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The Indweller is God Himself
by
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During childhood, man develops absorbing
interest in play in the company of other children;
During youth, under the influence of cupid,
he roams about in the company of women with infatuation;
During middle age, he is entangled in worldly
matters and deeply engrossed in hoarding wealth;
And lastly, in old age, he craves for this and that,
not contemplating on God even at that ripe age.
Unable to get rid of old habits,
Unable to develop interest in Godward path,
Man wastes his precious human birth,
Deeply enmeshed in the web of karma.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Man spends his life time thus, deeply enmeshed in pursuing ephemeral things. He is carried away by unproductive thoughts depending upon the particular stage of growth through which he is passing. Ultimately, he realises that he has, in fact, wasted his precious human birth in vain pursuits. Is this the real nature of a human being? Is this what he has to learn in life? These activities are momentary like water bubbles. They cannot provide lasting happiness to man. It is mere foolishness to spend one's time in such futile pursuits.

When God takes birth in human form, people doubt whether he is born like any other human being from the mother's womb or out of His Divine will. The fact is when God takes birth in human form, he selects His parents. He carries on with His **avataric** mission with the help of the form He has assumed. This happens in every age. The same was the case with Lord Krishna in the **Dwapara Yuga**. He made friendship with the Pandavas. In fact, He was friend, philosopher, and guide to them. He constantly protected them against the machinations of the wicked Kauravas. When they were engaged in the Kurukshetra war with the Kauravas, Krishna donned the role of a **ratha sarathi** (charioteer) to Arjuna and led the Pandavas to victory.

After the war ended, Lord Krishna informed the Pandavas that He would leave for His palace in Dwaraka. He wanted one of the five Pandava brothers to accompany Him during this journey. Kunthi, the mother of the Pandavas, suggested that Krishna take Arjuna with Him since they were very close to each other. Accordingly, Lord Krishna took Arjuna to Dwaraka and provided all comforts to him during his stay there. Arjuna was a bit embarrassed to take avail of the services rendered by Lord Krishna to him. He told Krishna, "Oh! Lord! How can I take services from You?" Krishna replied, "Arjuna! You are mistaken. Whom am I serving? Is it your body? Even your body belongs to Me. It is not yours. I am the protector of all beings in the world. You, therefore, should not delude yourself thinking that you are the body."

The body is made up of five elements and
is bound to perish sooner or later,
but the Indweller has neither birth nor death.

The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and
is the eternal witness.
Truly Speaking, the **Dehi** (indweller) is
Devadeva (God of gods) Himself.
(Telugu Poem)

"I am that **Devadeva**. You identify yourself with the body out of delusion and say 'I'. But that is not your real Self. You are not the body. As long as you identify yourself with the body, you remain as the individual being (**jiva**). Once you come out of that delusion, you become one with **Deva** (the Supreme Self). Hence, give up attachment to the body. The human body is like a doll. However, one has to perform all one's **karmas** using the body as the instrument. Man has the right only to perform **karma**. The entire world moves on account of **karma**. I am the Director of this cosmic play, Oh! Arjuna!", said Lord Krishna.

The Yadavas with whom Krishna spent His entire life perished due to their ego and hatred. In the end, Krishna Himself gave up the human vesture and left for His divine abode. Watching these developments helplessly, Arjuna wept inconsolably. Unable to bear the separation from his dear Lord, friend, philosopher and guide, he wailed, "Oh! Krishna! You have been constantly protecting me and guarding me. Now that you left for your heavenly abode, in whom shall I seek refuge?"

At last, realising the futility of spending his time in grief, he returned to Hasthinapura. The city of Dwaraka presented a scene of total destruction. The entire Yadava clan had perished. Arjuna did not know what to do in those circumstances. He remembered the possibility of his mother Kunthi enquiring about the welfare of Lord Krishna and the Yadavas. A hundred and one questions cropped up in his mind, but he had no answers for any of them.

