ISSN 0974-8857

TULSĪ PRAJÑĀ

(A UGC-CARE Listed Quarterly Research Journal of JVBI)

Year : 48 • Vol. 191-192 • Issue : July-Dec, 2021

JAIN VISHVA BHARATI INSTITUTE
A University dedicated to Oriental Studies & Human Values
Ladnun - 341 306, Rajasthan, India

Forgiveness in Various Schools of Thought

Tulsī Prajñā
48 (191-192)
July-Dec., 2021
ISSN : 0974-8857

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Abstract

Supreme forgiveness is pertinent in all the three worlds. It helps to sail across the ocean of birth and death; it enables us to be endowed with the three jewels i.e., Right belief, Right knowledge and Right conduct and safeguards us from a miserable plight. The persons, who without finding fault with others bear patiently the harsh words of the rogues, accepting them as the outcome of the evil actions of their previous births. They experience their own celestial virtues and are deeply engrossed in their self-realization and have been termed by Lord Jinendra as gifted with supreme forgiveness.

This paper attempts to elaborate the concept of forgiveness in various schools of thought.We know the persons gifted with supreme forgiveness, worshipped by Gods and divine beings skilled in various arts and sciences (*vidyādharas*) and the innumerable holy saints who vanquish all worldly miseries on attaining the eternal omniscience and getting rid of the blemishes of karma have become enlightened souls .

Key Words

Original Sin, *Aphimi*, *Insaan*, *Nasiya, Kṣamā, Dayā, Kṛpā, Kāruṇya, Adveśa, Anugraha-pradāna, Dvaiśa, Naraka, Jīva.*

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Introduction

The famous saying goes "To err is human, to forgive is divine ". What makes the power of forgiveness comparable to God? The very nature of humans is to get angry and feel resentful towards those who have hurt us or did some harm to us in any way. We tend to remember the undesirable actions of others which impacted us and made us feel bad. Forgiveness is the act of overcoming the feeling of resentment or revenge for the person who has done wrong actions. Supreme forgiveness contributes to a horde of virtues; it is dear to the nude Jain monks. Supreme forgiveness is like the crown jewel (*cintāmanī*) for the learned scholars. Only persons with stable minds can acquire the virtue of supreme forgiveness. Supreme forgiveness is held in high veneration by all great men. Forgiveness works like a dazzling jewel to dispel the darkness of wrong belief. The faults of the helpless persons are pardoned by a forgiver and he does not get enraged with them. Freedom from the growth of evil passions in the mind is forgiveness. The concept of forgiveness in various schools of thought is described here.

Judaism

Forgiveness is a significant theological and moral concept in Judaism, both as a good in itself and as underscoring the gap between human fallibility and the demands of religious and moral practice. That human beings are capable of wrongdoing is taken for granted in the Jewish tradition—not because of 'Original Sin' which is alien to the tradition, but because of the recognition in human nature of emotional and sensual impulses and thoughtless ness: Cain's murder of Abel—the 'invention' of murder-evokes divine outrage, but not surprise. The importance of forgiveness is in its recognition of human fallibility and the value of healing that the process of forgiveness offers.

In the act of forgiveness, Judaism distinguishes transgressions between 'man and his fellow' and those between 'man and God'. A necessary condition for God's forgiveness is that the wrongdoer should first seek and receive forgiveness from the person(s) whom he or she has injured. In the end, divine forgiveness takes precedence, because God ultimately judges human actions and the authenticity of human repentance. This process is epitomized in the prayers offered on the annual Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which include a detailed confession of sins committed, intentionally or unintentionally, during the previous year in the hope of gaining forgiveness for the new year.

Specific conditions distinguish the Jewish conception of forgiveness for the person who seeks it. To be taken seriously, any request for forgiveness requires the person's acknowledgment of responsibility for the wrongful act; making good or providing compensation insofar as that is possible—for the harm or damage caused; assurance of change in the future (the literal meaning of the Hebrew term for repentance, t'shuvah, is 'turning') and a request for forgiveness itself.

A second set of conditions for forgiveness in Judaism addresses the question of who is empowered to grant it—the conditions are both unequivocal and at odds with certain views in other traditions. Where the wrongdoing has occurred between man and his fellow man, only the person who has suffered injury can grant forgiveness—it is also this person who decides whether the conditions for granting forgiveness have been met. On these terms, no third party or surrogate—whether a cleric or a representative of the person harmed—can extend forgiveness.

