

Chapter XXI

Sri Krishna rescues a Brahmana's children

Maya built a beautiful hall for Yudhishtira. He had collected the valuable gems and other material from the hall of king Vrishaparva built on Mainaka near Bindu sarovara. He had also brought the original gada of Vayu and gave it to Bhimasena.

On a day of sun eclipse, Krishna went to Samanta panchaka for a bath with his wives and children. The five ponds at Kurukshetra constructed by Parasurama to offer Pitru tarpana after destroying Kshatriya are known as Samanta panchaka. Nandagopa, Yashoda and Pandavas also went there. Vasudeva performed a sacrifice on this occasion.

Krishna performed Asvamedhayaga at Dwaraka within one day only. Krishna himself was Dikshita for this sacrifice. On this occasion a Brahmana arrived with tears in his eyes. He told that his children die the very moment they are born. Arjuna offered to rescue his children. Krishna doubted his ability. Arjuna said if I am not able to rescue the children, I will jump into the fire. Arjuna encircled Brahmana's house with his arrows at the time of her delivery. However, the child was taken away by some invisible spirit and only the cries of the child were heard. Arjuna went round the regions of Yama, Indra Agni, Soma, Vayu, Varuna etc and did not find the child. He returned and offered to jump into the fire in the presence of Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna took the Brahmana and Arjuna with him and moved in a big chariot towards north crossing the seven seas. He cut the deep darkness with his chakra across ghandodaka and went to his original place Anastasia. HE entered into his original form asking Brahmana and Arjuna to

remain outside. He brought the children of Brahmana out. Nanda, Sunanda etc attendees of Vishnu used to be born as the children of the Brahmana .Krishna returned to Dvaraka and gave the children to Brahmana.

Sri Krishna killed Dhantavakra and his brother Viduratha.

Arjuna asked Shri Krishna to describe the worlds through which they went while moving towards Anantasana. Shri Krishna explained the same as under: Jambudvipa, Lavanamudra, Plakshadvipa, Iksusamudra, Shalmalidvipa, Surasamudra, Kushadvipa, Sarpisamudram, Kraunchadvipa, Dadhisamudra, Shakadvipa, Kshirasamudra, Pushkaradvipa, and Suddhodasamudra. He also gave the measurement of these. The total area is stated to be two crores fifty three and half lakh yojanas. The Look-alike is situated between Vajralepa and anatomies.

On another occasion Narada described fourteen worlds to Yudhishtira as under: Bhu, Antariksha, Svarga, maha, Jana, Tapah and Satya seven above and Atala, vitala, Sutala Talatala, Mahatala, Rastala, Patala seven below.

Yudhishtira asked Narada why his father Pandu has no place in Indraloka while Harischandra has it. Narada replied that Harischandra performed Rajasuya yaga. Your father has already expressed his desire that his son should perform this yaga. Yudhishtira thought of performing Rajasuya sacrifice. He consulted his brothers and also sent a messenger to Sri Krishna. At the same time the relatives of the sixteen thousand wives of Krishna also sent a messenger informing the disturbing news that Jarasandha is planning to kill and offer to Siva twenty two thousand and eight hundred kings. They appealed to Krishna to rescue these kings. On hearing this Shri Krishna went to Indraprastha encouraged them to undertake Rajasuya yaga.

Rajasuya yaga duly performed will enable the Rijuyogas to attain the status of Brahma. Those who are not eligible to this status will attain better position than his equals in the liberated state, that is to say, they will enjoy more ananda. King Pandu belongs to Maruts group. Among forty nine maruts, seven are important. Pandu though he belongs to Marut group and originally he is one of the seven important Maruts i.e., Paravaha, he is not able to attain the higher status than Harischandra as he showed dis-respect to Indra and was cursed by him to be born as a man. However, Indra told him that he will attain his die status by performing Rajasuya. That is why Pandu desires that his son should perform Rajasuya.

Jarasandha Vadha

Shri Krishna told Yudhishtira that Bhimasena is the most appropriate person to lead this Yaga. Jarasandha will oppose this yaga. He has to be first killed. Bhima should be departed to kill him. Bhima readily agreed to proceed in the matter. Shri Krishna proposed that he himself accompanied by Bhima and Arjuna will go to kill Jarasandha. Jarasandha will consider Arjuna as inferior to him, he is afraid of me, therefore he will choose to fight with Bhima only and will be killed by him. Krishna further told Yudhishtira that he himself did not kill Jarasandha when he attacked Mathura only to provide an opportunity to a Vishnubhakta to fight against a Sivabhakta and reveal the superiority of Vishnu-bhakta. This removed the fear in the mind of Yudhishtira. Krishna Bhima and Arjuna left for Magadha country.