Finally, Arjuna collected all the **gopikas** (cowherd maids) and started on his march out of Dwaraka, as per the divine command. Suddenly, Arjuna and the **gopikas** were surrounded by a horde of forest dwelling nomads. But, to his utter dismay, Arjuna could not even lift his bow, the Gandiva; strange indeed! The great warrior Arjuna, who tore the opposing army lines into pieces with utter ease in the Kurukshetra war, could not even lift his Gandiva now. He lamented at his helplessness and prayed to Krishna "Oh! Lord Krishna! What has happened to all my strength? Where is it gone now?" Again, he answered to himself: "He who had granted this power to me has now taken it back."

At last, in utter helplessness and agony, he prayed to Lord Krishna "Oh! Lord! You have to protect your **gopikas** yourself. I am helpless." Finally, Arjuna reached Hasthinapura along with some of the **gopikas** who could be saved from the clutches of the barbarians by the divine grace of Krishna. There, Arjuna found the people in great despair. He could not understand the reason for their sorrow.

Meanwhile, Dharmaraja was very anxious to know from Arjuna the welfare of Lord Krishna. Arjuna replied, "I will tell you everything that had happened, in detail." However, mother Kunthi was very anxious to know about the welfare of Lord Krishna. She enquired, "Son! Arjuna! Is my dear Krishna alright? Please tell me in detail what had happened during your stay in Dwaraka." She was very eager to know the facts, and Arjuna could not but reveal the truth. Finally, he steadied himself and related everything about the departure of Krishna for His heavenly abode and the subsequent developments.

The moment Arjuna revealed that Krishna had shed His mortal coil, mother Kunthi could not bear the grief, and she collapsed on the cot on which she was sitting. Dharmaraja rushed to her side and tried to console her saying, "Mother! What was destined to happen has happened. These are all the divine **leelas** of Lord Krishna. There is no use grieving over these developments. Please get up."

But, mother Kunthi did not respond. He realised that she had left her mortal coil. He put her head on his lap and called all his brothers. He gave instructions to his brothers for performing the obsequies of mother Kunthi. At the same time, he gave instructions for the necessary arrangements to be made for the coronation of young Parikshit, the heir apparent, as the King of Hasthinapura.

Thereafter, he called Nakula and Sahadeva to his side and told them to make arrangements for their **mahaprasthana** (the great march) of the Pandavas to the Himalayas. Droupadi, the queen of the Pandavas, who was witnessing these developments, could not maintain her poise anymore. She could not bear the double loss of Lord Krishna's departure on the one side and the sudden demise of mother Kunthi on the other.

Dharmaraja called Arjuna and instructed him to make arrangements for the cremation of the dead body of mother Kunthi. Arjuna complied with his instructions. The brothers could not contain their grief. They wept inconsolably on two counts -- one for losing their dear Lord Krishna and the other over the death of their beloved mother.

Dharmaraja led the funeral procession, carrying the fire in an earthen pot. The same tradition was in vogue in those days also. As the funeral procession was proceeding, the people of Hastinapura could not contain their emotions. Finally, when the body of mother Kunthi was placed on the funeral pyre in the cremation ground, Dharmaraja lit the pyre. In a few moments, the mortal body of mother Kunthi was consigned to flames. The Pandava brothers returned home.

The next item on their agenda was to perform the coronation of young Parikshit . What a great wonder! They lost their dear mother; they lost their very life breath, Lord Krishna; yet, they were now prepared to perform the coronation of Parikshit with perfect calm and poise! Time marches on! And, all things that have to be performed have to take their course.

The kingdom of Hastinapura has to be protected. Thinking thus, the priests started chanting the Vedic **mantras** for conducting the rituals connected with the coronation of Parikshit. He was brought into the court, and the royal crown was placed on his head amidst the chanting of **vedic mantras** by the priests.

However, Parikshit was very unhappy and pleaded with the Pandavas, "Oh! My dear grandfathers! You are all great kings. You are still hale and healthy. Is it proper for me to wear the royal crown in your esteemed presence? Do I deserve to wear this royal crown? How worthless and insignificant am I! Some one of you, please wear this crown and rule the country."