Where the injury caused makes it impossible for the victim to respond to the wrongdoer's request for forgiveness (for example, as a victim of murder), forgiveness at this human level would be impossible—and the act itself then becomes in effect unforgivable. A dramatic example of this notion was the theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel's response to the report of a request for forgiveness by a dying Nazi soldier who had repented his participation in a Nazi atrocity: "No one else can forgive crimes committed against other people." Divine forgiveness might be extended even here, but that would depend on God's judgment of the authenticity of repentance.

That granting forgiveness for wrongdoing among persons is first in the hands of the person wronged raises the possibility that he or she may be unwilling to grant even a genuine request—Judaism views such refusal itself as a potential wrong. If the wrongdoer acknowledges his wrongdoing three times before witnesses—including each time a request for forgiveness and the expression of willingness to provide compensation—but the person wronged continues to deny him forgiveness, the person who was first injured becomes himself guilty of wrongdoing. Whether this constitutes human forgiveness for the initial wrongdoer is unclear, the issue moves, in any event, into God's 'court'.

Forgiveness may be related to, but is independent of, the exercise of justice. The person who wishes to be forgiven may repent, provide compensation and accept any other punishment mandated by a Rabbinic court—but obtaining forgiveness is separate and in addition to these. Where Jewish law mandates capital punishment for a wrong that has been committed, an odd combination of execution and forgiveness may coincide. God's forgiveness, although generally presupposes a sinner's first obtaining human forgiveness, ultimately stands on its own. In the Kabbalist doctrine of reincarnation, repentance as an obligation may be realized only after several cycles. The possibility of God's forgiveness in these terms extends to the subjects of the most severe, in some cases hereditary, condemnation found in the *Bible*—the descendants of Amalek who truly turn away from their past may escape the otherwise-man-dated punishment—a pardon rather than forgiveness.

The role of forgiveness in Judaic practice may seem to conflict with instances of severe justice or punishment recorded in the Hebrew *Bible* in which no opportunity

was afforded for repentance or forgiveness. The doctrine of theodicy, which figures in Judaism as in other major Western religious traditions, and according to which historical events occur as punishment or reward for human actions, leaves little space for intervention-like a plea for forgiveness—between an act and the judgment on it. That issue extends beyond the concept of forgiveness and its important place in Judaism's theological and moral tradition. Maimonides' statement that "Even if a man has sinned his whole life and repents on the day of his death, his sins are forgiven " underscores both the role of forgiveness as a principle and the complications of its applications. The function of forgiveness, religiously and socially, is readily inferred—the possibility of a return to full moral and religious standing in one's society and before God has obvious significance for its effect on the lives of the individuals involved and on the texture of communal existence as a whole .

Christianity

The concept of forgiveness is one of the central elements of the Christian life, seen as the act of, condition of, or disposition toward pardoning sin. Given new expression by Jesus and closely associated with the atonement theology developed by St. Paul, forgiveness became a characteristic of the early church and according to the Acts of the Apostles (10:43), a hallmark of belief in the founder through whom the forgiveness of sins is assured.

The Greek verb *aphimi* (forgive) is used over 140 times in the New Testament, although comparatively little in the letters of St. Paul. Jesus' own discourses on forgiveness are plentiful. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), in which believers petition God to 'forgive us the wrong we have done as we forgive those who wrong us' (verse 12), is given further emphasis by Jesus, who exhorts and cautions that if forgiveness is withheld, then the heavenly Father will not forgive (verses 14-15). So important is the need to forgive, at least in the context of the gospels, that in reply to Peter's question about how frequently one should forgive, Jesus counsels forgiving seventy times seven times (Matthew 18:21-35). The gratuitous nature of forgiveness, however, is tempered by reasonability. Jesus recognizes that contumacy in sin is unforgivable (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-18), as is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29), and even while modeling the necessity of forgiveness, he is firm in his insistence that one's sins should not be repeated (John 8:11). The remission of sins is sometimes allied with the question of the power of the keys, by which clergy are delegated by Christ to withhold forgiveness, and hence deny access to the Kingdom of Heaven, if there is proper warrant .

If forgiveness is seen as a means toward community-building among Jesus' followers, it is accelerated and broadened by the theological understanding of his

death. Forgiveness is not rendered without penalty. St. Paul finds redemption through Jesus' blood sacrifice (Ephesians 1:7; Col 1:14), a propitiatory act, and the author of the letter to the Hebrews concurs (Hebrews 9:22), noting that this sacrifice is done once for all (Hebrews 10:12–18) .

