son. I don't care if people call me a deluded fool.)

Did he, as Dashrath, have more *pre`ma* (true love) for Satya than for Shri Rama? It is not so. He loved Shri Rama above everything else. I am reminded of a question and answer session between two Sants.

Shri Gayaprasadji Maharaj was a renowned Sant. He lived at Shri Govardhanji. Pundit Ramkinkarji Maharaj was giving discourses on the Ramcharitmanas at Shri Udiya Babaji's Ashram at that time. One day, Shri Gayaprasadji asked Pundit Ramkinkarji 'Is it proper to say that Maharaj Dashrath gave up Shri Rama to protect Satya? Did Dashrathji have more prema for Satya than for Shri Rama?' 'Maharaj Dashrath did not give up Shri Rama to protect his own Satya (pledge),' replied Sri Ramkinkarji. 'He had a different dilemma. Before asking for her two boons, Maharaj Keikeyi had made Dashrathji swear in Shri Rama's name, that he would grant whatever she asked. Maharaj Dashrath's dilemma was that if he broke his word, it would be Shri Rama who suffered. Maharaj Dashrath's love for Shri Rama was sublime.'

Shri Gayaprasadji was deeply moved. Pundit Ramkinkarji would fish out innumerable gems from the Ramcharitmanas, moving everyone.

Maharaj Prithu had great *nishthaa* (faith) in the Mahatmas and Gurus. The Gita has a beautiful statement about Gurunishtha. Shri Krishna told Arjuna:

*Yathe`chchhasi tathaa kuru (18. 63)*

'Do as you wish.'

Yet, while concluding the Gita, Shri Krishna did not give any teaching about the quintessence of the Gita; He gave a command –

*Sarvadharmama parityajya maame`kam sharanam vrajah,*

*Aham tvaa sarvapaape`bhyao mokshiyishyaami maa shuchah.*

*(18. 66)*

Arjuna! Give up all Dharmas!’

Many people feel happy to hear this. ‘Bhagwan, Himself, tells us to give up all Dharmas, so why are we told to walk on the path of Dharma?’ they ask.

This is because they have not understood the matter properly. A person can be told to give up all Dharmas only if he has adhered to Dharma. What is the use of telling someone to give up Dharma if he has never followed it? If a person has something and he is told to give it up, there is some meaning in it; but what will a person give up if he has nothing to give up?

Arjuna was Dharma-nishtha. Bhagwan knew that he would never renounce Dharma unless commanded to do so. Unless Arjuna was convinced that giving up a principle of Dharma was right for him at that stage, his devotion to Dharma would become an obstacle in the destruction of those who practiced *adharmas* (that, which is contrary to Dharma). The Mahabharata has many examples of this.

The wheel of Karna’s chariot got stuck in the mud during the battle. Karna got down and tried to lift it on to firm ground. At that moment, Shri Krishna told Arjuna to shoot an arrow at Karna and kill him. Arjuna was taken aback. ‘Maharaj, Karna is unarmed; he is not even sitting in his chariot. He is on the ground, trying to lift up the wheel. Won’t it be *adharmas* if I kill him now?’

‘Arjuna, we will discuss Dharma and *adharmas* later. Just do what I say!’

Karna was listening. ‘Maharaj,’ he said, ‘You are the Ishwara! It is You who have said that this is a *dharma-yuddha* (war for Dharma). Why are You doing this trickery?’

‘Karna!’ said Shri Krishna. ‘Today you remember to talk about Dharma! You did not remember Dharma when the Pandavas were being burnt alive in the *lakshaagriha* (house of wax). You were present at Court when Draupadi was being publicly disrobed. Where was your Dharma that day? And, had you forgotten all you had been taught about Dharma when six of you, Maharathis (qualified exceptional warriors) surrounded Abhimanyu and killed him? Today, when your life is threatened, you cry for mercy in the name of Dharma?’

What was Karna to say? Arjuna understood the distinction between Dharma and Bhagwat-Dharma. He obeyed Shri Krishna’s command, and killed Karna.

Bhagwan’s purpose is to protect Dharma. If an *adharmas* can be destroyed by the help of Dharma, that is best; but if Dharma becomes an armor that protects an *adharmi*, Bhagwan destroys the *adharmas* without giving weight to Dharma-*adharmas*, because the end result will be that Dharma will be established. Dharma can be established only when *adharmas* is destroyed.

The comments of the Vandijan about Dharma and *danda* (punishment) in praising Maharaj Prithu is seen clearly in Shri Krishna’s life. When Maharaj

Yudhishtira did the Rajasuya Yagna, the question came up as to who should be chosen for the *agra-poojaa*. The Agra puja is done of the most superior person present. So many great people, like Vasishtha, Vamdev, Bhishma, Drona, and other Mahapurushas, were present, and it was difficult to rule out any of them. Seeing the indecision and confusion in people's minds, a King called Sahdev stood up. He was the son of Jarasandha, who had been killed by Shri Krishna. 'What are you thinking about?' he asked. 'It is absolutely clear and straightforward that at this point, there is no body on this earth who is the most superior, except Bhagwan Shri Krishna Himself. All of you here are aware that my father, Jarasandha, was opposed to Dharma, and that is why he was killed by Shri Krishna. Bhagwan Shri Krishna would have been justified in taking over the Kingdom as His right. He could have had me killed as the son of His enemy. Instead, He made me *dharma-paraayana* (inclined towards Dharma), made me competent, and made me the King. Bhagwan Shri Krishna is a *dharma-sansthaapaka* (one who establishes Dharma) in the true sense. He alone is the appropriate person for the Agra-puja.'

The Vandijan praised these same lofty qualities, which were to manifest in Maharaj Prithu's life. They praised him eloquently for the good deeds he was to do in future. We will discuss them tomorrow.

### Chapter 3.

Let us focus our mind on this *divya* (filled with divine qualities) character and story of Maharaj Prithu – that Mahapurusha, who is not only an ideal King, but also an ideal virakta.

The Magadha and Vandijan were praising Maharaj Prithu, but their words were a reflection of the feelings of the Sants and Mahatmas.

A very appealing point about Dhruvji comes to mind. Dhruvji was five years old when he had Bhagwan's *darshan* (to see with reverence). He looked at Bhagwan with tears in his eyes, longing to eulogize Him. Bhagwan understood Dhruv's feelings, and –

*Kritaanjalim brhmaye`na kambunaa parparsha baalam kripayaa kapole`.*

*(Bhagwat 4. 9. 4)*

He Graced Dhruv by touching His *shankha* (conch shell) that is pervaded by the Vedas, to his cheek. At the touch of Bhagwan's divine shankkha, Dhruvaji's speech began to flow in praise of Bhagwan.

*Yonthah pravishya mama vaachamimaam prasuptaam*

*Sanjeevayatyakhiladharah svadhaamnaa,*

*Anyaanshcha hastacharanashravanaatvagaadeen*

*Praanaannamo bhagavate` purushaaya tubhyam.*

*(Bhagwat 4. 9. 6)*

Truly, how very compassionate Bhagwan is! He Himself shows the method by which His bhaktas can praise Him! Dhruvji understood Bhagwan's compassion and felt overcome with anand.

It may be asked that since the Mahatmas admired Maharaj Prithu so much, why they didn't praise him themselves. Why did they prompt the Vandijan to praise him? The reason is that they knew he would be even more embarrassed if praised by them. The Vandijan said, 'If seen from the viewpoint of a ruler, your actions will be *nigoodha kaarya*.' That means Maharaj Prithu's actions would be so subtle and adroit that it would be only after his purpose was achieved that people would realize the vision and long term planning behind it. His method would be to work silently and steadily for the good of the people, disregarding criticism and praise. He would use spies to organize the work and do what was in the best interests of the populace.

*Antarbahishcha bhootaanam pashyana karmaani chaaranaih,*

*Udaaseena ivaadhyaksho vaayuraatme`va de`hinaam.*

*(Bhagwat 4. 16. 12)*

And

*Dridhavratah satyasangho brahmanyō vriddhase`vakah,  
Sharanayah sarvabhootaanaam maanado deenavatsalah.  
(4. 16. 16)*

*Dridhavratah* – meaning, his resolve will be unshakable. He will not relax any austerity he resolves to undertake.

Our Maharajji used to tell us that a person who accepts a *niyama* (vow of discipline or austerity) repeatedly, breaking it repeatedly, will never be successful in life, whether he is a *saashaka* (ruler) or a *saadhaka* (one who seeks spiritual progress). All if us have an inclination to make resolves that we don't maintain. This is particularly true with regard to *poojaa-paatha* (ritual worship- reciting passages). Maharajji would tell us about a bhakta called Pundarik was, to his *niyama*.

Bhakta Pundarik had taken a *vrata* (vow) to serve his mother and father. Bhagwan was pleased with his *se`vaa* (service), and manifested before him one day. It is the belief of the Shastras, and the experience of sadhakas and Sants, that disinterested service rendered sincerely pleases Bhagwan. Bhagwan manifested from a wooden pillar for Prahlad, because Prahlad felt the truth of the statement of the Vedas that everything is the Brahman – *sarva khalvidam brahm.* Serving Bhagwan in the form of the mother and father will also please Him, and He will manifest one day. The only thing is that a staunch faith in the heart of person who serves, is essential.

In the Sat-Yuga, there was no *moorti-poojaa* (ritual worship of an image of Bhagwan). Moorti puja started later on. The reason for this is that the mother, father and husband were served with the feeling of serving the Ishwara. Later, that feeling disappeared, and doubt came into the mind of the people. Then, idols were made, worshipped and served. The feeling, 'This is the Ishwara', developed. The situation now is quite different. I will tell you of an amusing incident.

A husband and wife were arguing about something. The lady was educated and intelligent. They had a *vighraha* (idol) of Thakurji that they worshipped every day. I told them, 'It is written in the Shastras that the husband should be considered the Parameshwara, and worshipped every day.'

'Maharaj,' said the lady, 'what you say is true, but I don't want to invite further problems by worshipping my husband and thinking him to be the Parameshwara!'

'You do the puja of the image of Thakurji in the Mandir every day,' I said, to tease her. 'So why can't you do your husband's puja?'

‘Maharaj, Thakurji sits quietly, but my husband creates so many problems even without my doing his puja! If I start doing his puja with the feeling that he is the Parameshwara, life will become even more difficult!’

Paundrik’s feeling, however, was one of total devotion. He served his parents with a sublime devotion. Pleased with his service, Bhagwan manifested before him one day. ‘I have come to you because I am pleased with your seva,’ He said. At that moment, Paundrik was busy serving his parents. ‘Prabho, it is a great Grace that You have come, but at the moment, I am occupied with serving my father and mother.’

Bhagwan smiled. ‘I don’t have much time; I will leave.’ He wanted to test Paundrik’s nishtha for seva.

Paundrik spoke firmly but respectfully. ‘Prabho, You may go away, but the seva that brought You will not go away. And, Prabho, I have full faith that if I am able to continue doing this seva, You will come again one day and Grace me.’

Bhagwan was pleased with this answer. ‘Very well; I will wait until you have finished your seva.’ Paundrik pushed a brick towards Bhagwan, asking Him to sit on it while He waited. It is believed that Vitthal Bhagwan stands on this brick even now.

The meaning if this is that seva done with faith can be a means for obtaining Bhagwan. Maharaj Prithu remained true to his vows of austerity and the pledges he had made.

We should adopt as many good habits as possible in our life, and follow them sincerely. The practical advantage of this is also seen in many forms. Good habits free us from bad habits. For example, if a person makes a resolve to sleep early and wake up early, he will escape many harmful nocturnal activities. If he takes a *mauna-vrata* (a vow to remain silent for certain timings), or puja, etc, it may irritate people initially, but they will gradually stop disturbing him during that time. What you have to do is to take a niyama with a firm resolve.

Maharajji spoke of an incident connected with ‘*dridhavrata*’ that he had seen and experienced in his village. A gentleman called Jaghru Singh lived in his village. He had once been appointed the *kaanungo* (Superintendent of Accounts) of the village. The villagers extended full support to whatever he undertook to do, and he invariably succeeded in his purpose. Maharajji wanted to know the secret of his success. He was told that the villagers had full confidence that Jaghru Singh would be true to his word, so they cooperated fully with him.

Maharaj Prithu was ‘*dridhavrata, satyasangha* (adhering to Satya), *brahmanyovridhase`vakah* (served the Brahmins and elderly).’ Commentators have interpreted the word *vridhdha* (elderly) as not meaning only the elderly, but also the people who were *gnaana-vridhdha* (mature in wisdom), *vidya-vridhdha* (and

knowledge) and *kalaa-vridha* (skilled in the Arts). Maharaj Prithu had great respect for expertise in all fields, regardless of the age of the person.

The same qualities were seen in the life of our Maharajji. He was very particular about proper care being given to Mahatmas, scholars, and students with exceptional qualities. A *virakta* (full of renunciation) Mahatma was giving daily discourses at the Ashram on one occasion. He was also staying at the Ashram. During the katha one day, he said, ‘Bhagwan Shri Krishna’s leelas are so sweet that they are like a rasgulla!’

Maharajji was listening to the katha. He smiled when he heard this. He returned to his room after the katha and called Swami Omkaranandji, who was the Mahant (head of the Ashram). ‘Send for one *haandi* (pot) of rasgullas, and have it sent to the room of the Mahatma who is doing the katha,’ he said.

The Mahatma was surprised to get the pot of rasgullas. ‘Is there some celebration today?’ he asked. When he was told that Maharajji had sent it, he went to Maharajji at once. ‘You are *kushala* (adroit) in both *paramaatha* (spiritual matters) and *vyavahaara* (social interaction)!’ he said. Maharajji had equal magnanimity for even a humble student like myself.

