



## **LESSON OF KING BHARAT**

Easy narration by Richard Shaw Brown

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Period: Treta (Silver) Yuga – over one million years BC*

Bharata, the eldest son of King Rishabdev, was a devout Theist. When his exalted father retired from material life to seek God alone in the wilderness, he appointed his foremost son, Bharata, to succeed him as King.

Accepting his father's order he began to rule the vast Kingdom (modern India is STILL named Bharata, but during the time of Bharat's rule his domain, known as Bharata varsha, included all the land between Persia and South East Asia). Following his father's wishes he also married beautiful Pancajana (lit. five persons), who became his Queen.

In the womb of Queen Pancajana King Bharata procreated five wonderful sons, who were named Sumati, Rashtrabhrita, Sudarshana, Aavarana and Dhumraketu.

Originally this (Asian-known) Earth was called Ajanabharvarsha (in Vedic history), but since the time of King Bharata it became known as Bharata-varsha (now shrunk to modern India).

King Bharata ruled with great skill, and treated his subjects like a father treats a child. He was very expert and wise, and he showed his people by example how to perform their duties according to their inbred qualities and activities. Protecting and leading the people of his kingdom King Bharata ruled with strength and compassion.

With a mind to propitiate and please God, King Bharata performed the various Vedic sacrifices and ceremonies. Believing that all the Vedic Hierarchy and all beings were part of God, King Bharata always mentally offered the good karma acquired through his activities back to God, for the pleasure of God, knowing that by watering the "root" of a tree you thereby nourish the entire tree. In this way he performed all his duties as an offering to God.

Through manifold pious activities carried out during his very long life King Bharata's consciousness became pure, and he became free of lust, anger, infatuation and material attachment. His heart having become clean his devotion to the Lord of the Universe grew every day.

The all-attractive Lord of the Universe, is the highest Being, and He manifests Himself in three ways, 1) as *Paramatma* or supersoul within the heart of every living being, 2) as *Brahman* or the impersonal all-pervading totality of life, and also 3) as *Bhagavan* or the beautifully dressed and adorned Supreme Being Who always resides with unlimited devotees in His eternal spiritual paradise.

According to his good karma King Bharat enjoyed material pleasures and ruled for a very long time; but when he felt his time was up, he decided to retire from family life, and accordingly he divided the wealth and domain he had inherited amongst his five grown sons.

Having duly installed his sons as the new rulers, Bharat resolutely departed from his opulent palace and loving wife and family and walked, alone and penniless, to a place in the Himalayas near Haridwar (lit. Door to God) named Pulahasrama. This spot is sanctified by the divine Sri *Shalagram* stones, which are found there.

There, in the Krishna-Gandaki River, The Supreme Lord has mercifully manifest Himself to His devotees in the form of smooth water-worn dark stones called "Shalagram" which are decorated with the signs of the *chakra* or discus and navel of the Supreme Lord.

Having accepted the life of a mendicant, former King Bharat passed his remaining days in the forest-ashram of Pulaha. By collecting fruits, nuts, berries, flowers, and holy basil leaves he offered these items to God via his Shalagram Stone Form, and Bharata himself subsided on the leftovers - feeling more and more contented.

Worshipping the Lord of the Universe in this manner his heart and mind became completely purified and he felt great spiritual satisfaction in his solitary service to God. He completely lost any desire for mundane sense pleasures and remained steady in his devotion.

Because he was such an exalted devotee, King Bharata, always engaged in constant remembrance of the Supreme Lord, and his heart melted in divine love.

In fact, he became so absorbed in his devotional meditation that he gradually lost all interest in rules and regulations, and remained absorbed in remembrance of God and his spiritual attributes.

Because of feeling divine ecstasy his body hairs stood up in goose bumps, and so many tears of joy flooded his eyes that he was unable to see clearly. In this manner he meditated on the form and glories of God until his heart became like a calm lake of divine love; and with his heart and mind so immersed he even forgot his routine duties.

Physically King Bharat was very handsome, with thick curly hair on his head that was always wet from bathing three times every day. He wore only a deerskin. King Bharat worshiped God as the light within the Sun by reciting Vedic Sanskrit verses and prayers. He would also pray in the following words...

"I bow to the Supreme Lord who is the bestower of intelligence. As the light of the Sun, God Narayana illuminates the entire universe and blesses all beings. He has created this universe using his own material and spiritual energies, and after creation he has entered into the heart of every individual finite soul as Supersoul. By his varied energies Lord Narayana is maintaining all living souls."