A group of five hills viz. Vaihara, Varaha, Vrishaba, Rishi and chaityaka surrounded Girivraja. Jarasandha used to be worship one of these hills i.e. chaityaka since it looked like Shivalinga. This was destroyed by Krishna, Bhima and Arjuna. Then, they entered into the city of Jarasandha through the path made by breaking the prakara wall. This new way was made since, one is not expected to enter into enemy's city through the main gate. They broke the drums the sound of which represented the glory of Jarasandha. They snatched the flowers, sandal paste etc from the shops in the city and entered into Jarasandha palace by making a breakaway for them. They had dressed like Brahmanas. They refused the hospitality offered by Jarasandha. He asked them as to who they were? Why they broke Shivalinga, broke the drum and snatched the flower etc. These acts do not befit the Brahmanas. On this Krishna replied "we are not Brahmanas. We are your enemies. You have undertaken a Bhairavayaga and propose to kill innocent kings and animals. We have come to punish you; Jarasandha said I cannot stop my Bhairavayaga.

You have to fight with me. Jarasandha proposed that he would fight with Bhimasena. A fight between the two with mace started. It was conducted outside the city. Both displayed their skill in Gadayuddha. Their gada were broken into pieces, and then they started fighting with fists. The fight continued for fifteen days, Bhima firmly caught his head, placed the foot on his trunk and broke him in two pieces. Krishna gave a hint as to how to break him by cutting grass blade and throwing the two pieces in opposite direction. Bhima knew his secret. However, Krishna gave the hint to enthrall him Jarasandha's son Sahadeva made peace with them by offering his sister and the chariot to Bhimasena. Bhima received his sister for his brother Sahadeva. Nakula had already married the daughter of Madra King. These two wives of Nakula and Sahadeva were originally Ushas wife of Ashwini. This Ushas is different from Usha the wife of Aniruddha. With the death of Jarasandha the main hurdle for the Rajasuya of Pandavas was removed.

Rajasuya yaga

Sri Vedavyasa arrived and instructed Yudhishtira to make all preparations. He instructed Bhimasena to undertake digvijayayatra. The benefit of the sacrifice goes to that person who plays the principal role. Bhima was eligible for the benefit of Rajasuya viz. the position of Brahma. Therefore, Sri Vedavyasa asked Bhima to play the principal role by undertaking digvijayayatra.

Arjuna pleaded that he has the chariot, bow etc necessary requirements for digvijayayatra and he is also interested in digvijayayatra. However, Sri Vedavyasa said Kichaka; Karna etc will give tributes to Bhima without much grumbling, therefore, he should lead digvijayayatra. He directed Arjuna to go to Saptadvipa, Patala etc regions and bring tributes.

Bhima went to Virata kingdom and collected tributes from Kichaka. Then, he went to Cedi kingdom collected tributes from Shishupala. Kunti's sister Srutasrava was the mother of Shishupala. She advised him to pay the tributes. Bhima collected the tributes from Paundraka Vasudeva and Karna. He went to the city of Banasura and collected the vast wealth from him.

Nakula and Sahadeva who were sent to different direction returned and reported the tributes won by them.

Arjuna defeated the tribal rules like abhira and nisada. He obtained tributes from Bhagadatta. He wandered over nine varshas viz Kimpurusha, Harivarsa, Ilavrita, Bhadrasva, Ketumala, hiranmya, Ramyaka, kuru and Bharata varsha itself. He brought huge tributes from this area. He also went into seven patalas won the demons and the deities and brought the tribute even from Bali Chakravarti.

The Rajasuya sacrifice was started. Yajnavalkya, Paila and Dhaumya and Susama played the role of Adhvaryu, Hota and Udgata. Sri Vedavyasa himself became Brahma. Dharmraja was Yajamana and Draupadi was Yajamana Patni Brahma, Rudra, Indra etc deities, and Bhishma Drona etc elders. The entire family of Dhritarashtra, Balarama and Yadavas were present. Rukmini and Satyabhama were also specially invited. At the sacrificial pendal, the debates on philosophical issues were arranged. Dharmraja asked Bhishma as to whom the agrapuja be offered. Bhishma suggested that it should be offered

to Sri Krishna. Dharma duly offered agrapuja to Shri Krishna. This upset Shishupala. He talked ill of Shri Krishna. Bhimasena was enraged by this and proceeded to kill Shishupala. Bhishma restrained. He was destined to be killed by Shri Krishna. Therefore, Bhima did not proceed further. Shishupala declared to fight against Krishna. He invited the other kings also to join him. Sri Krishna pushed the other kings behind and killed Shishupala with his Chakrayudha.