The Pandava brothers tried to convince Parikshit saying, "Dear child! We will not be here any more to rule this kingdom. There must be someone to look after the welfare of the people as king of this great country. Therefore, you have to shoulder this responsibility. The affairs of the kingdom have to be looked after. You should not flinch from your duty in ensuring the continuity of the regal obligations." Explaining thus and convincing the young Parikshit, they sat down.

Thereafter, the coronation of Parikshit as the King of Hastinapura was performed as per the wishes of Dharmaraja. Parikshit too bowed to the wishes of Dharmaraja and allowed the rituals of coronation to be completed. The Pandavas then started on their great march to the Himalayas, straight from the royal court where the coronation of Parikshit was being held. They immersed the ashes of their mother in the holy river Ganges. Thereafter, they continued their march in the Himalayas, proceeding one behind the other. Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, led the great march. Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva followed him in that order. Droupadi, being the wife of the five Pandava brothers, walked behind the brothers.

While the Pandavas and their queen Droupadi were thus proceeding in their great march to the Himalayas, Droupadi first dropped down. Thereafter, the four brothers, Sahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna, and Bhima dropped down in that order during the course of their journey. But, none among them looked behind during their march. For each of them, it was a lone journey to their final abode. Finally, Dharmaraja was alone, and he continued his march.

In this manner, the Pandavas' earthly sojourn came to an end.

Pariskhit was grief-stricken when he came to know about their departure from this world. When they set out on the **mahaprasthana**, people were unable to bear their separation, and hence many of them shed their mortal coils. It appeared as though destiny was unkind toward the Pandavas. Who can understand the ways of destiny! None, except God, can know about the turn of events in one's life. One may don ochre robes, but that will not enable one to know what the future has in store.

The Pandavas symbolised virtues and valour. They could shed their mortal coils peacefully because they had led their lives in an ideal manner and sanctified their time in the contemplation of God.

Like the Pandavas, King Parikshit was also one of virtues and valour. Even while carrying out his kingly duties He spent his time in **namasmarana**. When he took over the reigns of Hasthinapura, some evil-minded kings joined hands and waged a war against him. They underestimated his strength and valour, thinking that he was young and inexperienced. But some other noble kings came to his rescue. With their help, Parikshit could vanquish the enemies and assert his supremacy. He could emerge victorious due to his unflinching faith in God. That is why I often tell you: God is your sole refuge wherever you are --whether on the mountain top or in the sky or in the town or in the city or in the middle of the deep sea.

When Parikshit was anointed king, initially people were apprehensive as to how a young boy could shape the destiny of a kingdom. However, under the able guidance of Kripacharya's son, Parikshit proved to be an efficient king. He followed in the foot steps of the Pandavas. He took some time off from his royal duties and went to the place where the Pandavas shed their mortal coils. He performed **pradakshina** (circumambulation) and wore the dust of their feet on his head in reverence. He practised and propagated their ideals.

The Pandavas are ideals to the entire world. We should emulate their ideals and sanctify our lives. We may have to face sorrows and suffering, but we should remain undeterred by emotional obstacles. Only then will the true power and strength manifest in us. When we follow the ideals of the Pandavas, we will experience peace, happiness, and prosperity.

Students!

You are young and have a long life ahead of you. Pariskhit was much younger than you when he ascended the throne. However, he took up the challenge with admirable courage and faith in God. He stood as an ideal to the young generation. You too should develop such courage and fortitude and strive for the welfare of society. That is the true ideal. Pray to God to bestow on you the necessary strength to hold on to this ideal. The Pandavas left the world long ago but their ideal is eternal and ever fresh. You should cherish their ideal in your heart and try to follow the same in letter and spirit.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

All of you are highly virtuous. You should be an ideal to others. Never give room for sorrow. Be always fearless. You don't need to be a slave to others. Have firm faith that God is always with you, guiding you, and guarding you. Having God firmly installed in your heart, and, with the divine name on your lips, you march forward saying **Jai, Jai, Jai ...**