

LESSON 22

BHARAT AND BAHUBALI

King Rushabhdev had two wives named Sumangala and Sunanda. By Sumangala, he had ninety-nine sons and one daughter. Oldest son was Bharat and daughter's name was Brahmi. By the second wife, Sunanda he had one son named Bahubali and one daughter named Sundari. All of them were given proper training in different arts and crafts. Bharat became a great warrior and a politician. Bahubali was tall, well built, and strong. He was known for his mighty arms. Because he had very strong arms, he was known as Bahubali. Brahmi attained a very high level of literary proficiency. She developed the first known script, which came to be known as Brahmi script. Sundari became very proficient in mathematics. After Lord Rushabhdev attained omniscience, both girls renounced the worldly life and became his disciples.

As a king, Rushabhdev had responsibility for a large geographical area in his kingdom. At the time of his renouncement, he handed over the city of Vinita, also known as Ayodhya, to Bharat and the city of Taxshila to Bahubali. To the remaining 98 sons he gave different parts of his vast kingdom.

Bharat quickly established firm hold over Vinita. He organized a strong army and one day divine miraculous wheel (Chakraratna) appeared in army base. When used, it will serve the purpose. Its appearance also symbolizes that he should take up conquer six nations. Then he embarked upon his journey of conquest. In those days, there was hardly anyone who could withstand his well-equipped army. He could therefore easily conquer the regions around Vinita. Then he turned his attention towards his brothers and asked them to acknowledge his superiority. They all went to Lord Rushabhdev to ask for advice. Bhagawan explained about conquering inner enemies (passions) and not the external enemies. He also advised on attaining liberation, "True Kingdom". They all realized the futility of fighting with the elder brother so they surrendered their territories to him, renounced the worldly life and became disciples of Lord Rushabhdev.

Now only Bahubali remained. Bharat approached him too. Bahubali felt that his kingdom was given to his father and he would live independent of any superiors. Therefore, when he received Bharat's request to accept a subordinate status, he refused to accept that type of status and began preparations to fight. Both brothers were strong and had large army and the war between the two was sure to result in a large-scale bloodshed. The ministers on both sides therefore tried to persuade them against war but neither of them would give up his ground. The war thus seemed inevitable and both the brothers brought their armies face to face with each other. Every one trembled at the prospect of the heavy casualty that was going to result due to the imminent war.

Once again ministers from both sides persuade both kings it is the question of the superiority between the two of you. So, instead of going to a large-scale war for that purpose, how about just two of you fight and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Both of them agreed to it. They suggested that they would engage in a duel fight and whoever was found superior would be declared as the victor. Bharat and Bahubali both agreed. First fight was to look at each others eye without blinking and whoever blinks first loses the

fight. It lasted for a few minutes but then Bharat blinked. He lost that fight.

Second fight was to get into water pool and splash water at each other and see who can hold up. Bharat splashed first. Bahubali did not flinch. Now was Bahubali's turn. When he splashed Bharat could not hold up and flinched. Bharat lost once again.

Third fight was wrestling. In that Bahubali lifted Bharat up and as he was about to drop him the ground he felt no he is my brother I can not do that. He put him on his shoulders and then slowly let him down. Crowd praised Bahubali's victory. Bharat could not take it so in anger he ordered miraculous disk to kill Bahubali. (Miraculous disk does not kill any relatives.)

Bahubali became mad at Bharat's such behavior. He therefore thought of smashing the elder brother with his mighty fist. As he raised his hand for that purpose, the onlookers trembled with the idea of Bharat's imminent death.

However, suddenly Bahubali thought, "What am I doing? Am I going to kill my elder brother for the sake of worldly possessions? My other brothers have given up their kingdom and what am I doing?" He could not turn back his raised hand, so he used it to pull out his hairs (as the monks do during Diksha) as a symbol of giving up everything and renounced the worldly life. He left the scene.

Bahubali thought that if he went to the assembly of Rushabhdev, he would have to bow down to his younger brothers who had become monks earlier. He felt that how could he bow down to them so instead of going there he went to forest to meditate by himself. He stood on the same spot meditating for a long time. He immersed in meditation so much that he did not move at all and creepers grew on his feet and up to upper body. (About one thousands of years ago, a gigantic fifty-seven feet standing statue of Bahubali in meditation had been carved from one stone on the hill of Vindhyagiri at Shravan Belgola, in Mysore State.)

One year passed by but Bahubali did not attain enlightenment. He could not get enlightenment because he could not give up his ego. At last, Lord Rushabhdev, out of compassion, sent Brahmi and Sundari to bring him to the right path. They came to the place where Bahubali was meditating. Seeing the mighty brother standing like a rock, they calmly asked him to get off the elephant. Bahubali realized familiar voice. He started thinking that he was not standing on the elephant and what are they talking about. Where is that elephant? He then realized that he was riding on the elephant of ego. He immediately let go his ego and decided to go to the Rushabhdev. As soon he took first step, he attained Kevaljnan.