Gradually the fathers of the church began to formulate rituals for the forgiveness of sins and linked this to public penances. Church councils elaborated both the theory and method of forgiveness and the scholastic theologians articulated its logic. The casuist tradition in Christian moral theology looked for ways in which forgiveness might be obtained by penitents. Reformers in the sixteenth century decried the Catholic doctrine of indulgences, the temporal remission of punishment for sins already forgiven by God. For the first time, the Council of Trent (1551) not only enshrined the practice of confession as a sacrament for the universal Church, but also directed that all the faithful who had reached the age of reason perform it once yearly .

Today forgiveness has ecumenical and social import. The mutual lifting of anathemas between Catholics and the Orthodox is one step toward ecclesial unity. One particularly rich ceremony of the Jubilee - an international coalition movement in over forty countries calling for cancellation of unpayable third world debt by the year 2000—dubbed the 'Day of Forgiveness', came on March 12, 2000, during the penitential season of Lent. There Pope John Paul II begged forgiveness from God for the sins committed by members of the church, and particularly sins committed in the name of the church. As recently as May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI echoed his predecessor in this regard. The wave of forgiveness launched in various ways by the churches has spilled over into the social realm, where its pastoral efficacy is seen in such organizations as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, among other similar programs. As a means of promoting peace, forgiveness heals those wounds created by civil strife through remorse of the guilty, the public acknowledgment of their crimes, and final confrontation and healing by victims.

Islam

Forgiveness is a fundamental concept rooted within the teachings of Islam. It is most crucial for restoring the relational balance and healing between family members and within society. It sets up a mental process through which feelings of anger and resentment can be dealt with when the forgiver and the person forgiven seek reconciliation. Forgiveness also functions at another level enabling reconnection with God for a seeker of spiritual healing. This suggests that there are two aspects of forgiveness in Islam—the first relates to the need for humans to find divine forgiveness for their own short comings, and the other concerns the need for humans to practice forgiveness between one another for the wrongs committed to others.

God is described in many verses in the *Qur'an* by names that relate to his mercy and forgiveness. He is called the most forgiving (*al-ghafoor*); the one who restores or heals(*al-'afuw*)); the one who accepts repentance (*al-tawwab*) and the Most Merciful and Compassionate (*al-rahmanand al-rahim*). The *Qur'an* also indicates that God's mercy and forgiveness overtake his justice. Although in the *Qur'an*, *Suras* 4:48 and 9:80 suggest that God does not forgive idolatry and apostates, in general, Islamic belief declares that God is more merciful and caring to His creations than a mother is to her infants.

This means that God created humans knowing that they can be heedless or liable to forget their duties and responsibilities—in fact, *insaan*, the Arabic word for humans, derives from the word *nasiya*, to forget. As humans we are liable to make mistakes and are constantly in need of God's forgiveness. This goes back to the time of Adam and Eve when they had disobeyed God, but did not know how to ask for forgiveness: "Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of forgiveness, and his Lord turned toward him, for He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful" (*Qur'an* 2:37).

This negates the idea of original sin and, by extension, the doctrine of vicarious atonement that stems from it: "Say: O my Devotees who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins (except continued association of Him with other partners/deities): for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (39:53).

It is difficult to forgive those who have committed grave injustice, yet, the faithful are asked to try even harder to forgive their enemies and those that have committed the worst excesses. The *Qur'an* teaches that forgiveness is both required and necessary to deepen one's piety. It also provides the basis for a new community of reconciled members—as when Muhammad declared a general amnesty upon re-entering his native city of Mecca in 630 and from which he had narrowly escaped with his life less than a decade earlier.

Consider the following verses of the *Qur'an*: "Believers are those who avoid major sins and acts of indecencies and when they are angry they forgive" (42:37); "The reward of the evil is the evil thereof, but whosoever forgives and makes amends, his reward is with Allah" (42:40); "If you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, It is indeed better for the patient. Endure you patiently. Your patience is not except through the help of God" (16:126-127).

Hinduism

Hindu traditions use several classical Vedic Sanskrit words to illuminate the supplementary and complementary shades of meanings associated with forgiveness: merciful (*kṣamā*), compassionate (*dayā*), graceful (*kṛpā*), empathetic (*kāruṇya*), unbiased with any form of hatred (*adveśa*) and one who does not cause any fear and generates a sense of trust and confidence (*abhaya*). The understanding of forgiveness is influenced by the context of discussion; the affiliates in the act or process and the past and continuing relations between the affiliates. The act of forgiving is a process for getting freedom from inner pains, fears, and sufferings and moving toward a goal of comfort, freedom, an attitude of detachment, salvation and self-realization.

