

RATNAKAR AND THE FOUR BROTHERS

Once, there were four brothers who were very united, but Ratnakar and the Four Brothers 27 extremely poor. Together they began to think about how to earn money. They had heard that the ocean was called Ratnakar ('maker of gems') because it contains so many gems. Together, they decided to worship the ocean to earn its favour. Then, they hoped, it would give them some gems and deliver them from poverty. With this thought, they went to the seashore and began their austerities. In order to maximize the time spent in worship, they would begin right after their morning bath and prayers and eat only once a day. The four brothers divided the different tasks of preparing their daily meal amongst themselves. One brother would go into town and beg for flour, while another would draw water from a well. The third brother would collect firewood, and the fourth would prepare the meal. Once their meal was prepared, they would all sit together and eat. The four brothers performed very difficult austerities. Moreover, they worked in harmony and were never jealous of each other. The Ocean Deity rewards the four brothers for their unity 28 Kishore Satsang Pravesh The Ocean was pleased with the united efforts of the four brothers. However, before he would fulfil their wish for wealth, the Ocean decided to test the unity of the four brothers. One day, when all four brothers were engaged in their work, the Ocean assumed the form of a Brahmin and met each of them in turn. He first approached the brother who had gone to beg for flour. He tried to turn him against his brothers by saying, "I just met one of your brothers. Despite the fact that you are working so hard, he is saying bad things about you behind your back..." Before the Brahmin could say another word, the first brother retorted, "My brother would never say something like that." With a downcast face, the Brahmin quickly left. Then the Brahmin approached each of the other three brothers individually and repeated the same thing. They all responded in the same way. The Ocean was satisfied with the bond of unity among the four brothers. Their behaviour made him confident that if he gave them wealth they would neither fight amongst themselves for it, nor waste it. So he appeared before them and rewarded them with a handful of priceless jewels. We all know that 'where there is unity, there is peace'. Moreover, Muktanand Swami has said in his kirtan, 'Thai ekmanā prabhune bhajiye', meaning, 'let us become united and worship God'. Yogiji Maharaj also used to teach us to always keep 'Samp, suradhabhav, ane ekta' – 'unity, friendship, and oneness'. Only if we keep unity amongst ourselves and refrain from saying bad things about each other will God be pleased.