Due to my earnest inclination for studies, I had been told to absent myself from the *aarati* (lamp worship) and serving in the kitchen, which was compulsory for other students. Maharajji would encourage me by saying, ‘Study well. If you wish to go abroad for further studies later, I will arrange for it.’

When I was studying at the Ashram, my family members used to send money to the Ashram. When Maharajji heard about this, he asked me, ‘Why do you ask for money from your family?’

‘Maharajji, this is an Ashram, I said humbly. ‘Many people send donations from many cities. My family members send the money on their own – I have not asked them to send money.’

‘Then it is all right,’ he said. ‘You must never ask for money.’ What generosity to an ordinary student! Such personal concern and large-heartedness was a part of Maharajji.

When Maharajji’s health deteriorated drastically, the students would take turns to read the Ramcharitamanas out to him. I had been told to concentrate only on my studies. One day, one of the students did not come and Swami Govindanandji called me to take his place. Maharajji was lying down, listening with his eyes closed. When I started to read out, he recognized my voice. He opened his eyes and asked, ‘Is it Girish? How is it that you are here?’ I explained. ‘No! No! You go and study,’ he insisted. Maharajji’s greatness was seen even in the minutest matters.

Describing Maharaj Prithu’s good qualities, the Vandijan said that along with being a servant of the vridha, he would be the *kinkaro brahmavaadinaam*,

meaning he would feel humble before the learned Mahatmas who knew the Shastras. He would place questions about spiritual matters before them, and get their answers.

The word *kinkarah* was explained by our Maharajji as, '*Kim kim karomi iti punah punah prichchhati sa kinkarah*' – a person who folds his hands and asks, 'What should I do?' again and again. 'What is your command for me?' Such a person is a kinkara.

'What should be done and what should not be done' is a perpetual question that comes to every individual. People in every place and point of time are perplexed by it. Who can give a satisfactory answer to this question? Only a *tattva-ve`ttaa* (knower of the Tattva – the essence of the Brahman) Mahapurusha, or from the Shastras from where they have obtained their knowledge of the ultimate Satya, can give the answer. The Shrimad Bhagwat is one of the *divya grantha* (sublime books) that can help us to find the answer to our doubts about both spiritual as well as worldly matters.

It is the specialty about our Shastras that their relevance is eternal and enduring. In fact, it may be said that they have a greater relevance today, than when they were created. The demand for doctors increases when illness increases.

The epic poem, 'Raghvansha', describes two special qualities in Maharaj Dilip. His people loved him greatly, but they also feared him. The same is written about Maharaj Prithu.

*De`hinaamaatmavatpre`shthah suhridaam nandivardhanah,*

*Muktasangaprasangoyam dandapaanirasaashushu*

(4. 16. 18)

The people loved Maharaj Prithu as much as a person loves his body, and they feared him as much as a person fears Yamaraj (the Devta of Death).

The reason is that Maharaj Prithu loved the *sajjana* (people who were noble and good). He showed respect to them and rendered them service. The wicked, however, were punished with such implacable severity that others did not dare to commit any offence that would invite punishment. It is a fact that unless the law is implemented with stringent punishment, the Governance will not function efficiently.

Maharaj Anga was a good king, but there was a major difference between him and Maharaj Prithu, even though both were *bhagvat-bhakta*. Both saw the Ishwara in the heart of all and behaved accordingly, but Maharaj Anga was unable to mete out severe punishment. Maharaj Prithu also saw Bhagwan in the hearts of all, but he kept in mind that Bhagwan has a variety of forms in His

leelas, and his response was according to the character of the person he was dealing with. This uncommon drishti (viewpoint; vision) is Bhagwat-drishti.

What is Bhagwat drishti?

The explanation to this is found in the episode when Parikshit is in the womb and his mother, Uttara, prays to Bhagwan to protect her unborn baby from the Brahmastra (weapon of Brahmaji) released by Ashwatthama. This story is given in the Bhagwat and also in the Mahabharata, with some variations.

In the Bhagwat it is written that Bhagwan entered Uttara's womb and saved Parikshit's life. The Mahabharata says that Parikshit was lifeless when he was born. The Brahmastra had killed him while he was still in the womb, but Bhagwan brought him back to life. At this point Bhagwan Shri Krishna made a comment that sound strange, but its effect was to bring Parikshit back to life.

Bhagwan said, 'If I was on the Pandava's side without having *raaga* (attachment) for them, and if I opposed Duryodhan without having *dve'sha* (animosity) for him, let this dead baby live again.' This is Bhagwan's *leela-drishti* (the viewpoint that all He does in this world is a frolic). When an actor playing the role of a Devta kills an actor playing the role of a Daitya (Demon), does he have personal animosity? Of course not! Nor does he have any particular attachment to the bhaktas and Sants for whom he kills the Rakshasas on stage. Behind the curtain he is seen to have goodwill for both.

Although Maharaj Prithu had obtained this vision, his natural tendency, '*mukta sangah prasangah*' – was to associate with the Mahapurushas. He experienced shanti and anand in their presence.

The rule for studying the Upanishads is, '*Sanyasta shravanam kuryaad* – read or listen to the Upanishads after taking Sanyas.'

Why? Videharaj Janak, Maharshi Vasishtha, Maharshi Kardam, and others, were Grihasthas, but they had the knowledge of the Upanishads.

The reason behind this command is explained by commentators. 'If a person is in the Grihastha Ashram, but not carrying out his duties fully, it will be a *dosha* (fault; offence). Secondly, he will not be able to obtain the anand of the *shravana* (listening to) the Upanishads, thinking deeply about the Brahman, and experience *jeevana-mukti* (a feeling of being totally free while still in the physical body), as he would get if he had renounced all worldly considerations. He won't be free of involvement in worldly activities, and so he will have a shortage of time. The rule of taking Sanyas first is to allow the person to get the full benefit of the Upanishads.

We should not interpret the word 'Sanyas' as seen in present times. Our Maharajji used to tell us important points even when he said things jokingly. He told us that he had gone to Ayodhya once, and asked Shri Ramavallabhsharan Maharaj, 'Please make me a Mahatma.'

‘What do you understand, as being a Mahatma?’ he asked. ‘Do you think it means having a large Ashram instead of a small house, with a thousand residents instead of eight or ten family members? And, do you think it means getting lavish meals every day instead of simple food? If this is what you think being a Mahatma means, I will make you a Mahatma right now!’

It is better that I don’t elaborate on what it means these days, to take Sanyas! I know a gentleman who told me, ‘I am willing to take Sanyas today, provided you make me the Mahamandaleshwara (Head of a large Mutt).’

Sanyas means *tyaaga* – renunciation; but today, people speak of Sanyas with a plan for *grahana* (grasping). In the language of give and take, loss and profit, and commercial deals, people accept Sanyas only when it is accompanied by material benefits. ‘*Mukta sangah*’, however, means that no give and take is involved. Maharajji’s life was a shining example of *mukta sangah*.

A gentleman once asked Maharajji ‘Is there no rule in your Ashram that residents must listen to the katha and attend the *aarati* (lamp worship)? I see that people go where they want to and don’t go where they don’t feel like going.’

Maharajji said, ‘The person who considers this Ashram to be his can make the rules he wants. This Ashram was made by Swami Omkaranandji’s *praarabdha* (destiny created by actions of past lives), and it is he who looks after it. I come and go just as you do, so I am not authorized to make rules. Regarding your question about rules, if a person wants to bring changes into his life, he should make the *niyama* (self-imposed disciplines) himself, about listening to the katha or attending the Arti, while he stays here. This will bring auspiciousness into his life. Why should we impose compulsions on anyone?’

People asked impudent and unsuitable questions quite frequently. One sadhak had asked, ‘Maharajji, you are such a great Mahapurusha. You have all the qualities of spirituality, Gnan, *vairagya* (detachment), *nishkaama karma* (disinterested actions), etc. You have even obtained *aatmasaakshaatkaara* (a direct personal experience of the Atma being the Brahman). Then, why did you build such a large Ashram?’

Had it been any other Mahatma, he would have explained that it was not he who built the Ashram; his bhaktas had built it. Or, he would have said that it was *prarabdha*. However, ‘*pralaye` na vyathanti cha*’ – an enlightened person is not agitated even at the time of Dissolution. This was true of our Maharajshri.

‘That’s all right, Brahmachari,’ he replied. ‘Maybe I have made it, but you don’t make the same mistake!’

Maharaj Prithu’s *jeevana* (life) was filled with *tyaga* and *vairagya*. Although he was a King, seemingly attached to people, wealth, servitors, officers, etc, he had understood the truth about this world. A person who is attached to this world can never remain *sukhi* (filled with complete peace and satisfaction). That is why he

spent his spare time in the company of virakta Mahatmas and liberated Mahapurushas. He derives deep joy and peace in their company. *Mukta sangah prasanga* is, indeed, very enjoyable. I must tell you about an incident that happened in Mumbai!

At that time, Maharajshri was giving discourses on Vedanta in the mornings and on Bhakti in the evenings. A lady used to come both times. She came to Maharajji after some days, and said, 'I understand everything you say in the evening, but I can't understand the morning talks.'

'Then why do you come for the morning talks?' he asked.

The lady's answer reveals the temptation of being in the presence of a Mukta Mahapurusha. 'Maharaj, I may not be able to understand a word of what you say, but the *masti* (joyfulness) with which you speak fills me with anand.'

A Mahapurusha who has experienced the anand-swarup Paramatma reflects the Paramananda. *Rasa* (sweetness) drips from every word he utters. Many such incidents were seen in Maharajji's life.

Earlier, Maharajji used to travel only on foot. The Ashram and other conveniences came much later. Maharajshri and some other Sanyasis were once walking from Haridwar to Vrindavan. At Shukatal they met a man who looked at Maharajshri's physique and asked sarcastically, 'Maharaj, from which field do you get the wheat you eat, that makes you so healthy? I cannot develop such a body even if I eat almonds!'

You all know that Maharajji's physique was like a baby elephant's! Local people often asked him how he became so healthy. He would smile and say, 'When a person says "*Soham-Soham*" (I am what the Brahman is) his chest expands, and when he says "*daasoham-daasoham*" (I am Your servant), his chest contracts.'

The man at Shukatal was a *naastika* (atheist) type. Maharajji told him, 'My brother, I eat the wheat of the field called "*be`fikree*" (freedom from worries).'

The man was not satisfied with this answer. 'Where will you charge in for today's food?' he asked rudely.

'Today we will invade your house!' replied Maharajji with a smile. The man was abashed. He fell at Maharajji's feet. 'Maharaj, you must all have bhiksha at my house today!' The man changed completely after that. He became an *aastika* (believer of Bhagwan). Maharajshri gave him no long lectures; not even a *mantra deekshaa* (initiation to a Mantra). This transformation occurred due to a short exchange of words with a Mahapurusha.

One day, a man asked Maharajshri, 'Maharajji, you say that Bhagwan abides in all, but if a thief comes into my house, how should I behave with him?'

Maharajshri understood that the man was repeating something he had heard in some *pravachan* (spiritual discourse). Had he indeed felt that Bhagwan abides in all beings, he would not have needed to place such a question. Namdevji never

needed to ask any question. A dog snatched up a roti Namdevji was cooking, and he ran after the dog with a cup of ghee, saying, 'Prabhu! The roti is dry – let me put some ghee on it!' And, when his house caught fire, he made no attempt to douse the flames. On the contrary, he began to pour oil and other inflammable substances on it with the feeling that Bhagwan had come in the form of the fire.

The man's query was whether he should do puja of the thief, or hand him over to the Police. Maharajji was very perceptive. He could instantly grasp the level of the questioner and reply accordingly. 'Look,' he answered. 'When Thakurji comes to your house as a thief, hand him over to the Police. Had He wanted your puja, He would have come in the form of a Sadhu or Mahatma. However, when He feels like going to jail, He will come to your house in the form of a thief.' All kinds of people came to Maharajshri, asking all kinds of questions!

One day, the barber who stayed at the Ashram thought, 'Everyone asks questions; why should I ask something?' He stood up during a discourse and asked, 'Maharajji, what is *nishkaama se`vaa* (disinterested service)?'

This was when Maharajji's vision was badly impaired, so he was unable to see who had asked the question. When he was told that it was the barber, he said, 'If you give people a shave without taking money for it that will be your nishkama seva.' How simple and succinct this answer was!

The Vandijan continued, 'Maharaj Prithu will, first of all, solve the problems of his people. Then he will do Yagnas as an *aaraadhanaa* (loving worship) of Bhagwan. Indra will steal the horse anointed for the Yagna, but ultimately, the Yagnapurusha (Bhagwan worshipped as the Yagna) will come to the *yagna-sthala* (place where the Yagna is held) and bestow blessings on Maharaj Prithu. As a fruit of this blessing, Maharaj Prithu will get the Satsang of the Sanat Kumars (the four enlightened sons of Brahmaji, who are always five years old) in the last years of his life.'

When the *stuti* (eulogy) was over Maharaj Prithu – *pratipoojyaabhinanda cha* – congratulated the Vandijan. This was actually an appreciation of the speech that came through them, and which was both *pratyaksha* (audible) and *paroksha* (coming silently from the hearts of the Mahatmas).

There is a rule about doing *pranaama* (bowing down). Sanyasis greet each other by saying, '*Om namo naarayana*'. Meaning, 'I bow to Narayana who is in your heart'. Bhagwan Krishna says,

*Yad yad vibhooti matsattvam shreemadoorjitame`va vaa,  
Tattade`vaavagachchha tvam mama te`jonshasambhava.  
(Gita 10. 41)*

'Arjuna, whenever any special quality is seen, know that it comes from My *ansha* (part). And, I manifest these qualities to achieve My purpose.'

