



Ramā Ekādasi

The glories of Ramā Ekadasi are described in *Brahma-vaivarta Purana* in conversation between Lord Krishna and King Yudhisthira.

Lord Krishna says, The Ekadasi that occurs during the waning moon of October/November is called Ramā Ekadasi and it vanquishes all one's sinful reactions.

“There once lived a famous king of the name Muchukunda, who was friendly to Lord Indra, as well as with Yamaraj, Varuna, and Vibhishana. Muchukunda always spoke the truth and constantly rendered devotional service to Me.

Because he ruled according to religious principles, there were no disturbances in his kingdom.”

Muchukunda's daughter was named Chandrabhaga, after a sacred river, and the king gave her in marriage to Shobhana, the son of Chandrasena. One day, Shobhana visited his father-in-law's palace on the auspicious Ekadasi day. This visit made Shobhana's wife Chandrabhaga quite anxious, for she knew that her husband was physically very weak and unable to bear the austerity of a day-long fast. She said to him, `My father is very strict about following Ekadasi. On Dasami, the day before Ekadasi, he strikes a large kettledrum and announces, "Nobody should eat on Ekadasi, the sacred day of Sri Hari!

"When Shobhana heard the sound of the kettledrum, he said to his wife, `O dear one, what should I do now? Please tell me how I can save my life and obey your father's strictness and at the same time satisfy our guests!

"Chandrabhaga then spoke, `My dear husband, in my father's house nobody - not even the elephants or horses, what to speak of consenting human beings - eats on Ekadasi. Indeed, none of the animals are given their ration of grains, leaves, or straw - or even water ! - on Ekadasi, the sacred day of Sri Hari. So how can you escape fasting? My beloved husband, if you must eat something, then you should leave here at once. Now, with firm conviction decide on what you have to do.'

"Prince Shobhana then said, 'I have decided to fast on the sacred Ekadasi day. Whatever my fate is, it will surely come to pass.' "Deciding thus, Shobhana attempted to fast on this Ekadasi, but he became unbearably disturbed with excessive hunger and thirst.

Eventually the sun set in the west, and the arrival of the auspicious night made all the Vaishnavas very happy. O Yudhisthira, all the devotees enjoyed worshipping Me (Sri Hari) and remaining awake all through night, but Prince Shobhana that night became absolutely unbearable.

When the Sun rose on the Dwadasi, that Prince Shobhana was dead. "King Muchukunda observed his son-in-law's

funeral, ordering a large stack of wood be assembled for the fire, but he instructed his daughter Chandrabhaga not to join her husband on the funeral pyre.

After completing her husband's srāddha ceremony, she continued to live in her father's house.

Lord Sri Krishna continued, "O best of the kings, Yudhishthira, even though Shobhana died because of observing Ramā Ekadasi, the merit that he accrued enabled him, after his death, to become the ruler of a kingdom high on the peak of Mandara Mountain.

"One day, a Brahmin named Somasharma, who lived in Muchukunda's kingdom, arrived in Shobhana's kingdom while travelling to various places of pilgrimage. The Brahmin saw Shobhana in all his resplendent glory and thought he might be the son-in-law of his own king Muchukunda. When Shobhana saw the Brahmin approaching, he immediately rose up from his seat and welcomed him. After Shobhana had paid his respectful obeisance's he asked the Brahmin about his well-being and about the health and welfare of his (Shobhana's) father-in-law, his wife and all the residents of the city.

He informed the king that everyone was living in peace and harmony. In great amazement, the Brahman said, 'King! I have never before seen such a beautiful city as this.

The King replied,' By the influence of observing Ramā Ekadasi, I have received this temporary kingdom.' 'O best of Brahmanas, please advise me how my kingdom can remain permanently. I think because I observed the Ekadasi without faith hence I received this unsteady kingdom. Please explain this topics to Chandrabhaga. I think she is capable of making it steady.

"Thus the Brahmin returned to his city and related the entire episode to Chandrabhaga, who was both surprised and overjoyed to hear this news of her husband. She said, 'O Brahmana, Is this a dream you have seen, or is it actually a factual thing?'

"Somasharma the Brahmin replied, `O Princess, I have seen your late husband face to face in that wonderful kingdom, which is as bright as the sun.

But you former husband has asked me to relate to you that he says that his kingdom is unstable and could vanish into thin air at any moment. Therefore he hope you can find a way to make it permanent.'

"Chandrabhaga then said, `O sage among the Brahmins, please take me to that place where my husband resides at once, for I greatly desire to see him again!

Surely I shall make his kingdom permanent with the merit that I have acquired by fasting on every Ekadasi throughout my life. Please reunite us at once, again. It is said that one who reunites separated persons also obtains very great merit.'

The humble Brahmin Somasharma then led Chandrabhaga to Shobhana's effulgent kingdom. Before reaching it, however, they stopped at the foot of Mount Mandara, at the sacred ashrama of Vamadeva. Upon hearing their story, Vamadeva chanted hymns from the Vedas and sprinkled holy water from his samanya arghya upon Chandrabhaga.

By the influence of that great Rishi's rites, the merit she had accrued by fasting for so many Ekadasis made her body transcendental. Ecstatic, her eyes beaming in wonder, Chandrabhaga continued on her journey.

"When Shobhana saw his wife approaching him high on Mount Mandara, he was overwhelmed with joy and called out to her in great happiness and jubilation.

After she arrived , he seated her on his left side and she said to him, `O my respected husband, please listen as I tell you something that will benefit you greatly. Since I was eight years old I have fasted regularly and with full faith on every Ekadasi.

If I transfer to you all the merit I have accumulated, your kingdom will surely become permanent, and its prosperity will grow and grow until the coming of the great inundation!'

Lord Sri Krishna then continued to address Yudhisthira as follows, "O Yudhisthira, in this way Chandrabhaga who was beautifully decorated with the finest ornaments, she began to enjoy the association of her husband.

By the influence of Ramāñ Ekadasi, Shobhana found his kingdom on the peaks of Mount Mandara able to fulfill all his desires and bestow upon him everlasting happiness, like that achieved from the transcendental Kaama-dhenu.

One should not differentiate between the Ekadasis of the light and dark parts of the month.

As we have seen, both can award pleasure in this world and liberate even the most sinful and fallen souls. Just as black cows and white cows give equally good quality milk. So the Ekadasis of the dark fortnight (Krishna paksha) and the light fortnight (Shukla paksha) award liberation to the followers.

Anyone who simply hears this narration of the glories of the sacred day of Ramāñ Ekadasi, is freed from all kinds of sin and attains the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu.

Hare Krishna !