

SREE MAHAABHAARATHAM

AADHI PARVVAM

13. Jeralkkaaru Pithru Samvaadham (13. The Conversation Between Jeralkkaaru And His Father)

The history or story of Aastheekan. Jeralkkaaru observed strict Brahmacharyam or celibacy. During the time when he was wandering around in many different places and directions as a strict Brahmachaari, he saw some Pithroos or Ancestors hanging upside down with their legs up and heads down. He asked them if they were hanging upside down. They explained to Jeralkkaaru that because there is no one to perform the prescribed last rites for them and that is why they are hanging upside down. Knowing that Jeralkkaaru was born in their dynasty and deserved to perform the rites for them, he decided to marry as his repentance but with certain terms and conditions.

Saunakan Said:

For what reason did King Jenamejeyan, who is the Lord Indhra of his Subjects, conduct Sarppa Sathram and violently destroy the serpents? 1

Oh, Our most revered Soothaja or the son of Sootha! Please explain this principle in detail. And why or what was the reason for that Dhvija Sreshtta, Aastheekan, released and saved those serpents from the blazing sacrificial fire from the Sarppa Sathram? And that most powerful vigorous king who performed this Sarppa Sathram or serpent sacrifice was whose son? 2-3

Please also tell me or us, whose son was Vipran, Aastheekan? 4

Soothan Said:

Oh, Mune or Saunaka! The story called Aastheekam which explains about Aastheekan is so great and noble. Please listen to all these which I will be narrating to you. 5

Saunakan Said:

We are so anxiously with utmost interest eagerly awaiting to listen to the divine and interesting story of the Ancient Muni, Aastheekan, in detail. His stories are so tasty to the mind and intelligence. 6

Soothan Said:

Oh, Aaryaas or Highly Esteemed Braahmana Sreshttaas! This Ithihaasam or The Historical Legend or Epic is the purest and holiest mythological story. This is told or written by Vyaasa. As the Braahmanaas living at Naimisaaranyam asked in the past, my father, Lomaharshana who was an intelligent disciple of Vyaasa Maharshi, explained it to those Vipraas sitting in the middle of them. I shall explain it to you as I heard it from his mouth.

Hey, Saunaka Brahmarshe! One who listens to this historical story of Aastheekan can immediately destroy all the sins and all the effects of his past sinful actions immediately. I shall narrate that all sin destructive story with all details. 7-9

The father of Aastheeka Muni was as great and noble as a Prejaapathi like Brahmadheva, Kasyapa, etc. He was a Brahmachaari or Celibate. He was living without any food and performing severe austerity and penance. He was so powerful, enriched with penance. 10

He was a Yaayaavara or Yaayaavaran, a particular community of priestly Brahmins, and a very powerful ascetic. His wealth was Ddharmmam. He was a strict observer of severe austerity and long penance. 11

Once that Mahaabhaaga or the most pure and fortunate Ascetic was wandering around the world thinking that wherever he reaches by sun-set or evening is his home or Aasramam (with the concept 'Lokame Tharavaadu,' meaning the entire world is his own home.) 12

He traveled, visiting many Theerththams or holy places and taking ablutionary baths there in those sacred waters. For anyone who was not an AathmaSamyemi - meaning one who is having self-control or total control of mind and material desires - could not practice his routine. [Meaning he was such a great ascetic with fully self-controlled and soul-realized.] 13

He was a VaayuBhakshakan - one who eats air alone - and thus abandoning all food and without any sleep. He was so lean. But he was so effulgent like deep blazing fire. Like that he travelled here and there. 14

Once while he was wandering like that, he saw at one place in a hole the Pithroos or Ancestors hanging upside down with their heads down and legs up. As soon as he saw those Pithroos, Jeralkkaaru asked them: 15

Jeralkkaaru Said or Asked:

Why are you hanging like this with heads down in this hole? Who are all you? As the rats made the hole by removing the sand and making the hole for its home, that sand fell on the heads of Pithroos, and grass grew on those sand and the blades of grass stuck on them. 16 - 17

Pithroos or Ancestors Said:

We are all Yaayaavaraas, priestly Braahmanaas. We have performed severe austerity and penance and thus we are Rishees with rigid vows. We are sinking low into the earth like this for want of offspring. 18

We have one offspring or child called Jeralkkaaru. We are already partially unfortunate ones and our that son or child make us fully unfortunate due to his austerity and Brahmacharyam or celibacy. 19

He is so stupid and foolish and not marrying any woman to produce and have a son or child. Because there is no son in our family to perform the Vedhically prescribed rites for their forefathers or ancestors, we are hanging in this hole like this upside down. 20

Even though we have a son in our family we are like sonless just like the subjects of a kingdom where the king is a useless and incapable one. We are hanging our heads down in a hole like sinners. Who are you to be so compassionate and merciful to us? Are you a relative of us? [Because he asked them.] 21

Oh, the greatest and noblest Braahmana Saththama! We are so eager and anxious to know about you. We are in such a pathetic and sorrowful condition. Why are you condoling us like this? 22

Jeralkkaaru Said:

You are all my great and sacred forefathers. Please let me know how I can offer needed services for you. I am Jeralkkaaru. What should I do or how can I serve you? 23

Pithroos or Ancestors Said:

You please try for progeny so that our family can exist or sustain our family. It is for your own benefit or our benefit or attainment and maintenance of Ddharmmam. 24

Oh, Thaatha or Child! You cannot acquire the result of having a son to perform last rites for yourself as well as for your forefathers either by the fruit of virtues or by severe austerity and penance and by celibacy. 25

Oh, our Dear Son! Therefore, you should please try to marry a suitable girl and produce a wealth of children. That is what is most desirable, pleasing, and auspicious for us. 26

Jeralkkaaru Said:

I will not marry for my own sake, nor will I acquire any wealth for my enjoyment. But I am willing to marry for your benefit and welfare. 27

I will do it, marry, with that firm determination that too if that satisfies my condition. If my condition is not satisfied, then I cannot and will not marry. 28

I shall wed a girl who has my name if she is willingly given to me by her relatives, parents inclusive, and friends as a gift of charity to me. Otherwise, I will not marry. 29

Who is there to give me, who is an utterly poor beggar, a girl as my bride? If anyone gives me a girl as a Bhiksha or alms, then I would accept her as my duly wedded wife. 30

Oh, My Guros or Poorvikaas or Ancestors! I shall try to wed a girl who satisfies those conditions. If there is none available who fulfills those terms, then I shall not marry. 31

From that girl I will produce a son he will help to provide you redemption and elevate you to the higher world or eternal region by performing the last rites prescribed in Vedhaas. Thus, my forefathers can attain peace and comfort. 32

So ends this section.