

## CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

*The greatness of Bhīmeśvara*

*Sūta said:*

1-2. While the grandson of Bhīma thus resided there on the banks, engaged in the propitiation of the goddess and worship of the seven *Liṅgas*, the Pāṇḍavas who had been defeated in the game of dice, came there after some time in the course of their travels over the earth by way of pilgrimage.

3. At the outset itself, all of them with Draupadī as the sixth member reached (the shrine of) goddess Caṇḍikā situated in the north-east of the holy spot. They had become extremely tired on the way.

4-5. At that time the group of Caṇḍikās sat there itself. Barbarīka saw those warriors arriving there but he did not know the Pāṇḍavas nor they him, because ever since his birth there had been no contact between he and the Pāṇḍavas.

6. After entering the temple, the Pāṇḍavas approached (the idol of) the goddess and offered rice balls etc. Then they looked for water to quench their thirst.

7. Therefore Bhīma entered the *Kuṇḍa* in order to drink water. As he was entering it, Yudhiṣṭhira said these words:

8. "Take water out and wash your feet. Thereafter you may drink water. Otherwise great sin will befall you."

9. With eyes extremely agitated on account of thirst, Bhīma did not hear those words of the king. With a desire for water, he entered the *Kuṇḍa*.

10. On seeing the water, he resolved to drink it there itself. For the sake of cleanliness, he washed his face, hands and feet.

11. If anyone drinks water without washing, ghosts and vampires will enter him and drink it.

12. While Vṛkodara (i.e. Bhīma) was washing his feet thus, Suhṛdaya who was above, spoke these truthful words:

13. "O vicious one with sinful resolve, what is this that you are doing? You are washing your face, hands and feet in the *Kuṇḍa* of the goddess.

14. It is with this water that the goddess is always bathed

by me. Therefore, are not you afraid of sin in dropping dirty water therein?

15-16. As it is, dirty water is not worthy of being touched even by men. How can it be touched by gods? Why do you incur this sin? Tell me the truth. Come out of this *Kuṇḍa* immediately. Stand outside and drink. O sinner, if you are such a fool, why do you roam about (as a pilgrim) to holy spots?"

*Bhīma said:*

17-19. O ruthless, base Rākṣasa, what are you saying? Why do you speak harshly? Indeed, water is meant to be utilised by all living beings. It has been said by excellent sages that one should have holy ablution in *Tirthas*. Washing the limbs is also said to be (a form of) ablution. Why then do you rebuke me? If people do not drink or wash their limbs, what for are the holy rites of *Pūrta* (i.e. endowing wells, tanks etc.) performed by virtuous persons?

*Suhrdaya said:*

20-23. One should necessarily take bath in important *Tirthas*. This is true. There is no doubt about it. But, in *Caras* (mobile ones, i.e. flowing rivers and streams) you can enter (the *Tirtha* for bathing) but in *Sthāvaras* (immobile ones, i.e. tanks, wells etc.) you must stand outside (for bathing).

It is not ordained that bath in the *Sthāvaras* should be performed by entering them. In places where water is not taken by devotees for bathing the deities, or in those lakes where the water level is above hundred *Hastas*, it is ordained so. Even in the case of (permitted) entry, the procedure is to wash the feet outside (before entering) and then to take bath. Otherwise, it is said, there is sin. Has not this verse, formerly pronounced by the lotus-born Lord Brahmā, been heard by you?

24-26. "Those who discharge faeces, urine, rubbish, phlegm, spittle, tears and gargled water (in *Tirthas*) are on a par with slayers of Brāhmaṇas."

Hence come out quickly. If you have no control over your sense organs, O puerile one of evil conduct, why do you roam about the holy spots (for pilgrimage)?

Only he whose hands, feet, and mind are perfectly under control and whose activities are free from aberrations, will attain the benefit of the *Tirtha*.

*Bhīma said:*

27. Let it be sin or virtue, I am unable to come out. Neither hunger nor thirst can ever be controlled by me.

*Suhr̥daya said:*

28. Why do you commit a sin for the sake of life? Tell me. Has this verse uttered by Śibi not been heard by you?

29. "A man should live even for a short while with 'white' (i.e. pure) actions but not for a *Kalpa* with actions opposed to both the worlds."

*Bhīma said:*

30. My ears have become deaf due to your crowing sound. I will certainly drink water here. You may very well lament or become dried up.