One day after Bharat had finishing his morning cleansing and bathing duties — He sat on the bank of the Gandaki River and began chanting his mantras, beginning with OM.

While Bharata sat chanting he saw that a pregnant doe had come to the opposite river bank and was drinking water.

Suddenly the loud roar of a nearby lion terrified the doe who by nature was always afraid of being killed, and she leapt across the river. Because the doe was pregnant and jumped out of fear, the baby deer fell from her womb into the river.

Meanwhile the doe reached the opposite river bank and immediately dropped dead from acute distress and exhaustion.

When King Bharata saw the motherless baby deer floating down the river he felt great compassion. He immediately lifted the baby deer from the water, and, like a true friend he brought the fawn to his Ashram hut.

Seeing the helpless fawn King Bharata felt great compassion toward the deer, and he began to feed it grass and protect it from the danger of tigers and other animals. He felt compelled to raise the deer, and becoming affectionate the King would pet it and even kiss it out of love.

He became so absorbed in raising the fawn that he gradually forgot his holy duties and even forgot to meditate on and worship the Supreme Lord. He began to think, "Oh what a pity. By destiny, which is a force of God's Time factor, this young and helpless fawn has taken shelter of me; I am its only family. The deer is completely trusting in me, with full faith, so it is my duty to protect this creature, even at the cost of neglecting my own spiritual life. It would be a great fault if for my own selfish reasons I did not nurture this poor helpless creature that has taken shelter with me. A good man will never neglect a helpless being that has sought protection."

"Even though the deer is disturbing my spiritual life, I realize that a helpless being that has come under my shelter cannot be neglected. That would be a great fault. Even if one is a monk in the renounced they should feel compassion for suffering living beings. A good man will certainly neglect his own personal interests, however important they may be, to selflessly protect one who has taken shelter."

Through this association King Bharat developed an endearing attachment for the young deer, and he would lay with it and play with it and even eat with it. In this way his purified heart again became bound up in material affection, this time to the young and charming deer.

Whenever Bharat went into the forest to collect eatables and wood he would always take the young deer with him out of affection for its playful and charming antics, as well as fear for its safety from wild animals. He became so affectionate that he would play with the deer and sometimes even carry the young fawn on his shoulder. The King felt great happiness in playing with the fawn.

Whenever King Bharata engaged in some ritualistic spiritual practice he would break at intervals to check on the well being of the deer. Seeing that his beloved deer was comfortable he would bless it by saying, "My dear fawn, may you always be well and happy!"

Whenever the deer was out of sight King Bharat would worry, and like a miser who had lost his wealth, he would lament in this manner...

"Woe-is-me, my beloved fawn is missing and may have been killed by a hard-hearted hunter. Alas, the poor deer is helpless and I am so unfortunate that I cannot protect it. The deer has put full trust in me although I am selfish and cruel. But this deer has faith in me, just as a good man forgets the misbehavior of a friend and still maintains his faith in him. Oh, I wonder, will this helpless creature again return?"

"Has it been killed by wild animals? Will it again return and gladden my heart with its playful ways and eating of soft grasses? I fear that it has been eaten by a lone tiger or a flock of wild boars, or killed by wild dogs devoid of mercy."

"In the morning when the sun rises all auspicious things begin. But not so for me, worried as I am about the welfare of the deer. And now the sun is setting and still the poor deer has not yet returned."

"Oh, when will I see the princely deer again playing so sweetly? When will it come back and pacify my anxious

heart? I must be devoid of good karma otherwise the deer would have returned by now.”

“When I pretend to meditate the fawn would walk around me out of love and nudge me with its soft baby horns to get my attention.”

“Whenever I try to prepare sacred articles for worship the deer would pollute them by playfully touch with his mouth. And when I scold the deer it becomes as still as a saint out of fear.”

Raving in this way the King went outside and seeing the footprints of the deer on the ground, he praised the footprints out of love, saying, “the footprints of this deer, which are soft, beautiful, most auspicious, are imprinted on the surface of this fortunate Earth. By following these soft footprints I can again regain the lost treasure of my life.

King Bharata continued speaking like a madman, and seeing the deer-like spots on the full moon he thought that his deer must have been given shelter by the Moon god, who is protecting it from lions.

Looking at the Moon, Bharata began ranting like a madman, “In feeling separation for the deer I am also feeling acute separation for my own sons. My heart is burning in agony of separation like being in a forest-fire, and seeing my dilemma the friendly Moon is sending down soothing beams just like a friend throws water on a friend suffering from high fever.