After the sacrifice was over and all guests returned, Dharmaraja was chatting with Sri Krishna at the beautiful built by Maya. Duryodhana arrived at the hall. The walls of this hall were so transparent that the persons sitting on the other side were visible and presence of the wall itself was not felt. Consequently Duryodhana hit at the wall when he proceeded. The floor that was studded with blue gems was so soft and clean that Duryodhana felt there was water and he rolled his clothes to avoid the water. In another part of hall where there was actual water, he failed noticed it and fell. At this confusion of Duryodhana, Bhima, Draupadi and all others laughed. Duryodhana felt deeply humiliated. Duryodhana and Sakuni returned to Hastinavati with a burning heart started and to take revenge vengeance against Pandavas, particularly against Bhima and Draupadi.

The dice play

Sakuni suggested that they should invite Dharmaraja for a dice-play and rob all his wealth and kingdom. Dhritarashtra first hesitated to agree. However, when Duryodhana pressurized him he sent Vidura to invite Dharmaraja for the dice-play.

When Vidura came to invite Dharmaraja for dice-play Shri Krishna was not at Indraprastha. He had left for Dwaraka on receiving the information that Salva proposes to attack Dwaraka.

Dharmaraja agreed to go to Hastinavati for playing the dice in spite of the opposition by his brothers and Draupadi. Vidura also cautioned him against the dangers of the dice-play.

Pandavas went to dice-play hall with Bhishma etc elders. Dhritarashtra arrived with Vidura. Kauravas arrived with Shakuni and Karna. Bhishma etc elders did not like the idea of dice-play. However they kept quiet. Dharmaraja proposed his entire wealth as a bet for the play and lost it. Then, he went on proposing Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna, and Bhima as bet and lost all of them. Finally he proposed Draupadi and himself also as bet and lost. Duryodhana sent his

charioteer Pratikamin to bring Draupadi to the dice play hall. Draupadi told him that it is not proper for her to come to the hall where elders are present. Pratikamin returned. Duryodhana sent Dussasna to bring Draupadi. HE forcibly dragged her to the hall. She asked the question whether Yudhishtira lost her before he himself became a slave. No body answered this question. Bhishma said, since Dharmaraja himself has accepted the fact he lost Draupadi, we are helpless in the matter.

Draupadi told Bhishma and other elders that dice-play is a deceitful programmed. It is adharma. Therefore, victory in this is no victory. Consequently Dharmaraja himself is not defeated. Therefore, how can I be treated as a slave? You elders are not condemning it as

adharna. You are not giving your ruling on what is dharma and what is adharna. Therefore, this assembly is not an assembly of Wiseman at all.

Bhishma etc elders kept quite even after this exhortation, since, kali had entered into them. However, Vidura declared that Draupadi has not become a slave. The adharna has taken over the entire assembly.

Bhima said the hands of Dharmaraja are burnt. Arjuna appealed to him not to do so. Duryodhana displayed asked Dusyasana to take away the cloths of Pandavas. They removed the same and were clad with deer skin. Dusyasana started to drag the saree of Draupadi. She appealed to Shri Krishna to save her honor. The saree went on extending. A series of sarees appeared one after the other. Dusyasana was exhausted and collapsed. Bhima looked at an iron rod to hit Duryodhana. There were cries of foxes. This was very inauspicious. Dhritarashtra asked Vidura as to how to ward it off. Vidura said you first release Draupadi. Dhritarashtra offered three boons to Draupadi. She asked him to release Pandavas and their property. She did not ask anything for herself. Strictly speaking she had not asked for any boons. The relatives of a dice player have a right to ask for the return of the lost property.

She had exercised that right. Even if it is taken as boon she was within her limits. A Kshatriya should not ask for more than three boons.

She had asked for only two boons. She did not ask anything for herself as she was strictly following Bhagavata dharma. Dhritarashtra released Pandavas and returned the kingdom. Duryodhana was very angry. Shakuni suggested that Pandavas be invited for the dice-play again. Dhritarashtra invited again. This time the bet proposed by the Kauravas was different. If Pandavas were defeated they were required to live in the forest for twelve years and live in-cognito for one year. During this last year, if one of them was found, then, they were required to live in the forest for twelve years again. Dharmaraja was defeated again and Pandavas had to go to the forest. They went out of Hastinapur through the main gate Vardhamana. Vidura asked Kunti to stay with him. The people of Hastinapur followed Pandavas up to the banyan tree on the bank of river Ganga. Then Pandavas proceeded to Kamyakavana.