*Suhr̥daya said:*

31. I am born in the family of Kṣatriyas who protect virtue. Hence I will not allow you to commit a sin at any cost.

32-36. Hence, O pitiable wretch, come out of this *Kuṇḍa* immediately. Otherwise I will smash your head with brickbats.

After saying this, he took a brick and hurled it at his head. Bhīma dodged that brick and jumped out. Both of them began to revile each other. Both of them were of immense strength. Both of them were masters of warfare. With their long mighty arms, they fought with each other. Both of them had broad chests and long arms. Both were experts in close combats and duels. They struck each other with fists, knees and heels. Then within a short while, the son of Pāṇḍu, the descendant of Kuru, became exhausted.

37. Even when he was exhausted, Bhīma tried again and again to get up to fight. He became still more exhausted, but Barbarika grew (in power).

38-40. Then Barbarika lifted him with great force and dashed him (against the ground) furiously to the surprise of everyone. When he swooned and trembled again and again, he lifted him up and walked towards the sea in order to hurl him into the deep waters there. With their eyes restrained by the goddess, the Pāṇḍavas did not see this.

41. When the leading scion of the heroic family of Kuru was caught like that by that hero of wonderful valour, Devas and Devis (goddesses) became surprised on seeing him from the sky.

42. On seeing Barbarika gone to the seashore, Lord Rudra spoke to him from the sky:

43. "O Barbarika of great strength, tiger among Rākṣasas, let go off this Bhīma, your grandfather, the most excellent one among the descendants of Bharata.

44. Indeed he is on a pilgrimage in the company of his brothers and Kṛṣṇā (i.e. Draupadī). He came to this *Tirtha* in order to take his ablution.

45. In every respect the descendant of Kuru deserves your honour and respect. One's grandfather should be revered irrespective of his being sinful or sinless."

*Sūta said:*

46-48. Immediately after hearing these words of Rudra, he released (Bhīma) and fell at his feet. He then said: "Alas! Fie upon me! Alas! Let me be forgiven. Let me be forgiven." He said thus repeatedly. Beating his own head he cried again and again. As he was lamenting regretfully and fainting down frequently, Bhīmasena embraced and kissed him. Then he spoke these words:

49-55. "We do not know you nor you us ever since your birth. (Of course) your stay here had been heard from Ghaṭotkaca and Kṛṣṇa, O dear son. But as we had been overwhelmed by various kinds of calamities, we forgot it completely. It is clear that all faculties of memory will be lost in the case of persons suffering from misery. All our sorrows have been brought about by (the evils of) time. Do not bewail, dear boy. The fault is not yours even in the least.

Everyone going astray deserves to be punished by a Kṣatriya. Even one's own self should be punished by a good man if it goes

along evil path. What to say of father, mother, friend, brother, son etc.! Blessed indeed am I. My delight is very great indeed. My ancestors too are blessed, because my grandson is a knower of virtue and protects Dharma. You deserve boons because you deserve the praise of good people. Hence give up your sorrow. It behoves you to be calm and composed.”

*Barbarika said:*

56. I am a sinner, O grandfather. I am more accursed than a Brāhmaṇa-slayer. I am despicable. I am not worthy of being praised, O Lord; it does not behove you even to see or touch me.

57. Expiation has been prescribed by learned men in the case of all sins. But there is no expiation for one wanting in devotion to one's parents.

58. Hence I shall myself cast off my body in Mahī-Sāgara-Saṅgama, the body by which my grandfather has been afflicted.

59. In this manner let me avoid being sinful in (subsequent) births. It does not behove anyone to make me desist from this intention.

60. That is because one who prevents someone from explanation will be partly afflicted and affected by the same sin.

After saying this, the powerful hero went to the sea and jumped into it.

61-68. The sea trembled. It thought, ‘How can I kill him?’ Thereupon, Siddha Mother (goddess Siddhāmbikā) and the fourteen goddesses steadied him and embraced him. Accompanied by Rudra, they said to him, “O leader among heroes! There is no sin if the act is done due to ignorance. This is a statement in the scriptures. It does not behove you to make it otherwise (disobey it). See your grandfather; he is closely behind you. He is repeatedly uttering, ‘O son, O Son.’ He is ready to die after you. If you give up your body now, O hero, Bhīma too will forsake it (i.e. his own). That will be a great sin on you. Realise this and retain your physical body, O highly intelligent one.

Or if you are desirous of abandoning your body, there too listen to these words. It has been destined that your death will take place in a short while at the hands of Kṛṣṇa, the son of