King Bharata was overwhelmed by an uncontrollable desire in the form of the deer. Due to the results of his past karma he neglected his meditation and fell down from the lofty height of mystic yoga, penance, worship of God, and material detachment and lost his spiritual life.

If not for past karma how else could Bharat have become attracted to a deer, an animal, after having renounced his

beautiful Queen, his loving children, and kingdom while considering that material attachment blocked salvation of his soul? He left his beloved family for liberation and yet became ensnared by attachment to a deer. This can only be the result of his past karma.

King Bharat became so attached to the deer that he gradually gave up all his spiritual practices and ignored the passage of time. Eventually Death entered his hut just like a poisonous snake enters through a mouse hole and stood before him. Seeing death, the King looked over at the deer lying next to him, like his own son, and it was shedding tears over his demise.

Thus, at the time of death King Bharat's mind was absorbed in the body of a deer, and after he left his human body he was reborn as a baby deer at a nearby location. But because of his previous spiritual activities even he lost his human body and took on the body of a deer yet he did not forget his past life. This was due to the karma of his previous spiritual attainments.

Because of his high past karma his intelligence allowed him to understand that he was in the body of a deer, and he could remember how it happened. Remembering his fall down he said to himself.

"What a huge mistake! Although advanced I have fallen from the spiritual path. I renounced my loving sons, my affectionate wife and heavenly kingdom just to make advancement in spiritual life, and I took shelter in a lonely holy place in the wilderness. I had become self-controlled and self-realized, and I engaged constantly in remembering the Supreme Lord of the Universe. I was reaching success and my heart was becoming like a clean mirror. But somehow I was so foolish to allow my mind to once again become attached—to an animal, a deer. Now I have been reborn in this body of a deer and have strayed far away from my spiritual goal of life." ...

Bharat Maharaja was always feeling repentant. Very soon he left his deer mother and managed to find his way back to the ashram where he had last died, famous as the place of Shalagram Shila stones. Although remaining alone he was always aware of the Super Soul within his heart. He didn't want to make any new karma and simply waited until his 'deer-body' karma was exhausted. Finally he went into the waters of the river and stood, waist deep, and fasted until his deer body died.

Next he was born the son of a devout Brahmin belonging to the family line of Angira. His new father was very expert in Vedic sciences and was a learned and kind man, possessing good qualities like sense control, non-violence, tolerance, and he was well acquainted with Scriptures.

The Brahmin had nine sons from his first wife, and from his second wife he begot twins, a boy and a girl. It is stated that the twin boy was none other than the reincarnation of the great devotee formally known as King Bharat, and this is his amazing story after quitting his body of a deer.

Due to his exalted consciousness, Bharat, known at this point as Jada-Bharat, could remember his previous lives. He was afraid of making the same mistake and so he remained aloof from family attachments and material activities. He didn't want to fall into the false bodily identification again, so he behaved like a fool and dullard. This was to avoid the company of the people; and so that no one would speak with him, he appeared just like a madman, unhearing, unseeing, and uncomprehending.

Always remembering God within his heart he simply waited for this balance of his karma (as a Brahmin son) to expire so he could finally become free from material bondage.

Jada Bharat means the soul of King Bharat, now enveloped in a "jada-deha" or material body made of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, known as "Jada" or

matter. In other words, he had no identity other than the material body. And his only desire was to exhaust that remaining material karma tying him to the jada-deha.

Jada Bharat's father loved him very much and tried in every way to nurture and teach his son about Brahminical material life. But no matter how hard he tried still Jada Bharat remained unfazed and always appeared like a dunce. In fact he was being vigilant not to become again identified with the material world and its perishable ways.

The kind Brahmana tried hard to educate his son, Jada Bharat, but he remained as if uncomprehending, and he would do things in reverse, such as washing his hands before going to the latrine instead of after.

Eventually his father invested him with the Sacred Thread, but although he wore the thread of a Brahman it was impossible to teach Jada Bharat anything. In fact, it was Jada Bharat's intention to act this way in order to discourage his father from trying to teach him. Jada Bharat KNEW what was real, and he was very much afraid of again making his mistake. Still his father was so affectionate that he continued trying to teach him, but to no avail.

This was a source of great frustration to his father who tried his best to educate his son. He hoped his son's dullness could be cured and he wanted him to be a great scholar... but all his attempts were a complete failure. After trying for so long he finally died, and Jada Bharat's mother placed him and his sister under the care of the first wife while she herself willingly entered the funeral fire of her dead husband.

In this way Jada-Bharat came under the care of his nine foster brothers, all of whom considered him a liability and a dunce, and they stopped all attempts at educating him and instead tried to give him various labor jobs to perform such as mending fences, acting as a scare crow, etc. But

even these duties he was unable to recognize and he performed things backwards, always making a mess.

