**जया एकादशी - माहात्म्य**

**युधिष्ठिर ने भगवान श्रीकृष्ण से पूछा :** भगवन् ! कृपा करके यह बताइये कि माघ मास के शुक्लपक्ष में कौन सी एकादशी होती है, उसकी विधि क्या है तथा उसमें किस देवता का पूजन किया जाता है ?

**भगवान श्रीकृष्ण बोले :** राजेन्द्र ! माघ मास के शुक्लपक्ष में जो एकादशी होती है, उसका नाम ‘जया’ है । वह सब पापों को हरनेवाली उत्तम तिथि है । पवित्र होने के साथ ही पापों का नाश करनेवाली तथा मनुष्यों को भाग और मोक्ष प्रदान करनेवाली है । इतना ही नहीं , वह ब्रह्महत्या जैसे पाप तथा पिशाचत्व का भी विनाश करनेवाली है । इसका व्रत करने पर मनुष्यों को कभी प्रेतयोनि में नहीं जाना पड़ता । इसलिए राजन् ! प्रयत्नपूर्वक ‘जया’ नाम की एकादशी का व्रत करना चाहिए ।

एक समय की बात है । स्वर्गलोक में देवराज इन्द्र राज्य करते थे । देवगण पारिजात वृक्षों से युक्त नंदनवन में अप्सराओं के साथ विहार कर रहे थे । पचास करोड़ गन्धर्वों के नायक देवराज इन्द्र ने स्वेच्छानुसार वन में विहार करते हुए बड़े हर्ष के साथ नृत्य का आयोजन किया । गन्धर्व उसमें गान कर रहे थे, जिनमें पुष्पदन्त, चित्रसेन तथा उसका पुत्र - ये तीन प्रधान थे । चित्रसेन की स्त्री का नाम मालिनी था । मालिनी से एक कन्या उत्पन्न हुई थी, जो पुष्पवन्ती के नाम से विख्यात थी । पुष्पदन्त गन्धर्व का एक पुत्र था, जिसको लोग माल्यवान कहते थे । माल्यवान पुष्पवन्ती के रुप पर अत्यन्त मोहित था । ये दोनों भी इन्द्र के संतोषार्थ नृत्य करने के लिए आये थे । इन दोनों का गान हो रहा था । इनके साथ अप्सराएँ भी थीं । परस्पर अनुराग के कारण ये दोनों मोह के वशीभूत हो गये । चित्त में भ्रान्ति आ गयी इसलिए वे शुद्ध गान न गा सके । कभी ताल भंग हो जाता था तो कभी गीत बंद हो जाता था । इन्द्र ने इस प्रमाद पर विचार किया और इसे अपना अपमान समझकर वे कुपित हो गये ।

अत: इन दोनों को शाप देते हुए बोले : ‘ओ मूर्खो ! तुम दोनों को धिक्कार है ! तुम लोग पतित और मेरी आज्ञाभंग करनेवाले हो, अत: पति पत्नी के रुप में रहते हुए पिशाच हो जाओ ।’

इन्द्र के इस प्रकार शाप देने पर इन दोनों के मन में बड़ा दु:ख हुआ । वे हिमालय पर्वत पर चले गये और पिशाचयोनि को पाकर भयंकर दु:ख भोगने लगे । शारीरिक पातक से उत्पन्न ताप से पीड़ित होकर दोनों ही पर्वत की कन्दराओं में विचरते रहते थे । एक दिन पिशाच ने अपनी पत्नी पिशाची से कहा : ‘हमने कौन सा पाप किया है, जिससे यह पिशाचयोनि प्राप्त हुई है ? नरक का कष्ट अत्यन्त भयंकर है तथा पिशाचयोनि भी बहुत दु:ख देनेवाली है । अत: पूर्ण प्रयत्न करके पाप से बचना चाहिए ।’

इस प्रकार चिन्तामग्न होकर वे दोनों दु:ख के कारण सूखते जा रहे थे । दैवयोग से उन्हें माघ मास के शुक्लपक्ष की एकादशी की तिथि प्राप्त हो गयी । ‘जया’ नाम से विख्यात वह तिथि सब तिथियों में उत्तम है । उस दिन उन दोनों ने सब प्रकार के आहार त्याग दिये, जल पान तक नहीं किया । किसी जीव की हिंसा नहीं की, यहाँ तक कि खाने के लिए फल तक नहीं काटा । निरन्तर दु:ख से युक्त होकर वे एक पीपल के समीप बैठे रहे । सूर्यास्त हो गया । उनके प्राण हर लेने वाली भयंकर रात्रि उपस्थित हुई । उन्हें नींद नहीं आयी । वे रति या और कोई सुख भी नहीं पा सके ।

सूर्यादय हुआ, द्वादशी का दिन आया । इस प्रकार उस पिशाच दंपति के द्वारा ‘जया’ के उत्तम व्रत का पालन हो गया । उन्होंने रात में जागरण भी किया था । उस व्रत के प्रभाव से तथा भगवान विष्णु की शक्ति से उन दोनों का पिशाचत्व दूर हो गया । पुष्पवन्ती और माल्यवान अपने पूर्वरुप में आ गये । उनके हृदय में वही पुराना स्नेह उमड़ रहा था । उनके शरीर पर पहले जैसे ही अलंकार शोभा पा रहे थे ।

