

Dashavatar – Lord Krishna

(Akshayapatra - Sri Krishna's Hunger)



Pandavas started for their exile in the forest after loosing in the deceitful act of gambling, and a big insult in the hands of wicked Kauravas. On Vidura's request, Yudhishthira left his mother Kunti with him as she was old and weak. Draupadi, however, accompanied her husbands to the forest. The Pandavas reached Kamyak Forest and decided to rest there for a while.

The news of their exile reached Sri Krishna. He was Pandavas' cousin, their friend, savior, and guide. Moreover, Draupadi always treated him as her elder brother.

Sri Krishna reached Kamyak forest to Pandavas and Draupadi. After inquiring about their well being, He advised Pandavas to be vigilant and not lose heart. The ordeal they had to face was for their good, as "experience is the only source of knowledge". Good and bad experiences are essential to get correct perspective and fulfillment of life.

Lord Sri Krishna said that had he been there in the court of Dhritarashtra during the game of dice, he would not have allowed the game in the first place. He would have impressed upon everyone, including Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, how gambling leads to total corruption and degeneration of the race. He would have forcefully prohibited Duryodhana from engaging in such vice. Gambling, smoking, drinking, and hunting are the curse on humanity which every righteous person should labor to avoid. The persons who engage in these acts are doomed to destruction and moral death.

Akshayapatra

The Pandavas moved to Dvaita Vanam (forest) from Kamyak forest. One morning at sunrise, when the Pandavas were worshipping the Sun God, he took pity on their condition, and out of His immeasurable grace bestowed on them a special vessel, called Akshayapatra. In making the gift, the Sun God said, "The vessel would be filled by desired food items, and will remain undiminished, however much they are used up. Until Draupadi finishes her meal, the vessel will be full of food; however many may partake of it. When she has finished and cleaned the Vessel, it can give no more for that day." Thus once every day, the vessel was pouring plenty, until she has eaten her meal.

Sage Durvasa

One day, the sage Durvasa went to Duryodhana with his ten thousand disciples. Sage Durvasa was known for his short temper, and throwing curses at whosoever did not obey his commands. Knowing the sage's temper, Duryodhana carefully attended to all matters connected with the

reception of the guests. Duryodhana was so lavish in his hospitality that the sage was gratified, and told him to ask any boon.

Duryodhana felt greatly relieved at having come so safely out of the ordeal and when the sage asked him to seek a boon, it occurred to him that here was a opportunity of letting loose the irritable sage on the Pandavas. He said, “You have blessed us, great sage, by accepting our hospitality. Our brothers are in the forest. Kindly deign to visit them also, so that they may likewise be honored and happy.” He suggested for the visit a time when he knew that all the food prepared would have been eaten and none would be left for unexpected guests.

Duryodhana thought that there would be no way the Pandavas could properly feed sage Durvasas and his ten thousand disciples. He thought the short tempered Sage would then curse the Pandavas. This was Duryodhana’s wicked intent. Of course, as the saying goes “man plans one ways, but the Lord plans another way.”

Durvasa appeared before the Pandavas with his ten thousand disciples, just when Draupadi was resting after her food and after cleaning the sacred vessel, Akshayapatra. Draupadi welcomed the sage and after proper salutations inquired about their needs. Durvasa told her that they were all very hungry and would be happy needed to be fed. Draupadi was at her wits end as there was nothing in her kitchen to offer to these thousands of pious guests! Unfortunately the vessel that could have solved her problem was already used for the day and washed clean. Now it would yield the food the next day only. It was, at the same time essential for her to make some arrangements as per the command of Durvasa lest his curse might prove disastrous for her and the Pandavas.

To buy time, she requested the sage and his disciples to take bath in the nearby river, and in the meantime she could prepare meals for them. The sage agreed and left for the river with his associates.

Sri Krishna Comes Again to help Draupadi

Draupadi was greatly troubled and perfectly at a loss to find food when the sage and his disciples should return after their ablutions. Perturbed and helpless, Draupadi prayed earnestly to Sri Krishna to come to her aid in this hopeless predicament and deliver her from the wrath of the sage. Sri Krishna, in his palace in Dwaraka, heard the cry of despair of his devotee, and rushed to her forest dwelling. At once Sri Krishna appeared before her. He said “I am very hungry, bring without delay something to eat and we shall speak of other things afterwards.”

Draupadi did not understand this unusual demand. It looked as though the ally from whom she hoped for relief was causing more problems! On the one hand she had called Sri Krishna for help, and on the other, Sri Krishna himself appeared to trouble her. This paradox confused her. She said, "O Krishna this is not time for joking. Durvasa has demanded food for himself and thousands of his disciples. There is not a single grain in my kitchen. What should I do? How can I resolve this crisis?"

Hearing this, Sri Krishna said, "Oh sister that is why I am asking you to give me something to eat! Bring that vessel that gives you your food, there must be something in it." Reluctantly Draupadi did as was asked. Attached to the back of the vessel was a grain of rice! Sri Krishna put it in his mouth. His hunger was satisfied. Then a miracle occurred. The Lord of Universe had eaten enough; and with this was satisfied the appetite of whole world!

Sri Krishna seemed replete with satisfaction after eating his solitary grain and calling Bhima, told him to go to the river, and intimate to the revered sage that food was ready and waiting for them. Bhima, greatly puzzled, but full of faith in Sri Krishna, hastened to the river where Durvasa and his followers were bathing.

On the bank of river, Durvasa and his disciples suddenly felt their stomachs were full! They had no appetite left even for a single grain of food. How could they now eat the meals prepared by Draupadi? "Durvasa knew what it was and he told Bhima, "We have come here after asking Yudhisthira to prepare food for us, but we feel well fed and full, and cannot eat anything more. Tell Yudhisthira to forgive us." Then the party went away.

Questions:

- What is the Akshayapatra? What does it do?
- How did the Pandavas and Draupadi get it? From who?
- Why did they get it?
- Who is Sage Durvasa?
- What was he known for?
- How many disciples did he have?
- What is a boon?
- What boon did Duryodhana ask for? Why?
- Why did Draupadi call on Lord Krishna?
- How were Sage Durvasa and his disciples satisfied?
- Did the Pandavas escape a dangerous situation? How?

- Do you think you might escape dangerous situations in the same way?

Lingashtakam

Brahma Murari surarchita Lingam; Nirmala bhasita sobhita Lingam
Janmaja dukha vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (1)

Devamuni pravararchita Lingam; Kamadahana karunakara Lingam
Ravana darpa vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (2)

Sarva sugandhi sulepita Lingam; Buddhi vivardhana karana Lingam
Siddha surasura vandita Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (3)

Kanaka maha mani bhushita Lingam; Paniphati veshtitha shobhita Lingam
Dakshasu yajna vinashana Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (4)

Kumkuma chandana lepita Lingam; Pankaja hara sushobhita Lingam
Sanchita papa vinashana Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (5)

**Devaganarchita sevita Lingam
Bhavair bhaktibhi revacha Lingam
Dinakarakoti prabhakara Lingam
Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (6)**

**Ashtadalo pariveshtia Lingam
Sarva samudbhava karana Lingam
Ashtadaridra vinashana Lingam
Tatpranamami Sadashiva Lingam (7)**

**Suraguru suravara pujita Lingam
Suravana pushpa sadarchita Lingam
Paratparam paramatmaka Lingam
Tatpranamami Sadashiva Lingam (8)**

**Lingashtakamidam punyam
Yat Pathet Shivasannidhau
Shivalokamavapnoti
Shivena saha modate (9)**

Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

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Coloring exercise: Sri Krishna