The step brothers of Jada Bharat, although learned in the Vedas and karma-kandas, were basically materialistic, engaged in making more and more karma, and they were not able to see nor understand the hidden glories of their illustrious brother.

Materialistic people mistreated Jada Bharat, but he never protested. He acted like a madman even though he was a super-human. He did whatever people ordered of him, and took whatever food was given without begging. Jada Bharat was determined to refrain from creating more karma and also exhaust his remaining karma as soon as possible. He didn't care about wages for work or if food was good or bad, nor if it was hot or cold, or neither comfortable nor miserable...He was transcendental to all opposites.

Peopled seeing that although he was born the son of a Brahman he acted like a fool, called him names and insulted him. But he refused to feel bad and simply tolerated his life without losing sight of the spiritual truth.

Jada Bharat was very handsome, with long limbs and strong body. But he never covered not protected his body from rain nor shine. He took life as it came, disguised as a madman, and being insulted, he simply wandered around.

Jada Bharat's brothers considered him a fool and engaged him in hard fieldwork planting grains; but even simple jobs he was unable to fulfill properly, always acting stupid. For food he gladly accepted rotten, stale left overs. But he made no distinction, accepting all as nectar and God's mercy. He accepted what ever was given and did as directed without the slightest ill will towards anyone.

Gradually he was driven away by his brothers who grew tired of looking after him. Following his destiny wherever Jada Bharat simply wandered around the countryside and

through jungles, subsisting on whatever he came across with no intentions.

During the time that Jada Bharat was wondering around aimlessly he was captured by a band of thieves & murderers who were ordered by their leader to search out a fresh victim for human sacrifice to the Goddess Kali, he being desirous of having a son.

Jada Bharat was a perfect physical specimen, and being a dullard appearing no more aware than an animal he was considered ideal. Doing what ever he was told Jada Bharat was brought to a remote temple of Goddess Kali to be killed in sacrifice.

According to their own fanciful way the robbers cleaned and decorated the body of Bharat. They covered his limbs in scented oils and fine garments, which they considered suitable for the ceremony. After preparation Bharat was agreeably taken before the Goddess. He was made to sit before the statue of the Goddess while the robbers sounded music and tossed flowers.

The thieves planning to murder Jada Bharat were all real low-lifes, bound by passion and ignorance. They cared nothing for the Scriptural injunction against killing a Brahman. Jada Bharat was a saint and a born Brahman and killing him was forbidden.

Then the priest amongst the thieves was ready to offer the blood of this man-animal to Goddess Kali and taking a consecrated sword he raised the sharp blade above his head, ready to decapitate the great-soul known as Jada Bharat.

See the great devotee Jada Bharat kneeling before Her about to be sacrificed the Goddess Kali became infuriated. The Idol of the Goddess cracked open and the Goddess Kali Herself emerged seething with anger. Her eyes burned like fire, her teeth were like fangs, and she appeared in a horrific form, as if to destroy the entire

creation. The Goddess sprang forth from the altar and snatching the sacrificial sword from the evil priest she immediately slaughtered all the thieves, chopping off their heads and limbs. With blood spurting from the dismembered bodies of the dacoits the Goddess drank Her fill, and becoming intoxicated she began to play with the severed heads like a child plays with toys. The associates of the Goddess also appeared on the scene and drank the remaining blood. Then they began singing loudly and dancing with such force as if to crush the Earth beneath their feet. Such is the fate of anyone harming a pure devotee.

Great souls who are liberated from the material illusion, and who bear no ill will towards any being, they always seek shelter in the Supreme Lord, even when about to be murdered. This is normal for the self-realized souls.

Later, at another place, a certain King of Sindhu and Sauvira named King Rahugana was being carried in a palanquin amidst a large procession on route to visit a great sage at Kapilashram. The Palanquin required a replacement carrier, and it just so happened that they came across Jada Bharat during his aimless wanderings.

The King's servants seeing that Jada Bharat was young and strong ordered him to carry the burden. Being attuned to allowing his remaining karma to expire he accepted the duty without protest.

When the procession again continued there was shaking of the palanquin because Jada Bharat would only step forward after checking the ground in front of him to insure that no ants got crushed; this walking held up the other bearers and upset the palanquin. Agitated and annoyed the King admonished his men to carry properly, and again they tried without success because Jada Bharat was in a mind of his own.

The lead carrier told the King, "Your Majesty, we are trying our best, but this new bearer is causing the disruption by walking out of step."

