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# Lovebirds

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In ancient times, there was a king named Citraketu who had many wives. King Citraketu married one woman after another, but he was very unhappy because none of them bore a child. One day a great saintly person named Angira Rsi arrived at his palace, whereupon the king welcomed him and washed his feet. Seeing that the king was very unhappy, Angira Rsi asked him, “Why you are so unhappy? Your military is under your command; you behave well with them, and you give them a good salary. And your wives are very qualified.”

The king replied, “Everything is okay, except for the fact that I have no son. Who will take responsibility for the kingdom after me? Who will sit on my throne? And after I die, who will perform my sraddha ceremony. Who will offer me pinda? \*[see endnote] Because of this, I am very unhappy.”

The great sage said, “I see in your destiny that you have no son.”

The king said, “I know that you are very powerful. You can give me a son. I want a son.”

The sage said, “No one can be happy in this world by having a son or daughter, a wife or wealth. This world is full of miseries, full of the endless pain of endless birth and death. You will have to become old one day, you will have to give up this body, and after death you will not be able to take anything from this world – not even a penny.

“You can only be happy if you have love and affection for Lord Sri Krsna. Offer yourself in the lotus feet of Krsna and surrender unto Him. By this you can be happy; there is no other way. You should know that you are not this body, you are soul. Both the soul and the Supersoul are present in this body. If, by the help of guru, your soul will realize this, then you will be liberated; otherwise not. Otherwise you will have to reincarnate in this world as a hog, pig, donkey, monkey, and so many other species, always seeking happiness without obtaining it. So don't think, ‘My son will come and I will be happy.’ Rather, engage in bhajana to Krsna.”

The king replied, “O sage, you are powerful. I only want a son. Please give me a son”

Finally the sage told him, “Very well, you will have a son, but he will be the cause of both your happiness and distress.”

The king thought, “Oh, no harm, I will have a son and be happy. And, because he will sometimes disobey me, I will be unhappy; no harm. At that time I will give my kingdom to my son, and I will go to forest to do bhajana.”

Angira Rsi then gave the King some sweet-rice and told him, “You should give this to your dearest, most beloved queen.”

King Citraketu gave the sweet-rice to his eldest and most beautiful wife, named Krtadyuti, and after ten months, a beautiful son, a son as beautiful as the moon, took birth from her womb. And, day by day, like the moon, that child began to grow.

When the boy became about five years old, his father's other queens began speaking to each other. One queen said, "The king used to love us, but now, since the birth of this son, he does not even look after us. We are like maidservants now. He doesn't give us any aromatic oils for bathing, or any gift, and he doesn't even ask us, 'How are you?'"

"Even maidservants who are constantly engaged in rendering service to the husband are honored by the husband, and thus they have nothing for which to lament. Our position, however, is that we are maidservants of the maidservants. Therefore we are most unfortunate. The root cause of all these problems is this son."

The queens made a conspiracy and decided: "We should somehow give poison to this boy; Thus he will die, and then all our problems will be solved."

Unaware of the poison administered by her co-wives, Queen Krtadyuti walked within the house, thinking that her son was sleeping deeply. She did not understand that he was dead. Thinking that her child had been sleeping for a long time, Queen Krtadyuti, who was very intelligent, ordered the nurse, "My dear friend, please bring my son here." When the maidservant approached the child, who was lying down, she saw that his eyes were turned upward. There were no signs of life, all his senses having stopped, and she could understand that the child was dead. Seeing this, she immediately cried, "Now I am doomed," and fell to the ground. In great agitation, the maidservant struck her breast with both hands and cried loudly in regretful words. Hearing her loud voice, the queen immediately came, and when she approached her son, she saw that he was dead. In great lamentation, her hair and dress in disarray, the queen fell to the ground unconscious. Hearing the loud crying, all the inhabitants of the palace came, both men and women. Being equally aggrieved, they also began to cry. The queens who had administered the poison also cried pretentiously, knowing full well their offense.

When King Citraketu heard of his son's death from unknown causes, he became almost blind. Because of his great affection for his son, his lamentation grew like a blazing fire, and as he went to see the dead child, he kept slipping and falling on the ground. Surrounded by his ministers and other officers and the learned brahmanas present, the king approached and fell unconscious at the child's feet, his hair and dress scattered. When the King, breathing heavily, regained consciousness, his eyes were tearful, and he could not speak. He had forgotten the words of Angira Rsi, warning him that he would also have to be unhappy.