Actually, it is these *vibhooti* (special qualities) of Bhagwan that we bow down to. Maharaj Prithu bowed to the indicated vibhootis of Bhagwan that were behind the Vandijan's words. Bhaktas see Bhagwan everywhere, and know Him in whichever form He appears.

Pujya Ramkinkarji Maharaj often spoke on *bhaagvat-drishti* (a bhakta's way of looking at things). There is an episode when Hanumanji was startled to hear Trijata describe her dream to the other Rakshasis. '*Sapane` vaanara lankaa jaaree* – a monkey set fire to Lanka in my dream.'

Hanumanji was astounded. 'I have come here secretly,' he thought. 'No one knows that I am here. How did this Rakshasi find out?'

Trijata continued with her narration. 'This monkey burns Lanka. Ravana and his family are killed. The Glory of Shri Rama is being sung everywhere. This is what will happen very shortly.'

'Bhagwan Rama told me only to find out where and how Sitaji is,' thought Hanumanji. 'He did not tell me to set fire to Lanka. Trijata is indeed blessed! Bhagwan has conveyed to her, what He did not tell me'

Then he relaxed. 'Since Bhagwan is doing everything according to His plan, why should I be tense about anything? He will arrange for Lanka to burn.'

Hanumanji was tied up when he was taken to Ravana's Sabha. Ravana had just ordered that Hanumanji should be put to death, when Vibhishan entered. Vibhishan advised Ravana that it would be improper to kill an emissary. Therefore –

*'Aana danda kachhu kariye` gosain* – give him some other punishment.'

Ravana accepted the suggestion. He said –

*'Kapi ke` mamataa poonchha para sabahin kahau samujhaayi,*

*Te`la bori pata baandhi puni paavaka de`hu lagaai.*

*(Sunder Kand 24)*

To attack the object of a person's *mamataa* (attachment; affection) is the severest punishment. A monkey is greatly attached to his tail, so set this monkey's tail on fire.'

Hanumanji marveled at Prabhu's ways. 'You are great, Prabhu! You are using Ravana to implement Your plan to burn Lanka!' The Rakshasas brought oil and ghee and rags, wrapped Hanumanji's tail with them and set fire to it. Hanumanji decided he ought to help, so he began to elongate his tail.

*Rahaa na nagara basana dhrita te`laa,  
Baadhee poonchha keenha kapi khe`laa.  
(Sunder Kand 24. 5)*

(All the cloth, ghee and oil in Lanka were used up, because Hanumanji elongated his tail.)

Hanumanji understood that Bhagwan was making him the instrument for burning Lanka. He did not delay at all. Prabhu Himself does, and gets done, whatever He wants, but He Graces His servants by giving them the credit.

Maharaj Prithu also viewed his own actions in this light. ‘Prabhu! You are making the Vandijan tell me all that You wish to get done through me. You are great!’ The Vandijan were happy to be complimented and receive gifts from the King.

As soon as the *abhishe`ka* (Crowning ceremony) was over, the common people went closer to Maharaj Prithu. They were weeping as they spoke of their desperate need for food.

*Yadaabhisiktah prithuranga viprairaamantrito janataayaashcha paalah,  
Prajaa niranne` kshitiprishtha e`tya kshutkshaamade`haah patimabhyavochan.  
(14. 17. 9)*

*Tanno bhavaaneehatu raatave`nnam kshudhaarditaanaam narade`vade`va,  
Yaavanna namkshyaamaha ujghitorjaa vaartaapatistvam kila lokapaalah.  
(14. 17. 11)*

‘Maharaj! The fire of hunger is burning in our stomach. Please arrange for us to get food first of all, else we will perish with hunger!’

It may be asked why the people did not raise their voice earlier, since they were starving. The reason is that Bena was the Raja, and no *prajaa* (subjects of the King) dares to protest when the ruler is cruel and wicked. Bena would have probably ordered the death of anyone who complained against him. Now the people got the courage to speak because they realized that Maharaj Prithu’s character was quite different from Bena’s. They had faith that he would solve their problems.

Maharaj Prithu began to give deep thought to the matter, when he heard the pathetic laments of his people. *Deergha dadhyau kurukshe`tha*. ‘Is it possible that the people, themselves, are the cause of their hunger? Is it because they are lazy and idle?’ However, that was not the case. The people were willing to work hard. They had the will to achieve. It was the Prithvi (Earth) who did not allow the seeds that were sown to sprout. Maharaj Prithu was angered when he came to

know this. He put an arrow to his bow, and said, ‘I will punish the Prithvi for this *aparaadha* (offence). I will pierce and scatter the earth.’

Prithvi began to tremble with fear when she heard this. She assumed the form of a cow at once (The Adhidaivika form of the Prithvi is a cow) and tried to run away.

Bhoodevi (the goddess Earth) was present at Maharaj Prithu’s abhishek. She had presented him with divine sandals that had the power to transport him instantly to his destination. Maharaj Prithu put on the sandals and went after her. His first priority was to look after his people, so the consideration of her gift did not prevent him from acting for the welfare of his people. He felt that if the Prithvi hindered the welfare of his people, she was a culprit and deserved to be punished. The happiness of the people was of greater importance to him than personal benefits, convenience, or respect. Prithvi could not escape from Maharaj Prithu. He seemed to her to be a form of *mrityu* (death), and came back. ‘*Traahi maam! Traahi maam!* – have mercy on me!’ she pleaded.

*Uvaacha cha mahaabhaagam dharmagnaapanna vatsala,  
Traahi maamapi bhootaanaam paalane`vasthito bhavaana.  
(4. 17. 18)*

‘Rajan, you are *dharmagnya* (one who knows Dharma). It is written in the Shastras that a person who knows Dharma should protect a *sharanaagata* (one who surrenders to him), so please protect me. Please don’t destroy me.

*Sa tvaam jighaansase` kasmaadveenaamakritakilbishaam,  
Aha nishyatkatham yoshaam dharmagna iti yo matah.  
(4. 17. 19)*

I am pitiable and innocent, so why do you want to kill me? Prabhu! I am a woman, and you – in spite of being a Dharmagnya – want to kill me?

*Maam vipaatyaajaraam naavam yatra vishvam pratishthitam,  
Aatmaanam cha prajaashche`maah kathamambhasi dhaasyasi.  
(4. 17. 21)*

The whole world is sustained and supported by me. If you destroy me, where will your people stay? How can you keep your people on water if there is no land?’

Prithvi placed there four points before Maharaj Prithu. She was a *sharannagata* who had surrendered to him, she was *niraparaadha* (not guilty of any offence), she was a woman, and her destruction would result in the destruction of the support of Maharaj Prithu’s people. Therefore, it was not appropriate for a

Dharmagnya *shranaagata vatsala* (has motherly love for the person who has surrendered) Raja to destroy her.

After hearing what the Prithvi had to say, Maharaj Prithu said, ‘Prithvi, you consider yourself to be my sharanagata, yet you have disregarded my wishes. You have given dukha to my people. If you truly consider yourself to be my sharanagata, your actions should be according to my wish and command. You should help me in removing the dukha of my people.

Regarding your being not guilty of any offence, that is not correct. You take your portion as a Yagna Devta, but don’t give grain in return. The Shastras say that a woman should not be killed, but that is not applicable in all cases. The Shastras state clearly that any person – whether it is a man or a woman – who only looks after himself and does nothing to help anybody else, and has no compassion for any, can be killed by the Raja; it will not be considered killing. The Raja incurs no sin for killing such a person.’

In reply to the last point, Maharaj Prithu said, ‘I will use my Yoga-shakti to create a new Prithvi, on which my people can live after you have been destroyed.’

All pride left Prithvi when she heard this. She understood that Maharaj Prithu was an Avatar of Bhagwan, because only the Ishwara has the power to create a new Prithvi by using Yoga-shakti. Prithvi did Maharaj Prithu’s stuti.

## Chapter 4.

The dialogue between Maharaj Prithu and the Prithvi has a number of points that have great importance for us. We use many words without knowing their full implication. Afraid of being destroyed, Prithvi fell at Maharaj Prithu's feet. She told him that he was a Dharma-vatsal and she was a sharanagata, so he should not go against the Shastras by killing her. She quoted the Dharma Shastras:

*Saranaagata kahaun je` tajahein nija anahita anumaani,  
Te` nara paanvara paapamaya tinhin vilokata haani.  
(Ramcharitmanas 5. 43)*

Prithvi's arguments irritated Maharaj Prithu rather than pacifying him. He cut away her arguments.

What does *sharanaagata* (one who takes refuge) mean?

If a person does things that are contrary to the wishes or good of a person and then prostrates asking for pardon, is it true sharanagati? There is a great deal of such phony sharanagati these days. If the wrongdoing is caught, the culprit catches the feet of the person in authority, and begs for pardon. Then he starts the same misdeeds again. Leave alone humans, this tendency is seen even in Indra Devta – the Raja of the Devtas!

There is a description in the Bhagwat that Indra ordered the rain clouds to shower torrents of rain on Vraja, until the whole of Vraja is swept away by floods. The clouds tried, but did not succeed. Indra was shamed. He came to Shri Krishna asking for forgiveness. He placed his head at Shri Krishna's feet when they were alone. Had he truly been ashamed and remorseful, he would not have hesitated to do so before others. He was not really a sharanagata at heart. This is made clear when he fights with Shri Krishna later on, in the episode of the divine Parijat tree.

The Prithvi does the same, with a view of self-preservation.

It is true that a man should never raise his hand on a woman, but if the whole society is being harmed by one individual, whether it is a man, woman, or eunuch, a Kin is not at fault for killing that person.

The Shastras say:

*Pumaana yoshitdoota kleeba aatmasambhaavanodhamah,  
Bhoote`shu niranukrisho nripaanaam tadvadhovadhah.  
(4. 17. 26)*

Maharaj Prithu did not consider the last two points if Prithvi valid. How can it be denied that it is an *aparaadha* (offence) to accept her portion of a Yagna, and then conceal the seeds in her womb (instead of letting them grow into crops)? Maharaj Prithu said,

*Tvaam stabdhaam durmadaam neetvaagaam tilashah sharaih,  
Aatmaayogabate`ne`maa dhaarayishyaamyaham prajaah.  
(4. 17. 27)*

‘I think you are intoxicated. If you have the vanity to think that my people will drown in the sea if I destroy you, hear me well – I will create a new Prithvi by my Yoga-shakti, and establish my people on it.’

Prithvi’s eyes opened wide when she heard this, because the Earth is not created by Brahmaji. There was a resolve in the mind of the Brahman, ‘*E`koham bahusyaama* – let Me turn from one into many.’ This caused a disturbance in Prakriti (the Ishwara’s power of Creation; Nature). The *kaala-shakti* (power of Time) created the *mahat-tattva*. This can be called the universal consciousness, or cosmic intelligence. The Mahat Tattva was transformed when Bhagwan’s gaze fell on it, and *ahankaara* (the subtle ego of individuality) was created.

Ahankara is of three kinds – Sat (lofty), Rajas (mixed) and Tamas (lowly). The Devtas of the *mana* (emotional mind) and *indreeya* (senses) were created from the Sattvik ahankara. The five *gnaane`ndriya* (sense organs) and *karme`ndriya* (organs of action) were created from the Rajas ahankara. *Shabda* (sound) was created from the Tamas ahankara. The *aakaasha* (space) was created from shabda, the *vaayu* (wind) was created from the aakash, *agni* (fire) was created from vayu, *jala* (water) was created from agni, and then the Prithvi (earth) – whose quality is fragrance – was created from jala.

One *brahmaanda* (Cosmos) was made of all these Tattvas (elements). The Paramatma entered into this Brahmanda. The fissure in the Brahmanda created a *viraata* (colossal) *purusha* (man) – *sahasrasheersha purusha sahasra paada*. A lotus emerged from the naval of this Virat Purusha and Brahmaji – the Creator of the world – emerged from this lotus.

The Prithvi had a flash of recollection about how she was created. At the same time she remembered all the troubles she had gone through. She realized that it was Narayana Himself who had come in the form of Maharaj Prithu. She folded her hands respectfully and eulogized him.

*Namah parasmai purushaaya maayayaa vinyastanaanaatanave` gunaatmane`,  
Namah svaroopaanubhave`na nirdhula dravyakriyaakaarakavibhramormaye.  
(4. 17. 29)*

‘You are the Param Purusha (Supreme Purusha) incarnate. You accept such Avatars, with the assistance of Your Maya (power of Illusion) that I am unable to recognize You. I salute You again and again.’

It is believed that when Bhagwan takes different Avatars, the *kalaas* (part of His powers) are also different in the Avatars. When He comes up to eight kalaas, it is called a Mahapurusha. When He comes with nine or more kalaas, it is called an *anshaavataara* (a partial Avatar). This is why Devarshi Narad says, ‘*Tasmin tad jane` bhe`daabhaavada*. There are many qualities that *sajjana* (good people) and Bhagwan have in common.’

The Prithvi said:

*Sansthaapayishyannaja maam rasaatalaadabhyujahaaraambhasa aadi sookarah.*

(4. 17. 34)

‘Prabhu! You had once taken the Varaha Avatar (when Bhagwan came as a boar) to rescue me from Hiranyaksha. You had lifted me out of the Netherlands, brought me out from under the water, and established me. This is why You were given the name, ‘Dharaadhara.’ And today, You want to kill me? Prabhu, this is against *neeti* (ethics), because *neeti* says:

*Angeekritam sukritinaa paripaalayanti.*

Once the Ishwara accepts someone, He does not kill that person even if he has some faults. Nor does the Ishwara abandon him.’