Hinduism recognizes two sides in the act of forgiveness. Each side is a multilayered structure. The first side is the seeker of forgiveness; the other side is the one who extends and delivers forgiveness. The act of seeking (*prārthanā*) forgiveness (*kṣamā, dayā, kṛpā*) may be carried out unilaterally, without the presence, permission, or expectation of the other side. The act of extending deliverance (*anugraha pradāna*) or forgiving (*kāruṇya, adveśa, abhaya*) may also take place unilaterally without the presence, permission, or expectation of acceptance from the other side.

In Hinduism, forgiveness, in the context of theological debates, takes the approach of explaining a personal God's or a spiritual master's (guru's) unbound mercy, grace, and compassion (*dayā, kāruṇya, kṛpā*). This is the model in which forgiveness is presented as emotion, love and devotion (*bhāvana, prema, bhakti*). In schools of theology where the concept of god is secondary or even dispensed with, forgiveness is represented as a combination of human virtues: pardoning; grace; mercy; compassion; freedom from all types of hatred, dislike, and repulsions—a state that can result only because of the presence of unbound, unconditioned love; and behaviour that will generate a sense of trust and confidence for interaction and not engender fear in anyone an attitude that can happen only when honesty and truth nurture the heart, mind and action.

The Jain and Buddhist traditions have stretched the concept of forgiveness to its limits in their nonviolence practices. The God incarnate, Śrī Rāma, who is extolled in the famous epic the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is esteemed for the virtue of forgiveness in the aspect of fearless trust (*abhaya*). In the medieval period, the saints and devotees extolled all the aspects of forgiveness. The Vaiṣṇava tradition advocates an extreme practice of forgiveness in the sense of absolute surrender' (*prapatti śaraṇagati*) to the will of the Supreme God.

Yoga schools extol the virtue of forgiveness as a part of the *yamas* and *niyamas*. The classical definition of *dharma* i.e. duty or virtue includes the *kṣamā* element of forgiveness. The quality of compassion is one of the six most desirable qualities for the partners intending to marry. Mother Earth is considered the incarnate form of forgiveness in the aspect of tolerance (*kṣamā*) and compassionate support.

Socially, the practice of forgiveness takes many shapes. The mandate for the practice of forgiveness is to possess an unbiased attitude; compassion; commensuration by balancing judgment and motive; and to accept the consequences of forgiving on behalf of the individual beneficiary and society at large. No one single model or rule fits the entire scenario. Following an inappropriate model in the dispensation of forgiveness is considered a sin. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness or meekness, on the contrary, forgiveness is the force that restrains the unregulated expression of hatred, power, and intolerance .

Buddhism

Forgiveness (*kṣamā* in Saṁskrita, *khamā* in Pāli) is a central concept in Buddhism and understanding forgiveness is essential to *nirvāṇa*, the ultimate state of compassion and wisdom all Buddhists hope to attain. The Buddhist adept, unlike the Christian, does not seek nor receive forgiveness from an omniscient deity as dispensation for his or her individual wrong doing. Receiving forgiveness is not a step toward entering heaven, and/or attaining eternal life, as in some other faiths. Forgiveness is part of the all-embracing the practice of loving-kindness (*metta*) espoused by the Buddha, which stresses the importance of reconciliation in establishing harmony in the world, considering that all living beings are interconnected.

Buddhists believe in karma (*kamma*), sometimes referred to as the Law of Consequences or the Law of Karma. According to Buddhist thought, while the mind is eternal, the physical bodies it inhabits are not—thus, when the body in which the mind currently resides dies, the mind moves into another body, another physical life. Actions in the present, both good and bad, affect the situations and experiences of future lives. PadmaSambhava, an Indian teacher who brought Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century, wrote, "If you want to know your past life, look into your present condition; If you want to know your future life, look at your present actions". The cycle of reincarnation will continue until the mind reaches enlightened consciousness, until it reaches *nirvāṇa*. Yet with the power of awareness of the law of karma, one can choose actions that create positive karma, and avoid those that beget negative karma. Forgiveness is necessary to prevent creation of negative thoughts and actions that will karmically affect future lives. The first chapter of the Dhammapada, the Buddha's essential teachings, observes:

"He abused me, he struck me, he overcame me, he robbed me"-
In those who do not harbor such thoughts, hatred will cease.
(Dhammapada, 1:3-4)

It is important to note that although forgiveness is a common theme in the *Jātaka* tales (tales of the Buddha as various *bodhisattvas*), and that in some stories, forgiveness

comes from the Buddha to someone who has wronged him or others, these are not stories of absolution by a deity to a layperson. The Buddha was not an omnipresent deity; he was an ordinary man who became enlightened, and as such became a divine being. Being a Buddha comes from having attained *nirvāṇa* and having the ultimate wisdom-including the salience of forgiveness—to share with others. This is not the same as a Christian receiving forgiveness from Jesus Christ or God.

