

A pastime of Bali Maharaja and Vamandev

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31052018 [46:47]

esha vaa uttamashloko
na jihaasati yad yashah
hatvaa mainaam hared yuddhe
shayeeta nihato mayaa [SB 8.20.13]

Translation: If this brahmana really is Lord Vishnu, who is worshiped by Vedic hymns, He would never give up His widespread reputation; either He would lie down having been killed by me, or He would kill me in a fight.

Yes. That's the kind of person He is.

Purport: Bali Maharaja's statement that Vishnu would lie down having been killed is not the direct meaning, for Vishnu cannot be killed by anyone. Lord Vishnu can kill everyone, but He cannot be killed. Thus, the real meaning of the words "lie down" is that Lord Vishnu would reside within the core of Bali Maharaja's heart. Lord Vishnu is defeated by a devotee through devotional service; otherwise, no one can defeat Lord Vishnu.

He is mentioned herein as uttamashloko. Shloks you know? Different folks, different shloks. [laughs]. So these are uttam, uttamashlokas. The Lord, that is glorified by uttamashloko, the best of the shloks. 'Utt' means above and 'tam' means darkness or ignorance that is beyond the darkness. Shloks glorifying the Lord. That glory is not mundane glory, not in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance. Such so-called glories exist, they are around.

The Lord's glories are uttama, transcendental to all these tamasic glories or glories in the mode of darkness. So, this verse says, He is the Lord who is glorified by the Vedic hymns. Vamandev ki... Jaya.

So, I was thinking, as usual, what are the lessons or highlights of this pastime? Vamandev and Bali Maharaja prasanga. What are the major principles established? What are some of the universal affairs take place in connection with this pastime? Even talk of cosmology and astronomy in connection with this pastime.

So that was my thought when I looked at the verse and I thought of pursuing that. So, let's see how far we can go. The demigods were in trouble. They get into trouble from time to time [Laughs] they are bhaktas, devotees of the Lord.

na me bhaktah pranashyati [BG 9.31) Lord has made that declaration.

So, He is stepping forward, He is there to intervene. The circumstances in which all this happens is Kashyap Muni returns home and the wife did not seem so happy. He said: "What happened? What's wrong?" Then she shared what happened to all her sons. Some of the demigods are sons of Aditi and Kashyap. He is the progenitor. He said: "Ok, you could perform payo-vrath." Which she does and in record-breaking time of just one dozen days, she brought the Lord before her.

I used to think for some time that Dhruva Maharaja broke the record. Within six months he managed to get the Lord standing before him. Here, Aditi managed to get the Lord within twelve days. As I say this, I am also reminded of Katvanga muni. Katvanga Muni: "Oh, I have seven days. What can I do? Oh, seven days is a lot of time." Katvanga Muni had just a few moments, he became fully Krishna conscious and he went back to Godhead. Haribol! So, I think there are many record breakers, Aditi, Dhruva Maharaja and Katvanga Muni.

So, the Lord is tricky. He could trick and He has become vatu Vaman. Vatu means dwarf Vaman. Initially, He appeared in a regular form and size of the Lord and then He transformed Himself into Vatu Vaman. As it happened with Devaki and Vasudev. There was Lord Vishnu, four-handed and then He transformed Himself into a child. So, here He becomes Vatu Vaman and there is a reason. He doesn't consult but just by the desire of the Lord, things begin to happen. Just last night we were reading about that; iccha shakti. One of the shaktis of the Lord is iccha shakti. There is jnana shakti and parasya saktir vividhaiva sruyate (Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.8)

Vividha means very many. That is why He is known as shaktiman because He possesses all the shaktis. So, one of those shaktis is iccha shakti. Just mere desire and things happen. So, He had a desire to do something to help the Demigods. So, He has assumed this form, Vatu Vaman and now He proceeds towards the yajna on the banks of Narmada river. Bali Maharaja is now the Lord of the universe. Indra is no longer the Lord. He has been dethroned. He is hiding behind the clouds somewhere, scared and when Bali Maharaja had gone to challenge him and eventually attack him. Bali Maharaja's power was felt in the outskirts of Amravati, Indra's capital. When Bali Maharaja blew his conch shell, that was enough. All the demigods fled in fear just by hearing the sound of the conch shell. Hence it is said that when the conch shell is blown, the glories of the Lord are being

blown or broadcasted. One thing that I understand from the blowing of the conch shell is the glories of the Lord are being broadcasted or roared. The Bhagavatam is like the roaring of a lion, then little rabbits and all creatures, Kali's followers; they all flee in fear when Bhagavatam does the garjana. When Bhagavatam roars, there is silence.

Sri Radha Gopinath ki... Jaya.