There is a remarkable statement in Sanskrit literature. ‘If a *sajjan* plants a tree, and it is found that the tree is poisonous, his nature is such that he will not cut down the tree.

*Vrishavrikshopi sanvarddhya svayam che`ttumasaampratam.*’

Both these qualities are seen in Bhagwan Shankar’s nature in the episode of Banasura. Pleased with Banasura’s worship, Bhagwan Shankar gave him the boon of having a thousand arms, and immense strength. ‘If you want anything more, you may ask for it,’ he said.

‘Please remain in my city, and guard it,’ Banasura was so impertinent that he asked his Istadev (form chosen for worship) to become his gate-keeper! And, Bhagwan Shankar was so compassionate that he agreed!

Banasura had an *aasuree vritti* (the tendency of an Asura). Having thus acquired a thousand arms and great strength, he looked for an opponent who could match his strength. ‘This will help me to use the great strength of my arms,’ he thought. Any person who gets power uses it either for good or for bad purposes. Banasura

searched long, but found no one suitable. He came back to the city and found Shankar Bhagwan guarding the gates.

‘How was your journey?’ asked Shankarji.

‘The journey was all right,’ answered Banasura, ‘but I could not find anyone worth fighting with. You have given me a thousand arms and immense strength, but I can’t sue them! Now, I feel like having a bout with you!’

Bhagwan Shankar rebuked him angrily. ‘I will not fight with you, but the flag that flutters on your Palace is lowered, you can take it that a worthy warrior has come to your city.’

Banasura was satisfied when he heard this. After that, he would look at the flag every morning, even before he went to bow down to Bhagwan Shankar. Banasura’s daughter, Usha, had Aniruddha kidnapped from Dwarka and brought to her palace. When Banasura found out, he had Aniruddha put into jail.

Aniruddha was Bhagwan Shri Krishna’s grandson; the son of His eldest son, Pradyumna. Naradji went to Dwarka and asked Shri Krishna, ‘Are You aware that Your grandson, Aniruddha, is in Banasura’s jail?’ When Maharaj Ugrasen heard this, he ordered an attack on Banasura. Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Pradyumna, Samba, and others lead the attack. As the protector of the city, Bhagwan Shankar fought with Shri Krishna. Bhagwan Shri Krishna realized that it would be impossible to fight with Banasura unless Bhagwan Shankar was removed from the battle, so He released the *jimhaastra* (a weapon that caused intense yawning). Bhagwan Shankar began to yawn continuously and was unable to fight. Shri Krishna took this opportunity to start cutting off Banasura’s arms. He had four arms left when Bhagwan Shankar returned to the battle.

Seeing Bhagwan Shankar’s compassionate nature and simple-heartedness, Bhagwan Shri Krishna said, ‘I will not kill Banasura, because I have promised Prahlad that I will not kill any King of his lineage.’ He allowed Banasura to live with two arms. Thus, it is established that once a sajjan accepts someone, he does not kill him even if he makes same mistake.

Our Maharajji had the same nature. There was a devotee, who came every day to serve him by pressing his legs, but he was rough and clumsy, and Maharajji’s hair would get pulled out in the process. Sometimes his nails scratched Maharajji. Maharajji knew that the man would be very upset if he was told not to do this *se`vaa* (service), but this could not be allowed to go on, either.

One day Maharajji told the man jokingly, ‘Don’t think only you do my seva; I also do your seva!’ The man was in tears to think of Maharajji’s rendering service to him, but when he heard how Maharajji suffered from his well-meaning but inexpert efforts, he routine came to an end.

There was another incident, even more serious. One of Maharajji’s disciples, who was always with him, would, sometimes, stop talking to him. He did this to show

his displeasure when he felt Maharajji was doing anything detrimental to his health. They were on a flight one day, when Maharajji's angina pain started. It was during one of the disciple's days of not talking. He had the medicine for the pain. Normally, he would have kept asking whether Maharajji was all right, but this time he didn't. Maharajji was in no condition to speak. He endured the pain in silence.

A Mahapurusha has to endure many things in life. Please don't think that people tolerate Mahatmas; it is just the opposite. The Mahatmas tolerate everybody's peculiarities and keep people together.

The Prithvi told Maharaj Prithu about the difficulties she had faced, and the factors that induced her to hide the seeds in her womb. 'Prabhu,' she pleaded, 'if You calm down and give some thought to the matter, You will realize that no Yagnas have been held since Bena became the Raja. So where is the question of my taking my portion of the offerings? It is my Dharma to give a return for what I receive, but if a wicked person wants to drain me without doing any Yagna, is it not my Dharma to protect the seeds by hiding them?'

This is why it is said that if a Raja becomes wicked, prosperity starts disappearing, but wealth appears and begins to serve the Kingdom if the Raja is *dharmasheela* (follows Dharma).

*Timi sukha sampati binahin bolaayein,  
Dharmaseela pahin jaahin subhaayein.  
(Ramcharitamanas 1. 293. 3)*

The Bhagwat has a shloka about Raja Parikshit.

*Yasya raasktre` prajaa sarvaa trasyante` saadhu saadhavee.*

When the *dushta* (wicked) people in the Kingdom harass the sajjan people, the tears of the sajjan dampen grains of dust. The Raja of that Kingdom has to spend as many years in Narak (Hell), as the number of grains of dust dampened by the sajjan's tears.

Prthivi then told Maharaj Prithu how to solve the problem of feeding the people.

*Vatsam kalyaya me` veera ye`naaham vatsalaa tava,  
Dhokshye` ksheeramayaan kaamaananuroopam cha doshanam.  
Doghaaram cha mahaabaaho bhootaanaam bhootabhaavana,  
Annameepsitamoorjasvadbhagavaan vaanchhate` yadi.  
(Bhagwat 4. 18. 9-10)*

‘Prabhu! If Your people need grains for nourishment, please arrange for a suitable calk, milking bucket, and milkman, I will lick the calf lovingly and produce everything that is needed in the form of milk.’

The Prithvi’s form, in the *adhyaatmika jagata* (the divine or supernatural world) is that of a cow. The calf and milkman must, therefore, also be of the Adhyatmik world. Mahatma Prithu was an Avatar of Bhagwan. He became the milkman – *dogdhaa gopaalanandanah* (Shri Krishna was the milkman who milked the cow of the Upanishads and brought out the milk of the Gita).

Whenever I read this term – *dogdhaa gopaalanandana* – I am reminded of a comical incident that happened in a School of Sanskrit in Vrindavan. The pathetic level of Sanskrit education is well known. A student had been taught this shloka one day. He asked the teacher, ‘Who were the two *gadhaa* (donkeys) mentioned in this shloka, “*sarvopanishado gaavo dogdhaa gopaalanandanah*”?’ In Sanskrit, the milkman, who does the *dohana* (milking), is called a ‘dogdhaa’. The student understood it as *do gadhaa* – two donkeys! The Teacher hit his head in despair. ‘One was me and the other was you!’ he said.

Maharaj Prithu became the dogdhaa, and made Svayambhuva Manu (the first man to be created by Brahmaji) the calf. He milked all the different kinds of grains. Svayambhuva Manu is the Founder of Dharma, and a calf is the symbol of Dharma. The meaning of this is that the seeds that Prthivi had hidden in her womb because of adharma were extracted by Maharaj Prithu, through the medium of Dharma.

The process of milking was not limited to Maharaj Prithu. The Bhagwat describes multiple milkers and calves. The Rishis made Vrihaspati the calf and obtained the milk of the Vedas. The Devtas made Indra the calf and obtained the milk of *amrita* (the elixir that bestows immortality). The Daityas made Prahlad the calf and obtained *madiraa* (intoxicating drinks). The Yakshas and Rakshasas were not backward in getting what they wanted. Even the serpents, scorpions, etc made the Takshak (a deadly snake) the calf and obtained poison. The meaning of this is that whatever *bhaavanaa* (feeling) you cultivate in the Adhyatmik jagat – whatever kind of sadhana you do – you will get its fruit accordingly.

Shri Krishna says, in the Shrimad Bhagwat, ‘*Bhootaani yaanti bhoote`jyaa* – people who do bhajan (loving worship and meditation) of the *bhoota* (spirits) will become bhootas, those who do bhajan of the Devtas will become Devtas, and those who do My bhajan will obtain My *svaroopa* (form; essence).’

The Prithvi, too, is *sarva kaamadudhaa* – she can be milked for everything a person can want, but it can only be something that is of his own spiritual level or his eligibility. The Devta of Swarga can obtain only amrita.

Maharaj Prithu had no particular urge about what should be obtained from the Prithvi. He gave an opportunity to all groups to get what they were eligible for. This can be called the special characteristic of a wise ruler. Maharajji used to say that a competent ruler should not have any *duraagraha* (obstinacy or rigidity).

If any ruler were to say today that every student must learn Hindi and Sanskrit, and wear dhoti-kurta, it will not result in an equal uplifting of all sections of society. Some sections will be left under-developed. Sanskrit should certainly be taught, in order to preserve the classic language and obtain the Gnan of the philosophy of life. Hindi should be taught to facilitate communication and interaction between people of different backgrounds. However, the language needed for the development of science and industry should also be taught.

Similarly, to insist that the soldiers guarding our mountainous borders should take an early morning bath and follow Vedic rituals would be impractical and foolish. It is essential to keep in mind what is suited best to the time, place and circumstances. Moreover, it must be seen whether we accept or reject something for the sake of personal preference, or whether we do so with an objective viewpoint. It is important to provide for the needs of all sections of society.

The seventh Canto of the Bhagwat has a description of the *varna-aashrama dharma* (the Dharma for the four social levels – the Brahmins, the warrior class Kshatriyas, the trader class Vaishyas and the labor class Sudras, which are called the Varnas. The Ashrams are the four stages of life, the celibate student – Brahmachari, the married householder – the Grihastha, the middle-aged person turning to spirituality – the Vanaprastha, and the man of renunciation – the Sanyasi). It is written that the Mahapurushas can make amendments about the definition of Dharma, considering the place, time and situation; but no other person has the right to do so at whim.

It is Dharma for a Brahmachari to do Agnihotra (offer oblations in the sacred fire), and the *japa* (ritual chanting) of the Gayatri Mantra. When I was a student at Maharajji's Ashram, I managed to do the Gayatri japa and the ritual of Sandhya Vandan, but could not make the time for the Agnihotra. I spoke about this to Maharajji one day. 'What should I do?' I asked.

'When you sit down to eat, meditate as you put the first five mouthfuls into your mouth, that you are giving the *aahuti* (oblations) to the five *praana* (life sustaining winds) in the form of these mouthfuls. The *dosha* (fault) of not doing Agnihotra will be removed,' he said.

When all essential commodities had been obtained from the Prithvi, Maharaj Prithu was very pleased. He felt so much affection for the Prithvi that he accepted her as his daughter.

*Tato maheepatih preetah sarvakarmadudhaam Prithu,  
Duhitritve`chakoramaam pre`mnaa duhitrivatsalah.*

(4. 18. 28)

The Bhoodevi (goddess Earth) is called 'Mother', but Prithu accepted her as his daughter. A child cannot be harsh to his mother, but a father can chastise his daughter if she goes astray. It brings god fortune to accept the Prithvi as either a mother or daughter, but to think of her as a possession to be enjoyed results in sorrow and suffering.

Maharaj Prithu's anger as well as his affection for the Prithvi was connected to the welfare of his people, since he had a deep love for them. None of his actions were prompted by personal raga-dvesha. Then Prithvi said,

*Samaam cha kuru maam raajana deIvavrishtam yathaa payah,  
Aparaaavapi bhadram te`upaavarte`ta me`vibho.*

(4. 18. 11)

'My Adhibhautik (gross; material) form is uneven, so all the rain water flows into the sea. There is no water for farming once the rainy season is over. If you make the land flat and even, and make lakes, the people will have water all the year round.'

Maharaj Prithu accepted her advice and:

*Chooranayan svadhanushakotyaa giriktaani raajaraat,  
Bhoomandalamidam vainyah praayashchakre`samam vabhu.*

(4. 18. 29)

broke up the mountains with the tip of his bow, and made the land level.

He creates large, medium and small cities and villages, dividing them into districts. Lush fields and greenery pervaded the land. The populace thrived and was happy.

Prithu was conscious that death comes to everyone, so he began to ponder deeply upon Paramartha (the supreme goal of life), and became involved in spiritual activities. It is essential for people to prepare themselves for this.

A Mahatma used to tell as story in this context. There was a Kingdom. It had a peculiar custom. A King was chosen for a period of ten years. At the end of this stipulated period, the Raja was taken across the river and left in the dense jungle, where wild animals like tigers, cheetahs etc would kill and eat him. Then a new King would be chosen. This went on for many years.

Then a Raja was chosen who was very wise. He ruled te people well, but he also thought about what would happen when his ten years were over. He planned and built a city on the other side of the river. When his ten years were over, he was

also taken across the river and left in the forest, but he faced no problem since the city he had built was ready for him. He lived happily and ruled the city well. This truth applies to all of us – we will have to cross the river (of death) one day.

*Aaya hai to jaaye`gaa raja ranka fakir.*

(Whoever comes into this world has to leave it one day, whether it is a Raja, a beggar, or a Fakir.)

It is seen that when people want to travel to another city, they make reservations on the train and arrangements for the journey. Yet very few plan seriously for the *mahaa-yaatraa* (great journey). There are many people who don't even think about it, leave alone prepare! The wise person is the one who makes his preparations well in advance.