वे दोनों मनोहर रुप धारण करके विमान पर बैठे और स्वर्गलोक में चले गये । वहाँ देवराज इन्द्र के सामने जाकर दोनों ने बड़ी प्रसन्नता के साथ उन्हें प्रणाम किया ।

उन्हें इस रुप में उपस्थित देखकर इन्द्र को बड़ा विस्मय हुआ ! उन्होंने पूछा: ‘बताओ, किस पुण्य के प्रभाव से तुम दोनों का पिशाचत्व दूर हुआ है? तुम मेरे शाप को प्राप्त हो चुके थे, फिर किस देवता ने तुम्हें उससे छुटकारा दिलाया है?’

**माल्यवान बोला :** स्वामिन् ! भगवान वासुदेव की कृपा तथा ‘जया’ नामक एकादशी के व्रत से हमारा पिशाचत्व दूर हुआ है ।

**इन्द्र ने कहा :** … तो अब तुम दोनों मेरे कहने से सुधापान करो । जो लोग एकादशी के व्रत में तत्पर और भगवान श्रीकृष्ण के शरणागत होते हैं, वे हमारे भी पूजनीय होते हैं ।

**भगवान श्रीकृष्ण कहते हैं :** राजन् ! इस कारण एकादशी का व्रत करना चाहिए । नृपश्रेष्ठ ! ‘जया’ ब्रह्महत्या का पाप भी दूर करनेवाली है । जिसने ‘जया’ का व्रत किया है, उसने सब प्रकार के दान दे दिये और सम्पूर्ण यज्ञों का अनुष्ठान कर लिया । इस माहात्म्य के पढ़ने और सुनने से अग्निष्टोम यज्ञ का फल मिलता है ।

**Bhaimi or Jayaa Ekadashi**

**from the Bhavishya-uttara Purana.**

It is said that if one observes a fast on this day then one receives entrance to Sri Vishnu's abode, even though one has not performed the other vratas (fasts) of the year.

Yudhishthir Maharaj said, "Oh God of the Gods, Shree Krishn, all glories unto You! Oh Master of the universe**,** You alone are the source of the four types of living entities - those born from eggs, those born from perspiration, those born from seeds and those born from embryos. You alone are the root cause of all, Oh God, and therefore You are the creator, maintainer and destroyer.

Shree Krishn said, "Oh Yudhishthir, I shall tell you about Jaya Ekadashi. This Ekadashi obliterates all kinds of sinful reactions and demoniac influences that may be affecting the spirit soul. It is known as Jaya Ekadashi, and the fortunate soul who observes a fast on this sacred day is relieved of the great burden of ghostly existence. Thus there is no better Ekadashi than this, for it truly bestows freedom from birth and death. It is to be honored very carefully and diligently. So listen to Me very attentively, Oh Pandava, as I explain a wonderful historic episode regarding this Ekadashi, an episode that I have already related in the Padma Puran.

"Long, long ago in the heavenly planets, Sri Indr ruled his celestial kingdom very nicely, and all the devas living there were very happy and content. In Nandan Forest, which was beautifully graced with Parijata Flowers, Sri Indr drank ambrosia whenever he liked and enjoyed the service of fifty million celestial maidens, the Apsaras, who danced in ecstasy for his pleasure.

"Many singers, led by Pushpadant, sang in sweet voices beyond compare. Chitrasena, Indr's chief musician was there in the company of his wife Malini and his handsome son Malyavan. An Apsara named Pushpavati became very much attracted to Malyavan; indeed Cupid’s sharp arrows pierced the core of her heart. Her beautiful body and complexion, along with the enchanting movements of her eyebrows, captivated Malyavan.



"Oh King, listen as I describe the splendid beauty of Pushpavati: She has incomparably graceful arms with which to embrace a man like a fine silken noose; her face resembles the Moon; her lotus eyes reached almost to her lovely ears, which were adorned with wonderful and costly ear-rings; her thin, ornamented neck looked like a conch, having three lines; her waist was very slender, the size of a fist; her hips were broad, and her thighs like the trunks of banana trees; her naturally beautiful features were complemented by gorgeous ornaments and garments; her breasts were highly raised emphasizing her prime of youth; and to look upon her feet was to behold newly grown red lotuses.

"Seeing Pushpavati in all her heavenly beauty, Malyavan was bewitched at once. They had come with the other performers to please Sri Indr by singing and dancing enchantingly, but because they had become so enamored of each other, pierced through the heart by the arrows of Cupid, lust personified, they were utterly unable to sing or dance properly before the god and master of the heavenly realms.

