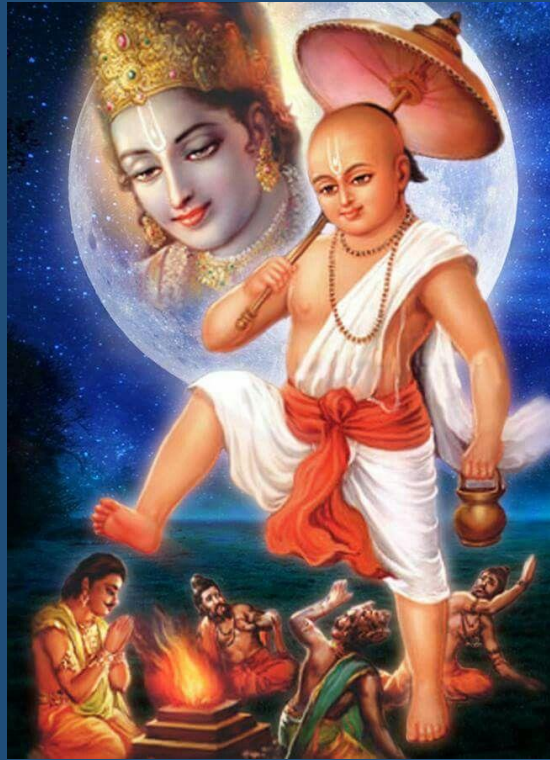


Bali Mahārāja Surrenders the Universe



When Bali Mahārāja was thus advised by his spiritual master, Śukrācārya, his family priest, he remained silent for some time, and then, after full deliberation, he replied to his spiritual master as follows.

As you have already stated, the principle

of religion that does not hinder one's economic development, sense gratification, fame and means of livelihood is the real occupational duty of the householder. I also think that this religious principle is correct. I am the grandson of Mahārāja Prahāda. How can I withdraw my promise because of greed for money when I have already said that I shall give this land? How can I behave like an ordinary cheater, especially toward a brāhmaṇa? There is nothing more sinful than untruthfulness. Because of this, mother earth once said, "I can bear any heavy thing except a person who is a liar."

I do not fear hell, poverty, an ocean of distress, falldown from my position or even death itself as much as I fear cheating a brāhmaṇa.

My lord, you can also see that all the material opulences of this world are certainly separated from their possessor at death. Therefore, if the brāhmaṇa Vāmanadeva is not satisfied by whatever gifts one has given, why not please Him with the riches one is destined to lose at death? Dadhīci, Śibi and many other great personalities were willing to sacrifice even their lives for the benefit of the people in general. This is the evidence of

history. So why not give up this insignificant land? What is the serious consideration against it?

O best of the brāhmaṇas, certainly the great demoniac kings who were never reluctant to fight enjoyed this world, but in due course of time everything they had was taken away, except their reputation, by which they continue to exist. In other words, one should try to achieve a good reputation instead of anything else. Many men have laid down their lives on the battlefield, being unafraid of fighting, but rarely has one gotten the chance to give his accumulated wealth faithfully to a

saintly person who creates holy places.

By giving charity, a benevolent and merciful person undoubtedly becomes even more auspicious, especially when he gives charity to a person like your good self. Under the circumstances, I must give this little brahmacārī whatever charity He wants from me. O great sage, great saintly persons like you, being completely aware of the Vedic principles for performing ritualistic ceremonies and yajñas, worship Lord Viṣṇu in all circumstances. Therefore, whether that same Lord Viṣṇu has come here to give me all benedictions or to punish me as an enemy, I must carry

out His order and give Him the requested tract of land without hesitation.

Although He is Viṣṇu Himself, out of fear He has covered Himself in the form of a brāhmaṇa to come to me begging. Under the circumstances, because He has assumed the form of a brāhmaṇa, even if He irreligiously arrests me or even kills me, I shall not retaliate, although He is my enemy. If this brāhmaṇa really is Lord Viṣṇu, 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.

Thereafter, the spiritual master, Śukrācārya, being inspired by the Supreme Lord, cursed his exalted disciple Bali Mahārāja, who was so magnanimous and fixed in truthfulness that instead of respecting his spiritual master's instructions, he wanted to disobey his order. Although you have no knowledge, you have become a so-called learned person, and therefore you dare be so impudent as to disobey my order. Because of disobeying me, you shall very soon be bereft of all your opulence.

Even after being cursed in this way by his own spiritual master, Bali Mahārāja,

being a great personality, never deviated from his determination. Therefore, according to custom, he first offered water to Vāmanadeva and then offered Him the gift of land he had promised.

Bali Mahārāja's wife, known as Vindhyāvali, who was decorated with a necklace of pearls, immediately came and had a large golden waterpot brought there, full of water with which to worship the Lord by washing His feet. Bali Mahārāja, the worshiper of Lord Vāmanadeva, jubilantly washed the Lord's lotus feet and then took the water on his head, for that water delivers the entire universe.

At that time, the residents of the higher planetary system, namely the demigods, the Gandharvas, the Vidyādharas, the Siddhas and the Cāraṇas, all being very pleased by Bali Mahārāja's simple, nonduplicitous act, praised his qualities and showered upon him millions of flowers.

The unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had assumed the form of Vāmana, then began increasing in size, acting in terms of the material energy, until everything in the universe was within His body, including the earth, the planetary systems, the sky, the directions,

the various holes in the universe, the seas, the oceans, the birds, beasts, human beings, the demigods and the great saintly persons.

Bali Mahārāja, along with all the priests, ācāryas and members of the assembly, observed the Supreme Personality of Godhead's universal body, which was full of six opulences. That body contained everything within the universe.

When all the demons, the followers of Mahārāja Bali, saw the universal form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who held everything within His body, when they saw in the Lord's hand His disc,

known as the Sudarśana cakra, which generates intolerable heat, and when they heard the tumultuous sound of His bow, all of these caused lamentation within their hearts.

Manifesting Himself in this way, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose activities are wonderful, covered the entire surface of the earth with one footstep, the sky with His body, and all directions with His arms. As the Lord took His second step, He covered the heavenly planets. And not even a spot remained for the third step, for the Lord's foot extended higher and higher, beyond Maharloka,

Janaloka, Tapoloka and even Satyaloka.