A Mahatma has composed a little rhyme. He saw people taking a dead man to the crematorium. They were chanting, '*Raama naama satya hai*' (the name of Rama is the ultimate Satya). Seeing this, he wondered whether they were speaking about the greatness of Bhagwan's name to give comfort to the dead man or to themselves. He made up this rhyme:

*Bhachapana mein bataayaa ki dhaaraa dhaama satya hai,*

*Javaanee mein bataayaa ki Artha-kaama satya hai,*

*Panchee jaba nikala gayaa pinjare`se taba*

*Logon ne` bataayaa ki raama naama satya hai.*

(When I was a child people said that this world is Satya. When I was a young man, people said that wealth and fulfillment of desires is Satya. When the bird flew out of the cage, people said that the name of Rama is Satya.)

Maharaj Prithu was extremely straightforward and vigilant. All four Purusharthas – Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha – were present in his life. He used the wealth obtained by milking the Prithvi for Dharma. He paid attention to the welfare of his people as well as the welfare of the Devtas in Swarga, including Indra, who was their King. He took a *deekshaa* (initiation) for doing a hundred Yagnas.

*Athaadeekshita raajaa tu hayame`dhyashate`na sah.*

Enlightened Mahapurushas like Maharshi Atri were the Acharyas (Teachers that guided the proceedings) of the Yagnas. The hundredth Yagna was about to start, after the successful completion of ninety nine. Indra became nervous, because anyone who completes a hundred Yagnas is entitled to be the Indra (King of

Swarga). Indra was afraid of losing his position to Maharaj Prithu. 'I will not let the hundredth Yagna be completed successfully,' he decided.

Indra went in an invisible form to the Yagnashala (place where the Yagna was held), to steal the horse anointed for the Yagna. Indra – stealing?! Maharajji used to say the avarice for a high position and power is not only in Delhi – it is also there in Swarga! And, the King of Swarga had no hesitation in stooping to stealing, to keep his own position secure.

Even though Indra was not visible, Maharshi Atri realized what had happened, because he was a *trikaalagnaani* – he had the power to know about the past, present and future. He alerted Maharaj Prithu. 'Devraj Indra is stealing the Yagna's horse, and taking it away. He must be stopped. You have taken deeksha for the Yagna, so you cannot fight. Send your son to bring the horse back.'

When Indra saw Prithukumar coming after him, he immediately assumed the form a Sadhu. He had matted locks on his head, ash smeared on his body, and a Rudraksha (a bead of a Himalayan tree, believed to enhance spiritual power) mala (necklace) round his neck. The Prince mistook him for a genuine Sadhu and went back.

It is really very easy to deceive people by donning a Sadhu's garb. There is a description in the Ramcharitmanas, that when Hanumanji was flying to bring the medicine to bring Laxmanji back to consciousness, a Rakshasa named Kalanemi tried to detain him by disguising himself as a Sadhu. Even Hanumanji was deceived for a short while, but a *makaree* (female crocodile) alerted him, saying:

*Muni na hoyee yaha nisichara ghoraa,  
Maanahu satya vachana kapi moraa.  
(Manas 6.57.2)*

Pujya Ramkinkarji was an outstanding exponent of the Manas. He explained the significance of the word *nisichara* (Rakshasa) *ghoraa* (terrible). 'A person, who is a Rakshasa outwardly as well as by nature, will be called a Nishachara. However, a demon who dresses like a Sadhu and tries to establish himself as a Mahatma, will be called a 'ghora Nishachara'. Haumanji considered Sadhus, Sants and Mahatmas worthy of worship, and respected them.

To Kalanemi, however,

*Sira langooro lape`ti pachaaraa,*

He wrapped his tail round Kalanemi's head, and bashed him to the ground.

People who don the mantle of Dharma to cheat people are more dangerous. People who believe in Dharma get cheated by them even in present times.

There was an incident in our village during a Bhagwat saptaha (seven day ritual). A man acted as though he was visited by a Devi. He would come with reddened eyes (caused by consuming an intoxicating drink called bhang) and pretended to go into frenzy. He acquired a degree of fame. People flocked to him with gifts of coconuts, sweets, etc.

One of the villagers was in the habit of listening to Satsang regularly. He understood that the man was a fraud. One day he went with neem leaves in his fist and called out, 'Deviji, please tell me what I have in my hand.' The man was furious. 'Have you come to test me?' he screamed. 'I will burn you to ashes!'

'Tell me first what I am holding in my fist, and burn me later,' said the learned man. The fraud realized that the game was up. He ran away from there. No more Devis appeared after that!

Satsang and the study of Shastras are necessary, otherwise frauds and cheats will misuse Dharma to deceive people and mislead people.

Maharshi Atri understood Indra's villainy. He told Prithu Kumar, 'The man you saw was dressed as a Sadhu - *jatilam bhasmanaachchhatram tasmai baanam na muchati* – and did not shoot, was no other than Indra. He deceived you by disguising himself as a Sadhu. Go and kill him, and bring the anointed horse back.'

Prithu Kumar went after Indra again. Indra saw him and escaped, leaving the horse behind. Since that day, Prithu Kumar was given the name 'Vijitashva' – the one who won the horse.

The Yagna started again. Indra was not prepared to concede defeat. He was ready to go to any length to safeguard his throne. He induced a dense darkness in the Yagnashala and stole the horse again. Once again, Vijitashva gave the chase. Once again Indra deceived him by pretending to be a Kapalika Sadhu.

When Maharaj Prithu was told of Indra's repeated mischief, he became very angry. He even attached an arrow to his bow, to kill Indra, but the Yagna Brahmins persuaded him to give up this thought. Then Bhagwan Vishnu came to Maharaj Prithu's Yagnashala.

We will talk about this tomorrow.

Boliye Vrindavanbeharilal Ki Jai!

## Chapter 5

Pujya Gurudev used to say that the *pravachana* (discourses) given by a Mahapurusha not only contain Bhagwan's katha, but also the katha of the lives of pure hearted Mahapurushas. It is one thing to give a discourse on the Upanishads, and another matter to live a life as prescribed by the Upanishads. The pravachan of a person who lives according to the dictates of the Upanishads leaves a deeper impression on the listeners. It is quite different from the pravachan of people who have mere learning. Pravachans can be given even after studying a subject, but the effect is not the same.

The Shastras have described *kaama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), and *lobha* (greed) as *vikaara* (mental distortions) that result in multiple misfortunes. The Gita says:

*Trividham narakasye`dham dvaaram naashanamaatmana,  
Kaamakrodhastathaa lobhastasmodatatrayam tyaje`t  
(16. 21)*

Kama, krodha and lobha are all three, gateways to Narak. They should be given up.

Maharaj Prithu felt anger, first for the Prithvi, and then for Indra. Was this anger a gateway to Narak for him? Had they been only gateways to Narak and nothing more, would the supremely compassionate Paramatma have created them at all? Can any father build doorways to Hell for his children? That can never be! Therefore, this needs a little thought.

The Ramcharitmanas describes the other viewpoint about anger. There, it is not shown as a gateway to Hell; it is shown as the doorway to Moksha.

*Nirbaana daayaka krodha jaakara bhagati abasahi basakaree  
(Manas 3.25.chhanda)*

Here, krodha is applied, but Prabhu's krodha is one that bestows *nirvaana* (annihilation of the ego).

How did Nalakubara and Manigriva get good fortune? Wasn't it because of Naradji's krodha? Naradji got angry and gave them a *shaapa* (curse) that they should become trees in Vraja. Then he gave them a *varadaana* (boon).

*Atorhatah sthaavarataam syaataam naiva yathaa punah,  
Smritihस्यानमतप्रासादे`na tatraapi madanugrahaat.  
(Bhagwat 10. 10. 21)*

There is a great difference between the krodha of a Mahapurusha and the krodha of an ordinary person. The anger of an ordinary person is connected to his reputation, but the anger of a Mahapurusha is connected to the welfare of the person he gets angry with. A Mahapurusha never gets angry with the intention of causing suffering, or harming anyone. Had Maharaj Prithu's anger with Prithvi been due to personal considerations, would he have accepted her as his daughter later on? Certainly not! So, one should not get a fixed idea, 'I will not get angry. I will not have pride.' Instead, one should think about when anger should be used, and when it should be avoided.

*Abhimaana* (pride) has been criticized, along with kama, krodha and lobha; yet Suteekshnaji asked Bhagwan for abhiman as a boon.

*Asa abhimaana jaayi jani more`, main se`vaka raghupati pati more`.*

*(Ramcharitmanas 3. 10. 21)*

'Prabhu! Let me always have the abhiman that I am Raghupati's servant and He is my Master.'

This pride gives good fortune.

We should think about why we get angry. An incident related to Maharajji gives some food for thought. When Maharajji's vision deteriorated badly, two disciples would walk with him, one on either side, holding his arms. People were told not to touch his feet when he was walking, but there were always some who insisted on bowing down, even though they were told that it could result in his stumbling. On one occasion, a man came forward suddenly and touched Maharajji's feet. The disciples who had tried to stop him got very angry and rebuked the man sharply. Maharajji observed everything quietly. Later, he asked the disciple, 'What was the reason of your anger? Was it because I was inconvenienced, or was it because the man did not listen to you?'

To know the purpose of anger is an important factor. If you get angry because you are unable to do sadhan-bhajan, the anger has some utility. Reading or listening about the lives of Mahapurushas teaches us how krodha can be used to bring good fortune. This gives us strength and teaches us to use anger constructively.

*Tadabhignaaya bhagavaan prithuh prithuparaakramah,*

*Indraaya kupito baanamaadattodyatakaarmukat.*

*4. 20. 26)*

Maharaj Prithu was angered when he heard about Indra's repeated attempts to disrupt the Yagna by stealing the Yagna's horse. He got up, picked up his bow and quiver of arrows. 'Instead of helping the Yagna to succeed, Indra is creating obstacles!' he thought. 'I will kill him myself!'

It is understandable that persons like Marich and Subahu tried to disrupt Vishwamitra's Yagna, because that is the nature of a Rakshasa. Rakshasas have a natural antipathy for Dharmic activities. However, it is not expected that a person like Indra – who achieved his position by doing a hundred Yagnas, to want to block a Yagna. Moreover, it was shocking that he should feel no hesitation in shameful actions like stealing, to prevent the Yagna from being completed. Under the circumstances, it may be asked, 'In that case, is there no difference between a Daitya and a Devta?'

This is an important point. Even though the actions seem to be identical, there is a major difference in the motive behind the actions.

A Daitya is one who is prepared to do anything to obtain the wealth of another, and a Devta is one who is prepared to do anything to protect his own wealth. Some more distinctions have also been made. A person who distributed ten per cent of his wealth is called a Dharmatma (one who adheres to Dharma). A person who keeps something for his own sustenance and gives away the rest is called a bhakta. And, a person who doesn't even bother about how he will sustain himself is called a Brahmanishtha (one who has faith that he is the Atma, the Brahman). This description has been given on different occasions in the Bhagwat.

The stories of the Devtas and Daityas are given in the different Puranas. Both Devtas and Daityas are the offspring of Kashyap, who is a Brahmagnani. Kashyap has two wives – Diti and Aditi. Diti is the mother of the Daityas and Aditi is the mother of the Devtas. Their natures are quite different. The Puranas are filled with stories of the clashes between the Devtas and the Daityas. Had Kashyap not been a Brahmagnani, he would have been in a terrible fix! Every time the Devtas were defeated, Aditi would come weeping to Kashyapji, and every time the Daityas were defeated, Diti would come to him in tears,

Diti went to Kashyapji after Vishwaroopa and Vritrasura were killed. After telling him about her sorrow, she continued to stay at his Ashram and serve him diligently. Kashyapji was pleased with her service and said, 'Diti, ask for a varadana.' Diti said, '*Putramindrahanam vrine`* - Maharaj, if you are pleased with me, please give me the boon that I get a son who kills Indra.' This is Diti's nature. The intention behind her request was exposed.

When someone accepts anyone's service, he must be alert about the motive behind the service. Some people feel happy just to be helpful to others, but if it is not the person's nature to render service, and yet he serves devotedly, it is better to be wary of that person. It is quite possible that he has an ulterior motive, or wants to harm the very person he serves. Diti's motive was to get a son who would kill Indra.

The story of Aditi is also given in the Bhagwat. When Bali conquered Swarga, Indra had to run from forest to forest to save himself. Seeing Indra's pathetic

plight, Aditi went to Kashyapji and asked for a son who would help Indra regain his wealth and position. Vaman Bhagwan was born as her son. He made Bali give back the Kingdom of Swarga to Indra.

There are certain rules for understanding the significance of the extraordinary episodes about the Devtas in the Puranas. By nature, the Devtas never give their wealth to anyone. If they do give something, it is only to get something. They are seen, mostly in two activities – showering flowers from the sky, or folding their hands and doing *stuti* (singing words of praise).

There is one episode in the Bhagwat, when Devraj Indra goes to Maharaj Parikshit with an *amrita kalasha* (a decorative pot containing the elixir that bestows immortality). A strange point is to be noted in this. Had he so desired, he could have taken the amrita kalash earlier, saving Raja Parikshit from the fear of death. However, he came only after Shukadevji came to Raja Parikshit. ‘Maharaj,’ he said to Shukadevji, ‘Raja Parikshit fears death, isn’t it? Please ask him to drink the amrita in this kalash, and tell the Bhagwat to me.’ The meaning of this is that Devtas give something only to get something more precious in return!

There was a Sant at Vrindavan known as Hathi Baba. A Sethji gave him two blankets. It was bitterly cold. Baba covered himself with one blanket and went to sleep. A thief crept into Baba’s hut, looking for anything he could steal. Baba was awoken by some slight sound, but he remained lying quietly, to see what the thief would do. The thief picked up the other blanket and crept out of the hut. Baba said nothing, because he felt that he did not need more than one blanket.