So, Bali Maharaja was performing the hundredth sacrifice. So, what happens when someone does this? You could also do, if you

could manage. Perform hundred sacrifice and then you become the next Indra. So, this was about to happen, because this was the hundredth sacrifice. Hence the Lord's arrival was timely, just one more to go and Bali Maharaja ends up becoming Indra.

So, Lord Vaman comes the beauty of Vaman is described as the Sun is rising in the east. Bhagavatam describes that when Vaman Dev was walking towards the sacrifice everyone assembled felt "Is this the Sun God walking towards us as he is so effulgent."

And of course, when Bhagavatam describes, koti surya sama prabha. The prabha or the effulgence coming from the Personality of Godhead is koti surya sama prabha. Koti means ten million Sun's effulgence put together like that is the effulgence of the Lord. So the assembled people thought "Is this Sun coming in our direction?."

Vaman Dev, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has become a beggar. By doing so, He is glorifying Bali Maharaja. He is honoring Bali Maharaja by taking the position of a beggar.

This is how the comments are, they talk about how He has become a beggar and then Bali Maharaja's spiritual master said: "Hye! No, no! Don't do this! Don't surrender! Don't give everything to Him!."

If things are not favorable, then we reject it. That is the foundational principle.

anukulasya sankalpa pratikulsya varjanam

Anukulasya – favorable – Sankalp, I take a vow to do this because it is favorable. Pratikulsya- unfavorable – Whatever is unfavorable for devotional service we reject and what to speak of surrendering everything unto Him. Then Bali Maharaja rejects his spiritual master. This is quite a big thing in history. Bali Maharaja said: "I don't care for your advice!"

He commented like that. Shukracharya: "If you give everything to the Lord. I am the Guru. I am supposed to be getting dakshina. What will I get? I will get nothing." That kind of motivation. But Bali Maharaja considered that as unfavorable he rejected the proposal and the proposer for the time being at least.

Bali Maharaja: "Ok, go ahead, take three steps of land." Bali Maharaja was thinking, this is some kind of insult. "I am the proprietor of the three worlds." There are fourteen planetary systems, three divisions; Svarga, Mrithyu lok, Patal ok and He is only asking for three steps of land. Bali Maharaja said, "What! Ask for more! Ask for more!" and then there is a point we must take note of.

Vaman Dev said: "If I am not going to be happy with three steps, well there is no end. If you give Me three planetary systems, or you give Me more and more, there is no end to the greed. So, no no, three steps of land is sufficient." [laughs] Of course, while saying this Vaman dev knows what He will take in those three steps.

He says: "Promise is a promise, gentleman's promise." This greed part is a lesson from this pastime. Even Mahatma Gandhi said: "Need is ok, not the greed." You have a right to whatever basic needs are there. That should be provided, you should acquire that much. However, when you get into the region of greed, there is no end. So, when Bali Maharaja finally asked: "This is what you wish? Just three steps? It's not going to be much. Ok, go ahead. So be it thathasthu.

Now the Lord is going to show His true nature. With one step He covers all the lower planetary systems. There are seven lower planetary systems and all that is covered by the Lord's one step. Of course, once He takes the first step, He is no more Vaman, He has become Trivikram.

Vikram also means victorious. He has become victorious by

taking three steps. He has become Trivikram. When He does that, Bhagavatam describes that His form has become as big as the universe, and everything that is within the universe is now covered also. Everything is within Him. Some kind of universal form. It's the Lords form Trivikrama, not the kind that Lord Krishna showed to Arjuna. But He is showing within Me, everything exists.

Just as Yashoda said: "Oh! You ate the dirt!" And Krsna says: "I did not eat." Yashoda:

"Open your mouth." Then, when Krsna opened His mouth, what did Yashoda see? The entire universe was in his mouth. Where Yashoda had the vision, it is called Brahmanda ghat in Vrndavan. At this particular ghat, Yashoda saw the entire brahmanda within the Lord.

vishvasya dhamne, that is the point.

namas te 'stu damne sphurad-dipti-dhamne
tvadiyodarayatha vishvasya dhamne

The prayer says, I offer my obeisances to that rope also, and I offer my obeisances to that udar-the belly, which is vishvasya dhamne. One is damne and one is dhamne. This is where correct pronunciation is essential. One is damne—the rope. Dham is your belly. vishvasya dhamne. Whole vishwa is ok mam

So, that experience was there, that the whole world was inside that form of Trivikram. As His leg was extended and it reached Brahma lok, Sathya lok, they were wondering what this is, sticking out here and going and going higher. Soon they realized this is my Lord's lotus feet and Brahma gathers his associates and worshipped the lotus feet, including washing the lotus feet. He came with a kamandalu. As He pours the water, then the water that washed the lotus feet of the Lord started flowing. Ganga Maiya ki... jaya, this is Ganga.

pada-nakha-nira-janita-jana-pavana [Sri Dasavatara Stotra]

Lord's pada- lotus feet, nakha-nails, nira-water, Brahma poured water. janita-jana-pavana – that water which washed the lotus feet and toes and nails especially mentioned became purifying water. Jana is all of us, the people. Pavana – purifying. That is one origin of Ganga is this. Another explanation is when the Lord lifted His foot, it kind of bumped into and hit into the covering of the universe and the water from the causal ocean starts dripping in.