There is a Buddhist tale, for example, of Aṅgulimāla, a serial murderer. Aṅgulimāla brutally killed and maimed many people and eventually planned to kill his own parents. When Aṅgulimāla was about to kill his mother, the Buddha intervened, advising Aṅgulimāla to stop killing, for anger and violence were not of right living. Amazed by the Buddha's words, Aṅgulimāla asked if he could become a disciple, despite the fact that he was a murderer. The Buddha accepted him, and Aṅgulimāla became a devoted monk. The Buddha did not absolve Aṅgulimāla of his wrongdoing. By emanating forgiveness, he helped Aṅgulimāla come to an understanding of the vanity of his anger and violence. Living a life of compassion and forgiveness is part of loving-kindness; which benefits all people, not just the one who has been forgiven.

If negative thoughts about having been wronged have already arisen, one can take steps to release them. Remaining angry disturbs one's peace of mind in his or her present life, and acting upon that anger will undoubtedly have negative consequences in a future physical life. The Buddha taught that learning to live a life that embraces forgiveness could be achieved through repeated meditation.

The Buddha recommended two types of meditation to address anger and embrace forgiveness. Vipassana meditation or insight meditation, involves recognizing the angry or vengeful feelings that arise, but processing them without attachment. Managing the feelings dispassionately allows room for forgiveness. Metta meditation or loving-kindness meditation, focuses on the interconnectedness of all sentient beings. In loving-kindness meditation, one uses one's breath to focus on feelings of loving-kindness for oneself. In stages, he or she expands these feelings to others, namely a loved one, a friend, a neutral person, someone one feels hostility toward and finally, to the entire universe. Remaining attached to anger causes suffering; embracing forgiveness reflects wisdom and compassion.

Jainism

The word '*kṣamā*' means patience, forbearance and pardon. "*kṣamā śatro ca mitre ca yatināmevabhūṣanam*" (*Hito*) - to pardon an enemy or a friend both, is the jewel of Yatis. "*Kṣamā vīrasya bhūṣanam*" – forbearance is the ornament of the brave.

Uttama kṣamā dharma supreme forgiveness is the first *dharma* out of the ten *dharma* of Jains. Ordinarily, it means not to cause misery to any living being or not to get angry at any unpleasant and unwanted happening. Forbearance (*kṣamā*) is the

inherent virtue of soul. When the soul degrades from its real attributes to ill-nature, such a soul is called attached (*rāgī*) or full of malice – ill will (*dvaiś*) etc. because the soul is simple and forgiving by nature. Discarding anger and getting stable in one's real nature, is *kṣamā*. *Kṣamā* is the soul's inherent wealth. Being endowed with this real wealth, this living being is called forbearing in disposition.

The conduct of a man, who does not get the least enraged even on finding obvious reasons for exciting anger, is in keeping with *uttama kṣamā dharma*. To forgive one with evil perception (*mithyādṛṣti*) or him who utters unpleasant words and makes efforts to cause anguish and torture without any reason, is the first category of *kṣamā*. To pardon one who nourishes thoughts of oppressing and killing with no reason is the second category of *kṣamā*. "kṣamatiitikṣamā" – one who practices forgiveness (*kṣamā*) under all odds is entitled as possessor of the virtue of supreme forgiveness (*uttama kṣamā dharma*).

Even when ill-natured persons heap abuses, ridicules, disgrace and beatings on the monks, who enter other regions to discover the cause of the real state of the body and indulge in twisting and torturing their body, the non-appearance of ill-will in these monks minds is *kṣamā*. This very thing has been said in this commenting remark of *NiyamaSāra*

To remain stable in supreme equanimitous thoughts on getting threat of being killed by persons given to evil perception (*mithyā-dṛṣti*) for no reason, considering oneself formless Parama Brahma is *uttama kṣamā dharma*. The following example reveals this very thing.