Perhaps the thief liked the blanket very much, or perhaps he became greedy; he came back into the hut and tried to lift up the blanket that covered Baba, without awakening him. Baba was already awake. ‘My brother,’ he said softly, ‘Take one blanket for now. Let the other one remain with me. You can take it later on, some other day.’ The Mahapurushas have no inclination to accumulate anything; they keep only what they need. The rest may be taken by anyone who needs it.

Pujya Rotiram Baba was another unique Sant. Once, he got a boil on his foot. Among Baba’s bhaktas there were some doctors. They created a major problem for Baba’s disciples, because each one would come and apply medicine, removing the medicine applied earlier. This went on for nearly a month, but the boil did not improve. Then one disciple suggested, ‘Baba, instead of changing medicines every day, why don’t we stick to one medicine for a few days and see?’

‘Dayalu (this was Baba’s general form of addressing people), the purpose of this body is over. It is now “public property”. Let people keep it as they will – what does it matter to me?’ Not only that, he never took any medicines to keep his body healthy. He would say, ‘The Ishwara can let it live or not, as He wishes.’

The *svabhaava* (nature) and *guna* (qualities) of a human being – and even Devtas and Daityas – crop up now and again in their body. The Shastras describe their character, nature and gunas. By reading the Shastras or listening to the discourses of the Mahatmas we can easily understand the different natures, gunas and character of people in our society. A person can know himself and even change himself if he wants to.

Maharshi Arti stopped Maharaj Prithu from killing Indra. ‘Rajan! Killing Indra is not appropriate for you, since you have taken deeksha for the Yagna. We will use Mantra-power to bring Indra here, and offer him as an oblation in the sacred fire. He will be burnt to ashes.’ He was about to start chanting the Mantras when Brahmaji manifested.

Maharshi Atri is the *maanasa putra* (child created mind power) of Brahmaji. ‘Putra,’ he said, ‘What are you about to do? It is not appropriate to kill Indra. He is a *svaroop*a (form) of Bhagwan. The Devtas who are worshipped through a Yagna are all parts of Indra; and you want to kill him?’

Then Brahmaji told Maharaj Prithu, ‘Rajan! Do you know why Indra is creating obstacles in your Yagna? He is afraid that if you complete a hundred Yagnas and become Indra yourself. However, I know that you have no such desire; your purpose is to get Bhagwan’s darshan. Once Indra knows this, he won’t steal your horse. Nor will he place any other obstacle. He is doing all this because he is afraid he will lose his throne.’ There are many stories about Indra in the Puranas. Once, Brihaspati (the Guru of the Devtas) went into hiding because he was displeased with Indra. Indra made Vishwaroop the Guru. Vishwaroop was the son of a Devta called Tvashta, but his mother was from a Daitya lineage. Although Vishwaroop was younger than Indra, and also lower in status, he was given the position of the Guru to serve Indra’s purpose.

A Yagna was being done for the benefit of the Devtas. Vishwaroop began to give some *aahuti* (oblations) secretly, for the Daityas’ benefit. Indra observed this. So, after the Yagna was completed successfully he cut off Vishwaroop’s head with his *vajra* (divine thunderbolt). Indra’s nature was peculiar.

‘Rajan,’ said Brahmaji, ‘It is not necessary that a person gets Bhagwan’s darshan even if he completes a hundred Yagnas. Had that been the case, Indra would have obtained Bhagwan long ago! Bhagwan is not obtained by *saadhana* (methods for spiritual progress); He is obtained by His *kripaa* (Grace).’

Some people interpret this differently. They say, ‘Since Bhagwan is obtained only by His *kripa*, what is the need for us to do sadhan-bhajan? This argument is not tenable. A man once asked Shri Udiya Babaji the same question. He replied, ‘All right; now you go and look after your shop. Bhagwan will come to you when He needs to!’

This is not said to make people give up all effort for spiritual progress. The important question is: Do we truly feel a need for Bhagwan in our life? Do we long to obtain Him? This is why there is a need for sadhan-bhajan in our life. Bhagwan will come to us by His kripa, but a constant effort for obtaining Him brings purity to the mind, and makes a person eligible for obtaining Him, and for recognizing the Ishwara when he meets Him.

One man went to a Mahatma and insisted, 'you are a *siddha* (having supernatural powers) Mahatma. Please give me a darshan of Bhagwan.'

'My brother, we can't try to tell Bhagwan what He should do and what He should not do. You should do sadhana. When you become eligible for His darshan, He will come to you Himself.'

The man was not convinced. He kept pestering the Mahatma. The benevolent Mahatma prayed to Bhagwan. The man got a glimpse of Radharani's foot. He became unconscious.

Bhagwan had manifested His *viraata* (colossal) form in Duryodhan's sabha, but only a very few people could get His darshan. Even in the episode of Devarshi Narad there is an important point connected to Bhagwan's darshan. In a previous birth, Naradji had become desperate for Bhagwan's darshan. Bhagwan had granted him a fleeting glimpse of Himself, but Naradji became even more desperate to see Bhagwan's divine beauty. Bhagwan spoke to Naradji in an inexpressibly sweet voice. 'My child

*Hantaasminjanmani bhavaanna maam drashtumihaarhati,*

*Avipakkakashaayaanaam durdarshoham kuyoginaam.*

*(Bhagwat 1. 6. 22)*

you will not obtain My darshan in this life, because the doshas in your life have not been removed fully yet.'

'Then, Prabhu, how did I get the darshan I just got?'

'I gave you a brief glimpse of Myself in order to awaken an intense desire for Me in your heart. Now go and do sadhana. Your desire will be fulfilled in your next birth.'

That same child was born as Narad in his next birth. Whenever Naradji uttered, 'Narayana', Bhagwan manifested instantly in his heart, like '*Aahoota ive mein sheeghram yaati che`tasi (Bhagwat 1. 6. 34)*'. If you call out somebody's name, the person comes to you. There is nothing surprising in this. Why won't a parent be eager to meet his child?

It is true that an intense desire to meet Bhagwan is essential, but it is not proper to think that Bhagwan is compelled to come to you if you weep for Him, sing His bhajans, or do japa. Sadhana is needed in life because it is our effort to meet the

Bhagwan we want. Don't people make an effort to meet their loved ones? A person who has prema for Bhagwan cannot help but make every possible effort to meet Him. The moment the person doing sadhana understands the limitations of sadhana, and realizes that he is helpless in obtaining Bhagwan, that is the preliminary point in obtaining Bhagwan's darshan.

Sadhana must not be given up. You must put in your best effort. However, after doing all the sadhana that is possible for you to do, if you get a feeling of helplessness that you can do nothing more to obtain Bhagwan's darshan, you should meditate with the feeling that Bhagwan is the *saadhan* (effort) as well as the *saadhya* (goal). Your *upaaya* (method) and *upe`ya* (that, which you want to obtain) are one. As soon as you understand and accept this, that is the point when Bhagwan's darshan becomes easily obtained.

Our Maharajshri's own experience is before us. Maharajshri's article, 'Obtaining Krishna by uttering His name' describes the four *purashcharana* (extensive rituals of chanting) of the Gayatri Mantra that he did, followed by one purashcharan of his Guru-Mantra. Even after his, he did not see Shri Krishna even in a dream; leave alone get His darshan when awake. A wave of despair and helplessness engulfed him. 'I can't do more sadhan. It seems I will not obtain Bhagwan's darshan in this life,' he felt.

Oppressed by a dense awareness of defeat, Maharajji went for a bath in the Gangaji. It was four o'clock in the morning. An incident took place there which pushed him into deeper dejection.

Maharajji had placed his mala on the bank before entering the water. A crow flew by, picked up the mala, and flew off again, dropping the mala in the Gangaji. Perhaps it was attracted by the smell of ghee that clung to the mala, but he dropped it when he realized it was not an edible item. In any case, it is surprising that a crow should be flying about in the dark, before dawn. And then, why did he drop it into the Gangaji? It could have sat on a tree, or somewhere else, with the mala. Believing it to be some *leelaa* sport) of Bhagwan, Maharajji thought, 'I could not do sadhana. Now, even my mala has gone. It is for the best.' Maharajshri returned to his home and shut himself in his room. He wept with frustration. The room was in total darkness. An effulgence manifested, and turned into a little boy, about ten or twelve years old. Maharajshri told us that he was wide awake, and his eyes were open. The child began to prance round the room. He was holding a flute, and was in the form of Shri Krishna, but He wasn't dark; He had a fair complexion. He told Maharajshri, 'Today onwards, you are what I am and I am what you are.' People who lived in close association with Maharajshri know that this Mahavakya (the ultimate statement of the Vedas describing the oneness of the Brahman and the Atma) 'Tattvamasi' was seen clearly in Maharajshri's life.

The image of the boy Krishna in the Nritya Gopal Mandir in the Anand Vrindavan Ashram is not dark; it is fair. *Saadhaka* (spiritual aspirants) derive a deep joy when they go to get His darshan even today.

‘Rajan,’ said Brahmaji, ‘there can be no comparison between you and Indra. Will it be proper for a great person like you to cause suffering to a small person like Indra? To me, it seems that Bhagwan Narayana wants to do some leela, using Indra as an instrument. It may even be that the time has come for you to obtain Bhagwan Narayana’s darshan.’

Brahmaji advised Prithu to stop the Yagna, saying:

*Maasmin mahaaraaja krithaah sma chintaam nishaamayaasmadvacha  
aadritaatmaa,*

*Yaddhayaayato daivahatam nu kartum manotirushtam vishate` tamondham.*

(4. 19. 34)

‘Rajan, you are doing the Yagna to obtain Moksha – Narayana – but Narayana cannot be obtained through sadhans. You may complete a hundred Yagnas or more, but there is no guarantee that Narayana will come. Furthermore, Rajan, you are, yourself, a knower of Moksha-Dharma, so you do not need to do Yagna-anushthanas. So, cease doing this Yagna.’

Listening to Brahmaji’s words it seemed to Maharaj Prithu – who had the heart of a bhakta – that it was Narayana Himself, who was giving this message through Brahmaji. He accepted Brahmaji’s advice as ‘*hari icchhaa*’ (Bhagwan’s wish) and gave up his resolve to complete the hundredth Yagna, convinced that it was best to do so.

‘Hari iccha’ has been given a lot of importance even in the Ramcharitmanas. It does not mean that we should leave everything to *bhaagya* (our destiny) and become idle. A bhakta tries his utmost to do sadhana and obtain Bhagwan, but when all his efforts fail, he accepts his failure as Bhagwan’s wish. In the Manas, Shivaji accepts it as Hari iccha when Sati gets doubts about Shri Rama being Bhagwan. The story is known to most of you.

Bhagwan Shankar and Satiji get a glimpse of Shri Rama desolate because Sitaji had been abducted. Shri Rama was weeping, wandering in the Dandakaranya forest in despair. Shankarji bowed to Him from afar, saying, ‘*Jai sacchidananda jagapaavana* (Glory to Sacchidananda Bhagwan who purifies the whole world).’

Satiji got deluded into thinking that Shri Rama could not possibly be the Sacchidananda Bhagwan (Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Anand = pure bliss; the Brahman), because none of these characteristics were to be seen in Shri Rama at that moment. She felt amazed that Bhagwan Shankar bowed down to Him and gave Him these adjectives.

Bhagwan Shankar tried to explain that this was Bhagwan's leela, that everything is possible in His leela, but Satiji was not convinced.

*Laagana ura upade`su jadapi kahe`u sivan baara bahu.*  
(Shivaji told her repeatedly, but he failed to convince her.)

Then Bhagwan Shankar told Satiji,

*Jaun tumhare` mana ati sande`hoo, lau kina jaayi pareechha le`hoo.*  
(*Manas 1. 51. 1*)  
'If you still doubt my word, go and test Him.'

Satiji set off to test Rama Bhagwan. Shankarji sat under the shade of a tree, awaiting her return, chanting Shri Rama's name as he waited. He began to think:

*More`hu kahain na sansaya jaaheen, vidhi vipareeta bhakayee naheen.*  
*Hoyihi soyi jo raama rachi raakhaa, ko hari tarka badhaavai saakhaa.*  
*Asa kahi lagi japana hari naamaa.*  
(*Manas 1. 51. 68*)

(Even my assurance did not dispel Sati's doubts. It is of no use to try to go against what Rama has ordained, so why argue? Let me chant Rama's name.)

A beautiful indication is hidden in the words, '*raama rachi raakhaa*'. *Rachanaa* (to create, or arrange) can be done sorrowfully or joyfully, but what was happening here did not seem propitious. Shankar Bhagwan thought that perhaps it may turn out to be fortunate in the long run, and that is exactly what happened. Sati was reborn as Parvati, the daughter of Himachal (the Himalaya Mountain). She married Shankar Bhagwan and was a far more devoted wife than when she was born as Sati.

Satiji set out to test whether Shri Rama was indeed Bhagwan, but the experience she had made her feel that it was she who had failed in the test. She came back to Shankarji abashed. 'Well, what test did you set?' he asked. Satiji did not tell Shankar Bhagwan the truth. She took refuge in a lie. Bhagwan Shankar knew everything. He had tried to prevent this fiasco and failed, so he accepted it as 'Hari iccha'.

*Hari icchaa bhaavee balavaanaa, hridayan vichaarata sambhu sujaanaa.*  
(*Manas 1. 55. 6*)

Then he resolved to merge his own wishes with Shri Rama's. Maharaj Prithu also merged his wishes with the indication given by Brahmaji, considering it to be Hari iccha. He gave up his sankalpa to complete the hundredth Yagna. He took the ritual bath taken after a Yagna is completed, did puja of the Devtas, and gave *dakshinaa* (monetary gifts) to Brahmins. He made sure that everyone involved in the Yagna was satisfied, and received their blessings.