King Rahugana was angry and he looked down at Jada Bharat, who was without blame, and sarcastically insulted him by saying, "Dear bearer, I am sorry to see that due to old age and weakness you have become fatigued by carrying this palanquin all alone, without assistance."

The King, being of warrior caste, and with his mind covered in the mode of passion, spoke these sarcastic words to the great saint Jada Bharat. But Bharat was none of those things; he was separate from matter, being fixed up in the absolute consciousness. Bharat was at one with God and therefore he did not react, instead he simply carried the palanquin out of step as before. This angered the King who cried out, "Why are you disobeying my order? Don't you realize I am master and you are servant? Are you dead although living? For your disobedience I'll teach you a lesson, just like Yamaraj deals with sinners, and bring you to your senses!"

The King threatened Jada Bharat in this way because the King considered the material body to be the self and he was caught up in the material illusion of ever-changing matter. It was wrong of the King who had no idea of the greatness of Jada Bharat.

But Bharat was in tune with God, and his own soul. He didn't relate to the body of 5 gross elements and mind of 3 subtle elements as his self. God Himself resided in the heart of Bharat, and Jada Bharat never cared about insult or praise, considering both to be other than the self. He could see the folly of the King, and by the will of providence the great soul smiled at the King and replied:

"You Majesty, what you have sarcastically said is certainly true because I am none of the things you mention. The material body is bearing the load, not I, who am different from the material body and subtle mind. The material

body may be weak or strong, or whatever, but that never applies to me, whom am spirit soul."

"It is also true that I have not worked hard, and I am not weak or tired, because all these designations pertain to the material body, and not the soul. What ever may appear as the material body is never applicable to the soul within the body."

"This path and the journey you are making is nothing to do with me, the spirit soul, and that is why I am not feeling any trouble on this account. Please consider that no wise man would ever confuse the body with the soul as you are doing."

"All material differences are in a constant state of flux, and the question of being fat or skinny, or anything else is not the reality of the self, who is always spiritual by nature."

"Fatness, thinness, bodily and mental illness, thirst, hunger, fear, disagreement, desires for material happiness, old age, sleep, attachment for material possessions, anger, lamentation, illusion and identification of the body with the self are all transformations of the material covering of the spirit soul. A person living in such a mundane bodily conception feels affected by these things, but I am not identified with matter. Therefore everything you have jokingly said it true about me, the soul, because I am separate from all this misidentification."

"Oh great hero, you have accused me of being dead though alive. In this regard, I can only say that this is the case everywhere because everything material has its beginning and end. And everything material is dead although permeated by the living spirit."

"You claim that you're the king and I am the servant, and you are trying to order me around; but this is nonsense because these material positions are ever changing, and

one day I may be King and you would be servant. This is according to our ever-changing karma.”

“And if I’m crazy like you say then what is the use? If you beat a madman he’s not cured, like beating a dead horse. In fact, I’m a self-realized soul, so what’s the use of punishing me?”

“Everyone is bound by their karma and following their own modes of nature so no one is ever fixed as master or servant. But, if you still think you’re right then tell me what to do?”

Having said this, and showing no signs or agitation, Jada Bharat began to carry the palanquin again, in the same way. He had no false ego. He was thinking that by carrying the palanquin, he was burning the remaining results of his past karma.

But King Rahugana was simply amazed to hear the words of Bharat. He was stunned, and he quickly realized that Jada Bharat was a greatly exalted devotee and saint.

His material identity as a king was smashed. He felt terrible for offending such a saint, and he immediately descended from his palanquin and fell flat on the ground like a staff, placing his head on the sacred feet of Jada Bharat.

King Rahugana prayed to Bharat, “Oh great saintly person, please excuse my ignorance. I’m so sorry!!! How could I know? You are wearing the sacred thread like a Brahmin, but you appear to be covered over, like ashes cover a fire. Please tell me who you are and how you came to this realization? Who is your spiritual master? And how have you reached this place?”

“Dear great saint, I’m not scared of the King of heaven, nor even the superintendent of hell, I am not afraid of anything in this world, save committing an offense against

a saint like you. Please forgive me, and kindly reveal your true identity.”

“We can see that your knowledge, although hidden, is greatly advanced and approved by Vedic Scriptures. Pray tell us why you’re wandering around appearing like a dunce. Please explain yourself to us.”

“You are surely an incarnation of God, roaming about for the benefit of humanity. Your knowledge is unlimited, and you’re fully self-realized. No one can be a better spiritual master than you. As a disciple we beg you to kindly tell us what is the safest position in life?”

TBC