There was a saint named Ekanātha. He had a vow of bathing in the Ganga daily. His ideology of forgiveness and renunciation was highly talked of in the city. One Paṭhāna also used to live in that city. Once he thought of teshing the saint. His house was on that very road by which the saint used to go for bathing in the Ganga. The next day when Ekanātha was returning after having a bath in the Ganga, the Paṭhāna chewing a betel leaf, spit down from above his rooftop. Its shower fell on the body of Ekanātha also; hence the saint went back to have a bath in the Ganga again. This process was repeated a hundred times on that one day. Ultimately when the saint was returning after his one hundred and one time bath, the Paṭhāna came down from his house top and falling down at his feet, started weeping and begging pardon, for his mischief and ill-doing. The saint said,"I am grateful to you for your good deed, because daily I used to bathe in the Ganga only once, but today I am lucky to bathe a hundred and one times due to you."Such is his generosity.

The persons who observe *uttama kṣamā dharma* towards those, who commit crimes against them, even on being capable of quick retaliation, are regarded by saints drinking the nectar of forbearance (*kṣamā-amṛta*) to be the destroyers of sins.

One who thinks in this or bears the miseries befallen on him with forbearance (*kṣamā*), no troubles and misfortunes will visit him again. 'Just as at the time of repaying debts one has to return the money of the money lender; similarly I had committed sins in my previous birth and now I am reaping their fruits in the form of sorrow, which is proper. If I suffer it with a spirit of forbearance, I shall become happy on getting rid of the debt of my sins.' Thinking that no anger should be displayed.

A being gifted with forbearance (*kṣamā*) never feels the prick of sorrow. Abuse him, as much as you can, have ill will against him as much as you like, even then he does not give up his *kṣamā* virtue. In this respect the following remark of a great scholar is noteworthy: "If you are wronged, be bravely revenged. Slight it and the work is begun; forgive it and it is finished. He is below himself who is not above injury."

Once it so happened that when saint Tukārāma had distributed all his belongings amongst the poor, one day the state of starvation arose in his home. His wife said, "What are you doing sitting idle here? Go and fetch a bundle of sugarcanes from the fields. We shall be able to pass the day anyhow by sucking them." Consequently, when Tukārāma set out for home with a bundle of sugarcanes from the field; on the way beggars enveloped him and begged for sugarcanes. Tukārāma gave one sugarcane each to every beggar. When he reached home, only one sugarcane was left with him. Seeing one sugarcane the hungry wife was enraged. She snatched the sugarcane from Tukārāmaś hands and started beating him with it. As a result, the sugarcane broke down into two equal parts. Now her anger subsided. In spite of getting beatings from his wife, the calm and forgiving Tukārāma spoke with a smile: "What a good wife! You have divided the sugarcane in two equal pieces. You suck one and I will suck the other."

Kamaṭha and Marabhūti both were brothers. One day Kamaṭha had sexual intercourse with Marabhūti's wife in his absence. As a result the king exiled Kamaṭha from his kingdom. Kamaṭha reached the hermitage of a sinful ascetic and started performing vicious penance. When Marabhūti, out of love for his brother, went to bring Kamaṭha back, the wretched fellow hurled a stone slab on his brother Marabhūti; consequently he died then and there and was reborn as an elephant. In the long run the elephant observed aṇuvratas under the influence of the preachments of a religious teacher. Meanwhile, the spirit of Kamaṭha after death was reborn as a dragon and bit the elephant out of ill will of his previous birth. Likewise, up to ten births Kamaṭha's spirit suffered the many-fold miseries of hell (*naraka*) by nourishing uncalled for enmity with Marabhūti and by bringing tortures on him; but the spirit (*jīva*) of Marabhūti went on forgiving the spirit of Kamaṭha. Therefore, due to his forgiveness (*kṣamā*) he was blessed to become Lord Pārśvanātha. In the end the spirit (*jīva*) of Kamaṭha came to the holy feet of Lord Pārśvanātha and asked for his forgiveness shedding all his bitterness and ill will towards him.

Thus, we see supreme forgiveness is pertinent in all the three worlds. It helps to sail across the ocean of birth and death; it enables us to be endowed with the three jewels i.e., right belief, right knowledge and right conduct and safeguards us from a miserable plight.

Conclusion

Thus, we see what harm can an ill-natured person do to one who holds the dagger of forgiveness in his hand? For ultimately one day fire is automatically extinguished on a grassless, barren ground.

To sum up, "It is good to have a giant's power, but bad to use it like a giant." Only the devil mind will try to follow this rule of the jungle.

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