*Ittham sa lokagurunaa samaadishto vishaampatih,  
Tathaa cha kritvaa vaatsalyam maghonaapi cha sandadhe`.  
Kritaavabrithsnaanaaya prithave` bhoorikarmane`,  
Varaan daduste` varadaa ye` tadvarhishi tarpitaah.  
Vipraah satyaashishastushtaah shraddhayaa labdha dakshinaah,  
Aashisho yuyujuh kahattaraadiraajaaya satkritah.  
(4. 16. 39 – 41)*

He also forged a friendship with Indra, who he had been ready to kill. The formality of bowing down and being blessed were not yet over, when Bhagwan Vishnu manifested there. He was accompanied by Devraj Indra.

Brahmaji was overcome with emotion to see Narayana. 'How much compassion Prabhu has! How greatly he loves His bhaktas!' Bhagwan's nature is indeed amazing! People place *maakhana-misri* (butter-sugar candy) in gold or silver bowls, along with Tulsi leaves, as an offering. But, does Bhagwan actually accept it? It is the *bhaavanaa* (feeling) of the bhaktas that they take the food as *prasaada* (Bhagwan's blessing) after offering it to His image.

We find another scenario with the gopis. The gopis never offered *bhoga* (food offerings) to Shri Krishna in gold or silver vessels. No did they invite Him to come and have makhan-misri. But, see His compassion! He went uninvited to their homes, scooped out the makhan kept in pots, and ate it stealthily! This was the greatness of the gopis of Vraja. Bhagwan could not restrain Himself from eating the butter of their homes. He was not interested in the rich dry fruits offered by raja Duryodhan, but He lovingly ate the banana peels offered lovingly at Vidura's home. He accepted vegetables leaves. You have heard this sung in the 'Narayana Varadavali.'

*Duryodhana ke` me`vaa tyaago saaga vidura ghara khaayo.*

Maharaj Prithu had not invited Narayana, but He manifested there as soon as he gave up the sankalpa of completing the Yagna. Prithu placed his head at Bhagwan's feet. Tears of prema streamed from his eyes. He felt overwhelmed.

Tomorrow we will discuss the conversation between Maharaj Prithu and Narayana.

Boliye Vrindavanbeharilal Ki Jai!

## Chapter 6.

This entire *sansaara* (interactive world) is a play of the *mana* (emotional mind). That, which is called 'Maya' from the viewpoint of the *samashti* (whole), is called the '*mana*' from the viewpoint of the *vyashti* (individual). All of us have had the experience that the objects of the external world remain unchanged, but if our *mana* is engrossed in thoughts of Bhagwan for a while, adverse circumstances don't have the power to effect us during that period. *Dukha* and *sukha* are part of worldly interaction; the *mana* is the base, or source, from which they arise. The Atma, or Paramatma, is the *aadhaara* (base; support) of the *mana*. Therefore, our efforts should be for the *mana* to be filled with good thoughts, good emotions, discussing Bhagwan and meditating on Him. This will improve our *mana*.

I had gone to Shri Badrinath to participate in a Bhagwat Katha. Obstacles are encountered even in auspicious activities. It took us four days to go from Delhi to Badrinath because of severe landslides. We had to wait at a village called Govindkund, for over eight hours. This village comes just before Joshimath.

All of us were eager to get the Satsang of any evolved Sant-Mahatma who lived thereabout. We were told of a Mahatma who lived in a small hut on the bank of the Gangaji. He was said to be about eighty years old. We went early next morning to meet him. He was doing *aasana* (Yogic exercises) when we arrived at his hut. He stopped when he saw us, and brought us mats to sit on. Then he plucked some berries from a nearby tree and gave them to us. He was our senior in age, experience, and Gnan. When we began to converse, I asked him, 'Maharaj, seeing the state of society, I feel a deep anguish. I feel I ought to get involved in the task of taking people in the right direction. Do you think this thought has merit?'

He smiled when he heard this. 'You are at an age when energetic talk comes naturally. If your inclination prompts you, you can give it a try. Unless you go through this experience, it is possible that you will not be convinced about this, even if I explain at length. I had the same conviction when I was young. I made every effort to guide people towards the right path. I did achieve some success. Then I felt that instead of improving society by giving *pravachan* (discourses) it would be more effective if I improved myself. People would get inspiration from my lifestyle, and some changes would surely take place in their lives. Now I have stopped giving lectures, but a good many *saadhaka* (spiritual seekers) come to me to clear their doubts. A little discussion is enough to guide them to the right path. What people have to do first of all is to improve their *mana*.'

The object to which we attach our *mana* is what appears before us all the time. A person experiences an hour's shanty when he sits in a Satsang for an hour. *Du-*

*sanga* (bad company) also has an effect, but it is the opposite of shanty. The mana will improve if it is attached to Satsang – to Bhagwan’s katha – and will prompt people to seek the pure mind to purify themselves.

Seeing the *masti* (carefree joyousness) of Avadhoota Dattatreya, Maharaj Yadu thought, ‘It is I who have all the worldly comforts and advantages, but it is this Mahatma who is full of joy!’ That means, a life that is lived with a beautiful mind attracts others and makes them wonder, ‘what is the factor in his life that is so attractive and full of joy? Why shouldn’t I also attain it?’

I had gone with Shri and Smt. Birlaji for the Gandhi Memorial function this morning. Gandhiji’s sentence, ‘Simple living, high thinking’ is well known. High thinking is the improving of the mind. A person can lead a simple life only if his thoughts are lofty. The simple life that is a result of high thinking is not an artificial simplicity cultivated to impress people. A simple life is not enduring unless it is the result of high thinking. So, it is not enough for a person to hear about high thinking; he has to give it serious thought and elevate his thinking, before simple living becomes natural.

There is a Dharmasangha Vidyalaya in Vrindavan. It is compulsory for the students to wear a dhoti. The students don’t wear trousers until they leave the school. It is seen that the day they complete their studies they go to a tailor and order trousers for themselves!

This shows that it is not possible to force anyone to change; it is necessary to change their mana. To change their mana it is necessary to change their thinking. When their thinking is changed, their antahkaran (fourfold mind comprising of the mana = emotional mind, buddhi – intellect, chitta = mental inclinations and ahankara = subtle ego of individuality) will change. The mind will change when the antahkaran changes. To change our thinking, we have to make changes in the way we study the Adhyatmik Shastras, ponder upon them, and also the prevailing system of education.

Maharaj Prithu listened to what Brahmaji told him to do, and gave up his sankalpa. As soon as he gave up his resolve to complete the hundredth Yagna, Bhagwan manifested there. It may be asked, ‘Does Bhagwan come when a Yagna is done, or does He come when it is given up?’

‘The human intellect is not competent in understanding what Bhagwan does, what He should do, and what He should not do.’ This is what Bhagwan Shri Krishna said in the Gita. This point is very important, and should always be kept in mind. Bhagwan said:

*Pitaahamasya jagato maataadhaataapitaamahah.*

(Gita 6. 17)

‘I am the mother, father and grand father of all.’

Who can be more particular about the well-being of a child that the parents and grandparents? The fact is, He wants to meet us all. Didn't He come to meet Maharaj Prithu?

A gentleman pleaded with Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, 'Maharaj, you have got Bhagwan's darshan; please make me have His darshan also.'

'Look,' said Baba, 'I do not tell Bhagwan what He should do. He will come when He thinks He should.'

The man persisted. Ultimately, Baba said, 'Very well; come at four o'clock tomorrow. I will make you have Bhagwan's darshan.'

When the man came the following day, Baba told him, 'Bhagwan has come, but He wants me to ask you one thing first.'

'What?'

'Bhagwan says that He will give you darshan, but after that you will get leprosy. If you are ready for this, He will give you darshan immediately.'

The man was stunned to hear Baba's words. He gave some thought to the matter and then he said, 'Baba, let it be.'

Baba had the power to gauge a person's spiritual level. He asked the man, 'You were so persistent earlier, about wanting Bhagwan's darshan. Why do you refuse it now?'

'Maharaj,' replied the man, 'I thought that you have had Bhagwan's darshan, Swami Akhandanandji had had His darshan; you both have so many followers and disciples. I thought that I will become like you if I also get His darshan.'

The goal of the man was not to get Bhagwan's darshan; he wanted to get Bhagwan's darshan as a means for obtaining respect and fame! Can a man who has *shraddha-vishvaasa* (faith and confidence) in Bhagwan, and knows Bhagwan's merciful nature ever believe that anyone could get leprosy if he got Bhagwan's darshan? If he had real prema for Bhagwan he would have said, 'Let me get Bhagwan's darshan; after that, who cares what happens to this body?' A bhakta is always ready to sacrifice everything for Bhagwan. What that man actually wanted was public adulation. The reverse is true of Mother Kunti (the mother of the five Pandavas and sister of Shri Krishna's father Vasudeva).

After the Mahabharata war was over, Bhagwan Shri Krishna prepared to return to Dwarka. Kunti asked Him for a boon.

*Vipadah santu na shashvattatra tatra jagadguro.*

*(Bhagwat 1.8. 25)*

'Please give me *vipatti* (misfortunes).'

Not only that, she added the word *shashvat* – everlasting! She asked for endless misfortunes!

People say, 'Bhagwan has the power to grant anything; why did Kunti ask for dukha? She could have asked for sukha, instead.'

That sounds perfectly logical, but if you think a bit, did she indeed ask for dukha? Mother Kunti knew perfectly well that every time the Pandavas were faced with misfortune, Shri Krishna would come to them and remove the problem. Thus, their misfortune was not really a misfortune – it was a blessing in disguise. It was getting Shri Krishna. Mother Kunti had infinite prema for Shri Krishna. She wanted Him to be with them always. She thought that if they faced misfortune continuously, He would always be with them. She wanted no sukha that would take Bhagwan away from them. Bhagwan also wants to stay close to His bhaktas. He waits for them to call Him, so He can go rushing to them.

You are all familiar with the story of Gajendra (the elephant) and the *graha* (crocodile). When the bhakta Gajendra called out to Bhagwan to save him from the graha, how long did it take Bhagwan to reach him? It is written here:

*Jaba laun gaja aapana bala baratyo ne`ka saryo nahin kaam,  
Nirabala hvai balaraama pukaare` aaye` aadhe` naam.*

(As long as the elephant depended on his own strength, he could not free himself, but as soon as he felt helpless and called out to Bhagwan, Bhagwan reached him when he had uttered only half of Bhagwan's name.)

Gajendra called out 'Govind!' Bhagwan reached before he could say 'vind'. The delay was not from Bhagwan's side; it was from Gajendra's side. If you let go of everything and desire only Bhagwan, how can He stay away from you?

Mahantji had told us about how someone had once asked Maharajji, 'How can I obtain Bhagwan's darshan?'

Maharajji asked, 'How often does this thought come to your mind?'

What was the man to say? The thought came only when he went to meet some Sant-Mahatma, as a good question to place before them. Most people who go to meet Mahatmas have such stock questions ready.

However, this is obviously an important question – how intensely do you wish to obtain the Ishwara? People have a number of activities to which they give greater priority. We need to give some thought to how much importance we give to obtaining the Ishwara. Even those who do daily puja-paath or sadhan-bhajan are not earnest about making their worship their priority. It is seen that when faced with some worldly pressures, their routine of worship is the first to be sacrificed! 'We will do the puja in the evening; or we'll do it tomorrow.' This is the decision they take with ease. Their priorities are eating, drinking, bathing and socializing. Compromising on puja becomes a routine matter.

A gentleman asked me yesterday, ‘Bhagwan had come when Maharaj Prithu was crowned, so why did Maharaj Prithu undertake Yagnas to get His darshan?’

This is the special urge of bhaktas. Everything they do is done for Bhagwan, for pleasing Him or serving Him, and obtaining Him. If Bhagwan Graces a bhakta by giving him His darshan, what will the bhakta do after that? What should he use his *purushaartha* (effort and ability) for? What object will he desire? The first and last goal of bhaktas and Mahapurushas is to obtain Bhagwan.

The gopis of Vrindavan got Shri Krishna’s darshan every day, but were they ever satisfied? They woke up every morning and went to see Him, as He went with the other cowherd boys to graze the cows. They found it extremely difficult to pass the day without Him. They waited eagerly for Him to return in the evening, so they would get His darshan again. The wish to see and meet the Beloved is a constant factor in prema. Maharaj Prithu’s prema for Bhagwan was insatiable.

When Bhagwan Vishnu manifested at the Yagna-sthala, Maharaj Prithu did His puja joyfully. Indra was feeling ashamed of his inappropriate behavior. Bhagwan was aware of Indra’s state of mind.

Pujya Swami Ramanandji is a great Mahatma. He lives at Omkareshwara. A young man came to him and said, ‘Maharaj, you tell us that we should do Dharma and speak the truth, but the times are not conducive to this.’

‘What is the state of the present times?’ he asked.

‘The times are such that one may do anything – tell lies, steal, cheat, etc – but the only important thing is to not get caught.’ This is the opinion of most people.

‘Very well; nobody knows of your wrong actions, but don’t you know of them? And, doesn’t the Ishwara know of them? When the two of you know about them, it makes no difference whether anyone else knows about them or not. At the end, the matter will be settled only between the two of you.’

Indra stood with bowed head and folded hands. Pointing to him, Bhagwan told Maharaj Prithu,

*E`shat e`kaarasheedbhanga hayame`dhashatasya ha,*

*Kshamaapayata aatmaanaamamanushya kshantumarhasi.*

(4. 20. 2)

‘Rajan, Indra has disrupted your Yagna, but now he seeks your forgiveness. Please forgive him.’