There was no one present to console any of them, but in the meantime, Angira Rsi returned to the palace. He had come with Narada Rsi, a very exalted sage. Such saintly persons as he and Narada can perform any activity they desire. For example, they can give life to a dead person. If a man has committed any offence, they can curse him by saying, "You should die at once," and that man will die at once.

Angira Rsi asked, "Why are you all weeping? Why? Why?" At first no one could recognize that this saintly person had given the son. He asked so many times, but no one replied. Finally

someone told him, “Oh, this boy has gone.” Angira asked, “Where has he gone? When will he return?” That person replied, “He has gone to a place from where there is no return at all.”

Angira Rsi then told the king and his associates, “All those who come to this world take birth, and one day they will have to die. This is the rotation of birth and death, birth and death, so don’t be unhappy. Rather, try to perform bhajana.”

After Angira Rsi completed his instructions, Narada Muni initiated the king into sacred Vedic mantras. Narada then brought the departed soul of the boy back into his body and told him to speak to everyone present, immediately after which the son returned to life and spoke about the philosophy of the soul. Thus enlightened by the instructions of the brahmanas Angira and Narada, King Citraketu became fully aware of spiritual knowledge. As an elephant becomes free from a muddy reservoir of water, King Citraketu came out of the dark well of material family life.

The narration above comes from the sixth canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, and there is another narration, found in the seventh canto, which illustrates a similar truth. In the seventh canto it is stated that there was a pair of pigeons who had many babies. One day the pigeon parents went to the forest to bring some food for their children, and for themselves as well. While in the forest they sat on a branch of a tree, under which there was very green grasses. They were remembering their marriage ceremony and other amorous pastimes, and they were very happily kissing each other with their beaks.

In the meantime, the she-pigeon saw several grains of rice on the grass, and she said, “Oh, my beloved, let us go and pick up these grains of rice.”

The male pigeon replied, “There is no businessman or farmer around. From where has this rice come? Don’t go. It is someone’s trap, and that hunter will capture you in his trap.” The she-pigeon said, “I don’t believe you.” She flew down and began to pick up the grains of rice.

In the meantime, lurking behind a tree, there was a hunter who was very black, very tall, and very fearsome. The hunter pulled a string, and the female pigeon became entrapped in a net that fell down upon her.

The female pigeon began to weep bitterly. The male pigeon saw this and exclaimed, “My wife is there in the hunter’s trap! He will kill her!” Very worried, he flew nearby that trap, weeping, and he began to consider, “God is very cruel. Why am I not dead in that trap, with my wife outside? My wife can support our children, but I cannot.”

While he was fully absorbed in weeping, the hunter, from behind the tree, took his bow and arrow, and shot and killed him. Clapping, that hunter then came and took the dead body of the male pigeon, pulled the she-pigeon out from under the net, joined their legs, and carried them to his home. And what did he do there? He put them in a pot full with water, cooked them, and then ate them.

Death is always ‘on our head.’ After today, after tomorrow, after five years, after ten years, after a hundred years, after 125 or 150 years, you will have to die. It is therefore imperative to know who we are. We are not our body. We are an eternal soul, the eternal servant of Lord Krsna. We have forgotten Krsna, and that is why we have come in this world. The Supreme Lord is very

merciful and has given us a human form – not for sense gratification, but only to realize who we are. If we miss the opportunity of this human life, without realization of soul and Supersoul, we will have to come again in the rotation of birth and death, as dog, pigs and hogs, and it may be millions upon millions of births before we again have this human form.”

Those who are wise and intelligent must perform bhajana. They should try to know who they actually are, who the Supersoul is, who has created this world, and the personal nature of that Supreme Creator.’ The Supreme Lord has form. In the first testament of the Bible, it has been written, “God created man after His own image.” He is very beautiful, and that is why mankind is beautiful – after His image.

So, my request is that if you want to be happy in this world, you must try to realize these truths. Find a qualified guru, and try to engage in sadhana, spiritual practice, under his guidance. Thus, you will soon be liberated from this world and become happy forever.

Gaura Premanande!

[\*Endnote - Generally, pinda is an offering of small balls of rice cooked in milk with black sesame, ghee and honey. The offering is made to the deceased and his forefathers. It must be performed every month for one year in order for the deceased to attain a body suitable for enjoyment in Pitrloka. Each of the offerings brings about manifestation of a part of that body. The first offering creates the head. The second creates the eyes, ears and nose. The third creates the cheeks, mouth and neck, and so on.

The ceremony is a fruitive ritual or part of karma-kanda. A vaisnava may perform the ritual for his deceased father, but only if the priest is a vaisnava and the offering to the forefathers is itself maha-prasada of any visnu-tattva.