That's one more origin of Ganga related to the pastime of Trivikrama.

In the Garga Samhita, it is mentioned that one time the Demigod wanted to go all the way to Golok and do reporting of the difficulties on the earth. Dharmasya glanir, there is a decline in religious principles. "My dear Lord, You have to personally come!" Instead of going to the shore of ksirsagar, they wanted to go to Golok and that time they went through this tunnel which was caused by Vaman, Trivikram's piercing the covering. So the Ganga water is flowing in, from outside coming in and Devtas were walking right on the bank of Ganga in the opposite direction. The Garga Samhita describes. And when they came out for the first time, what did they see? There are so many universes all around, all over floating. When

they were inside, they didn't know, they had not seen anything, maybe had heard, but now they were able to see the brahmaandas all around.

So, when Vaman Dev was just arriving on the scene there was a daughter. It is mentioned both that she was a daughter of Bali Maharaja and in some places it's mentioned that she was the sister. Ratnamala was her name. When she saw this little, beautiful, cute little boy holding an umbrella and a kamandalu, she really liked this boy and she thought or desired: "I wish I could have a child like him. Could I ever have a child, like him?" This was one thought.

So, two steps were taken, where is the third step to go? So, Bali Maharaja said: "The only thing left is my head now, so you may place your foot there." Before that, Vaman Dev said:

"You promised three steps, ok arrest him!" The snake was there, Vasuki, and he tied up and arrested Bali Maharaja. When the sister or daughter Ratnamala saw that scene then she had another thought. "What, what kind of guy He is? I will kill Him!" Then this Ratnamala becomes Putna. In Lord Krishna's pastimes, she takes the role of Putna. In her previous life, she was the sister or daughter of Bali Maharaja. Now she gets to have Krsna as her darling in her lap and how are you? Nice. Kissing and everything, ok have some breastmilk also. She got the Lord as her son and then the next thing, she wanted to kill Him. So, she had come with poison on the breast and her attempt was to kill. So, both things happened there.

When Bali Maharaja was tied up, then Prahlad Maharaja who is the grandfather of Bali Maharaja arrived on the scene begging for forgiveness. "My dear Lord, please take care of my grandson." There are beautiful prayers. And then he was dispatched. "Ok, you can't be here. You have surrendered everything. Now you are empty pockets nothing. You go to Suta planet." Bali Maharaja accepted. This pastime of Bali Maharaja and Vamadeva, where Bali Maharaja surrenders everything, becomes the glaring example of atma nivedanam.

sravanam kirtanam
visnoh smaranam

pada-sevanam arcanam vandanam
dasyam sakhyam atma-nivedanam (SB 7.5.23).

Atma nivedanam – surrendering everything. Bali Maharaja is the one. He is matchless. No one could compare with the mood or surrender of Bali Maharaja. But then he had to be kind of punished or so called punishment. "Ok, you go to Suta planet." And the Lord asked Prahlad Maharaja to also go. "Give

him your association and pacify him. He has gone through a lot right now. He lost everything, was insulted, humiliated and tied up. You be there with him.”

And not only that. We also read here that a devotee could also defeat the Lord. So, Bali Maharaja has defeated the Lord. Both have defeated each other. Bali Maharaja also defeated the Lord because the Lord decides: “I will be there. I will be chaukidhar the guard. I will be at the entrance. And you don’t have to pay any salary. I will just do free service as a guard.” So that is quite a defeat of the Lord. The Lord is taking a humble position.

Then what also happens? This episode is the talk of manvantaras. Manvantaras are the topics of Srimad Bhagavatam. So, this 8 th canto, talks of manvantaras. There are fourteen Manus and in every Manvantara (Manus lifetime) there is an incarnation of the Lord. Now Bali Maharaja is scheduled to be the next Indra.

The seventh Manu- Vaivasvath Manu is there, ruling now and it is the twenty-eighth cycle of the four maha yugas that is on. So, when the rest happens then it’s the next Manu. In every Manu’s lifetime, there is one incarnation, Manu puthras-the sons of Manu, there is an Indra, the Sapta rishis. There are five-six personalities. They become part of the rule of Manu Maharaja. He is a ruler. He has a Manu samhita, and he rules. It’s his constitution. Indra is there every time. So next time, it will be Bali Maharaja. He has been designated to be the next Indra during the next Manu’s time. So, he did not become Indra this time. “Don’t mind. Wait for a while, and you will become the next Indra.”