Why did Bhagwan want Indra’s offences to be forgiven? He knew Indra’s nature. He knew that the very thought of losing his throne was unbearable for him. He would do anything to preserve his position as the Raja of Swarga. Bhagwan’s nature is such that He may or may not notice people’s faults, but He always sees

their good qualities. It is a fact that there is nobody in this world who is totally free of faults.

Bhagwan sees Indra as the Raja of the Devtas. The Devtas symbolize *punya* (spiritual merit) and *sadguna* (good qualities). Indra showers rain, grants boons, and helps in the successful completion of many good activities. That is why Bhagwan wants Maharaj Prithu to forgive him, since he had accepted his mistake.

Maharaj Prithu looked at Bhagwan with astonishment. 'Prabhu! You can command me; I am Your servant!' Bhagwan, however, gives His bhaktas a lot of respect.

When Durvasa Rishi insulted Raja Ambarish, who was a great bhakta, Bhagwan's Chakra (divine discus) chased him, threatening to kill him. He went running to Bhagwan, saying, '*Traahee maam! Traahee maam!* Save me! Protect me!' and fell at His feet. Bhagwan expressed His helplessness in the matter.

*'Aham bhakta paraadheeno hyasvatantra iva dvija.*

I am governed by My bhaktas. I am not free to do what I please. Therefore only Ambarish can save you.'

Bhagwan considers Himself to be the *rinee* (debtor) of His bhaktas. There is a shloka in the Bhagwat, where Bhagwan says:

*Nirape`ksha munim shaantam nirvairam samadarshanam,*

*Anuvrajaamyaham nityam pooye`ye`tyanghrire`nubhih.*

(11. 14. 16)

People who have prema for Me want nothing from Me. I walk behind such Mahatmas with the thought I will become *pavitra* (purified) when the dust of their feet falls on Me.'

It is a bit difficult to understand this. What impurity can possibly come into Bhagwan that He needs to be purified? How can Bhagwan become a-pavitra? Maharajshri has explained this. 'Bhagwan thinks that His *pratignyaa* (vow):

*Ye` yathaa maam prapandyante` taanstathaivabhajaamyaham.*

(Gita 4. 11)

(I worship My bhaktas exactly as they worship Me.)

is broken repeatedly. Bhagwan's bhaktas love Him with single-minded devotion. According to His pledge, He should also love them with single-minded devotion. However, He can't do so, because He is one and they are many.

Bhagwan Krishna says something to the gopis that is quite startling. ‘Gopis! I cannot repay your pure prema even if I have a life as long as Indra’s, so I will always be your *rinee* debtor.’

This was not palatable to the gopis. They asked Him for a method by which He could become free of this debt.

‘There is only one way,’ said Bhagwan. ‘If all of you say with magnanimity, that you have forgiven My debt to you, I will no longer be your *rinee*.’

The gopis fell at Bhagwan’s feet when they heard this. ‘Our life is for You, Prabhu!’

‘But MY life cannot be for any one of you, alone,’ replied Shri Krishna. ‘That is why I am your *rinee*.’

Bhagwan gave Maharaj Prithu an *upade`sha* (teaching; sermon).

*Sudhiyah saadhavo loke` narade`va narottamaah,  
Naabhidruhyanti bhoote`bhyo yarhi naatmaa kale`varam.*

(4. 20. 3)

‘Rajan! The Mahapurushas have no ill-will for even a wicked person, leave alone a good person.’

‘Do not have *droha* (enmity),’ is the sermon, but what is the base of ill-will? Bhagwan tells us, ‘*Yarhinaatmaa kale`varam,*’ meaning, this body is not the Atma. All aversion is based on the physical form. It is a characteristic of a Mahapurusha that he interacts with others without the feeling the he is a body. He knows that is sansara is the *leelaakshe`tra* (playground), like a dream; it is not real. This interactive world is a leela from the viewpoint of a bhakta. If someone harms you or abuses you in a dream, will it be proper for you to consider him your enemy when you wake up?

A huge conference was held in Mumbai once. This was when Maharajshri was the President of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj. A large number of Sadhus, Sants and others had made contributions, and their names were announced to the public. The name of one Sant was accidentally omitted. It so happened, that he was from Vraja, and he was furious. ‘You have deliberately left out my name!’ he accused Maharajshri.

‘The list was very long; it is a genuine mistake, explained Maharajshri. I will announce your name at once, explaining the lapse.’

The Sant refused to accept this. Then Maharajshri asked, ‘What will satisfy you?’

‘Catch your ears and do *danda-baithak* (sit on your haunches and rise repeatedly) in front of the whole gathering!’

Can you believe it – Pujoyapad Swami Akhandanandji Maharaj actually complied with this demand! As a result, everybody was furious with that Sant. They decided to punish him when the conference was over. Maharajshri got a hint of their plans and spoke to the group, and convinced them to do nothing that would cause sorrow to that Sant.

Then, he said jokingly, ‘We are both from Vraja – our relationship is such that we behave like this with each other. And then, what difference does it make whether the body did some exercise, or whether it was garlanded? The body keeps getting respect and disdain!’

One Sant called Maharajshri to his Ashram to give a discourse. After criticizing Maharajshri at length in his welcome speech, he asked Maharajshri to start the discourse. Maharajshri recited the Mangalacharan (opening auspicious verses), and spoke about the Tattva (essence of the Brahman). Then he concluded his talk by saying ‘Hari Om’, and returned to his residence. The Mahapurushas have no resentment for anyone.

In His upadesh to Maharaj Prithu, Bhagwan said, ‘This physical form is the result of *avidyaa* (nescience; lack of right knowledge). *Kaamanaa* (desires) come because a person does not have the Gnan about his own *svaroopaa* (essence; true form). Actions are done to fulfill desires, and the result is rebirth. The superimposition of the Ishwara is called ‘Maya’ and the superimposition of the *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual) is called Avidya-Maya.

The radiance of an electric bulb will illuminate the surrounding area if it is in a glass container. If kept in an earthen container, it will illuminate only the inside of the container. The name of the transparent container is a *shuddha upaadhee* (pure superimposition connected to something), or Vidya-Maya upadhi (a superimposition caused by the right thinking Maya). And, the earthen vessel is called *avidyaa-maayaa* (delusion called by nescience) or *ashuddha upaadhee* (impure superimposition) Avidya and Vidya are both forms of Maya.

The Bhagwat calls Maya ‘*jaadoo*’ – a magic show, an illusion. The objects created by jadu are not real; they are a seeming reality. The *shareera* (gross physical body) is the result of avidya, which means it is false, *mithyaa* (a relative truth). Asat (that, which is not Satya) and mithya are different words in the Vedanta Shastra. Asat is that, which does not exist in any of the three tenses of past, present and future. Nor is it perceived. A popular example is *vandhyaa putra* – the son of a barren woman.

Mithya is that, which is perceived, but does not exist. For example, the *sansara* (the interactive world). However, the sansara is seen by everyone, so the example is not convincing. The blueness of the sky is a better example. We are told that the sky is not really blue, but the blueness is perceived in spite of knowing that the sky has no color. Vedanta tells us that as long as we have an

antahkaran, mana, and buddhi, perceptions will not be avoided. However, as soon as a person gets Gnan, he no longer considers the things he perceives to be Satya (that, which can never be negated). Then, it is established that the Gnan-drishhti (the viewpoint of Gnan) establishes that the perceived world and body are relative truths; they are mithya. Everything connected to the body also becomes mithya as soon as the person gets the Gnan that the body is mithya. Relationships, respect, insult, wealth, and possessions etc, cannot be called Satya. They will be called mithya. That is why the Bhagwat is called '*kalpatarorgalitam falam*' – the ripe fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree.

A highly respected Sant told me that the Gita is the quintessence of the Upanishads, and the Bhagwat is a commentary of the Gita. Someone asked Chaitanya Mahaprabhu why he had not written a commentary on the Brahma Sutra, as all the great Acharyas had done. Mahaprabhuji replied, 'Maharshi Vyas has already written it in the form of the Bhagwat.'

Our Maharajshri used to go to the Paramartha Ashram at Rishikesh every year. During one of his visits, two *saadhaka* (spiritual seekers) came to him with their dispute. They had both studied Vedanta in depth. They came to Maharajshri and placed their dispute before him. Maharajshri asked them, 'The points you are arguing over – do you quarrel with the belief that they are Satya, or do you believe them to be mithya?' Hearing this both got up and left the room quietly. After all, they were Vedantis.

'*Brahman satya jaganmithyaa*' (the Brahman is the only Satya; this interactive world is mithya) is repeated every day when we recite our prayers. If this world is mithya, what is there to quarrel about? And, if they argue over it, where is their conviction that the world is mithya?

If you think about the upadesha given by Bhagwan, you will notice a beautiful implication. There was no *dve`sha* (hatred), *eershyaa* (envy), or *droha* (rebellion) in Maharaj Prithu. He had neither avidya nor Maya. Then, who was Bhagwan's sermon directed at? The fact is that Bhagwan made Prithu the medium to give some teaching to Devraj Indra. It would have been humiliating for Indra to be rebuked directly by Bhagwan, so Bhagwan told him obliquely.

Bhagwan wanted Maharaj Prithu to ask for a *varadaana* (boon), so He said, '*Varan cha mat kanchana maanave`ndra.*' 'Kanchan' means 'any one'. 'I have so much to give, but it is My wish that you ask Me for a boon. It will please Me if you ask for something.' Prithu had no wish to ask for anything, but Bhagwan wanted to give him something. Our state is just the opposite!

People go to Behariji's Mandir. They make an offering of a hundred rupees with a long list of demands. 'Let my wife listen to me. Let my son do well in his exams. Let my factory flourish,' etc. we ask for all the things we cannot buy

with money. Bhagwan continues to do *kripaa* (shower Grace), but instead of having prema for Him, we remain immersed in prema for worldly objects. Maharshi Valmiki says:

*Jaahi na chaahiya kabahun kachu tumha sana sahaja sane`ha,  
Basahu nirantara taasua mana so raaura nija ge`hu.  
(Ramcharitmanas 2. 131)*

(Shri Rama, please always make Your home in the hearts of those who have prema for You, and want nothing but You.)

Bhagwan always abides in the heart of a *nishkaama pre`mee* (one who loves Bhagwan without wanting anything from Him). That is His abode.

Indra was overwhelmed to see Bhagwan's prema for Maharaj Prithu. He was about to kneel at Maharaj Prithu's feet, but Maharaj Prithu caught his shoulders and embraced him. 'Devraj! I wanted to get Bhagwan's darshan, and today, my wish is fulfilled. The Kingdom of Swarga will always be yours. The wealth I have belongs to Narayana.' Indra bowed with great warmth and took his leave. Bhagwan also prepared to leave, since Maharaj avoided asking for any varadana. Vyasji writes:

*Prasthaanaabhimukhopye`namanugrahavilambitah.*

As soon as Maharaj Prithu understood that Bhagwan was preparing to leave, his eyes filled with tears. Seeing his distress, Bhagwan said, 'Prithu, don't be sad. I will not leave you in tears. I will not go from here until you give Me leave to go with a happy heart. Think a little, and ask Me for whatever you want.'

The words 'anugraha vilambitah' were interpreted humorously by Maharajshri. 'Bhagwan got *vilamba* (delayed).'

Where did He want to go, where He was late in going to?

Bhagwan had made an appointment to meet a bhakta at Vaikuntha. 'I expect to be there in two hours. Wait for Me if I get delayed,' He had said. He was delayed because of Maharaj Prithu's prema. Bhagwan's rules are stringent, but they go awry when the love of a bhakta hold Him back.

'Arjuna! Make a vow that My bhakta will never be destroyed.'

Arjuna said, 'Maharaj, isn't it better that You make the vow?'

'No! No! It is better that you make the vow. My vows are subservient to My bhaktas, and get broken sometimes. However, I consider it My primary duty to fulfill the vows made by My bhaktas. Therefore, a vow made by My bhakta is never broken.'

Maharaj Prithu's intense love induced Bhagwan Narayana to linger at his Yagnasthal. Tomorrow we will discuss the incident further.

Boliye` Vrindavan Beharilal Ki Jai.

## Chapter 7

Bhagwan's kripa is showered constantly, not only on His bhaktas, but on all; yet we fail to experience it. Our Adhyatmik (spiritual) literature tells us repeatedly that everything will improve automatically for a person who keeps up a steady effort to improve his life.

Bhagwan came, Himself, to Prihu's Yagnasthal. This was His kripa. Vyasji tried very hard to get Shukadevji to come back home, but he did not succeed. The same Shukadevji came on his own to Raja Parikshit, to narrate the Bhagwat to him! Bhagwan did kripa, not only on Maharaj Prithu, but also on Devraj Indra. It was Prabhu who removed Devraj Indra's embarrassment and false impression. After Devraj Indra left Bhagwan also prepared to leave, but seeing the depth of Maharaj Prithu's love for Him, and his distress at parting from Bhagwan, He could not bring Himself to leave.

In spite of Bhagwan telling him repeatedly to ask for a varadan, Maharaj Prithu was unable to think of what to ask for. This is invariably the case with *nishkaama* (disinterested) bhaktas. Guru Sandeepani – who was Shri Krishna's Guru – was also nishkama. Bhagwan Krishna learnt the sixty four *vidyaa* (branches of learning) in sixty four days. The He asked, 'Gurudev, please command Me for whatever object you desire. I will give it as Guru-dakshinaa (a gift offered to the Guru when studies are completed).