Their pronunciation was wrong and their rhythm careless. Sri Indr understood the source of the errors at once. Offended at the discord in the musical performance, he became very angry and screamed, "You useless fools! You pretend to sing for me while in a stupor of infatuation with each other! You are mocking me! I curse you both to suffer henceforth as pisachas (hobgoblins). As husband and wife, go to the earthly regions and reap the reactions of your offenses.' "Struck dumb by these harsh words, Malyavan and Pushpavati at once became morose and fell from the beautiful Nandan Forest in the kingdom of heaven to a Himalayan peak here on planet Earth.

Immeasurably distressed, and their celestial intelligence vastly diminished by the effects of Sri Indr’s fierce curse, they lost their sense of taste and smell, and even their sense of touch. It was so cold and miserable high on the Himalayan wastes of snow and ice that they could not even enjoy the oblivion of sleep. "Roaming aimlessly hither and thither in those harsh altitudes, Malyavan and Pushpavati suffered more and more, from one moment to the next. Even though they were situated in a cave, because of the snowfall and cold their teeth chattered ceaselessly, and their hair stood on end because of their fright and bewilderment.

"In this utterly desperate situation, Malyavan said to Pushpavati, 'What abominable sins did we commit to have to suffer in these pisacha bodies, in this impossible environment? This is absolutely hellish! Though hell is very ferocious, the suffering we are undergoing here is even more abominable. Therefore it is abundantly clear that one should never commit sins".

"And so the forlorn lovers trudged onward in the snow and ice. By their great good fortune, however, it so happened that very day was the all-auspicious Jaya Ekadashi, the Ekadashi of the light fortnight of the month of Magha. Because of their misery they neglected to drink any water, kill any game, or even eat whatever fruits and leaves were available at that altitude, they unknowingly observed Ekadashi by fasting completely from all food and drink.

Sunk in misery Malyavan and Pushpavati collapsed beneath a Pipal tree (a Pipal tree is an extremely auspicious tree and ones walk around it when one performs prayers. One mainly finds it in temple grounds) and did not even try to get up. The Sun had set by that time. "The night was even colder and more miserable than the day. They shivered in the frigid snowfall as their teeth chattered in unison, and when they became numb, they embraced just to keep warm. Locked in each other’s arms, they could enjoy neither sleep nor sex. Thus they suffered through the whole night under the powerful curse of Indr.

“Still, Oh Yudhishthir, by the mercy of the fast they had by chance (unknowingly) observed on Jaya Ekadashi, and because they had remained awake all night, they were blessed. (This is optional if one can’t remain awake throughout the night. The whole purpose of any prayer is to perform it to your capabilities.) Please hear what happened on the next day. As Dwadashi dawned, Malyavan and Pushpavati had given up their demoniac forms and were once again beautiful heavenly beings wearing lustrous ornaments and exquisite garments. As they both looked at each other in amazement, a celestial airplane (vimana) arrived on the spot for them. A chorus of heavenly denizens sang their praises as the reformed couple stepped into the beautiful aircraft and proceeded directly to the heavenly regions, buoyed up by the good wishes of everyone. Soon Malyavan and Pushpavati arrived at Amaravati, Sri Indr’s capital city, and then they immediately went before their Sri (Indrdev) and offered him their cheerful obeisance’s.

“Sri Indr was astonished to see that they had been transformed, restored to their original status and forms so soon after he had cursed them to suffer as demons far, far below his celestial kingdom. Indrdev ask of them, ‘What extraordinary meritorious deeds have you performed so that you could give up your pisacha bodies so quickly after I cursed you? Who released you from my irresistible curse? “Malyavan replied, ‘Oh god, it was by the extreme mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shree Krishn (Vasudev) and also by the powerful influence of the Jaya Ekadashi, that we were released from our suffering condition as pisachas. This is the truth, Oh master: Because we executed devotional service to Sri Vishnu (even performed unknowingly – by ajnata sukriti) by observing the day most dear to Him, we have happily been restored to our former status.”

“Indrdev then said, ‘Because you served the Supreme God Shree Keshav by observing Ekadashi, you have become worship able even by me, and I can see that you are now completely purified of sin. **Whosoever engages in devotional service to Shree Hari or God Shiv becomes praiseworthy and worshipable even by me. Of this there is no doubt.**’ Sri Indrdev then gave Malyavan and Pushpavati free rein to enjoy each other and wander about his heavenly planet as they wished.

 “Therefore, Oh Maharaj Yudhishthir, one should strictly observe a fast on the sacred day of Sri Hari, especially on this Jaya Ekadashi, which frees one from the sin of killing even a twice born brahmin. A great soul who observes this fast with full faith and devotion has in effect given all kinds of charity, performed all kinds of sacrifice, and bathed in all the Holy places of pilgrimage. **Fasting on Jaya Ekadashi qualifies one to reside in Vaikunth and enjoy unending happiness for billions of yugas – indeed, forever, as the soul is eternal.** Oh great king, Shree Krishn continued, one who even hears or reads these wonderful glories of Jaya Ekadashi achieves the blessed merit attained by performing an Agnistoma fire sacrifice, during which the hymns from the Sama Veda are recited.”

Thus ends the narration of the glories of Jaya Ekadashi,
from the sacred Bhavishya-Uttara Puran

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