

Chapter Twenty Three

Mahārāja Pr̥thu's Going Back Home

|| 4.23.1-3 ||

maitreya uvāca
dṛṣṭvātmānaṁ pravayasam
ekadā vainya ātmavān
ātmanā vardhitāśeṣa-
svānusargaḥ prajāpatiḥ

jagatas tasthuṣaś cāpi
vṛttido dharmabhṛt satām
niṣpāditeśvarādeśo
yad-artham iha jajñivān

ātmajeṣv ātmajām nyasya
virahād rudatīm iva
prajāsu vimaṇḥsu ekaḥ
sa-dāro 'gāt tapo-vanam

Maitreya said: Once (**ekadā**), seeing his body age (**dṛṣṭvā ātmānaṁ pravayasam**), Pṛthu, protector of the people (**vainyah prajāpatiḥ**), maintainer of all moving and non-moving beings (**jagatas tasthuṣaś cāpi vṛttidah**), who was in control of his mind (**ātmavān**), who had by himself increased the wealth of the state (**ātmanā vardhita aśeṣa sva anusargaḥ**), and who was the upholder of *dharmā* for the devotees (**dharmabhṛt satām**), after having fulfilled the order of the Lord (**niṣpādita īśvara ādeśah**), having appeared on earth for that purpose (**yad-artham iha jajñivān**), handed over to his sons the earth (**ātmajeṣu ātmajām nyasya**), who was lamenting out of separation from him (**virahād rudatīm iva**), and went to the forest alone with his wife (**ekaḥ sa-dāro 'gāt tapo-vanam**), while the citizens grieved (**prajāsu vimaṇḥsu**).

॥ 4.23.4 ॥

tatrāpy adābhya-niyamo
vaikhānasa-susammate
ārabdha ugra-tapasi
yathā sva-vijaye purā

There, he underwent severe austerities (**tatrāpy ārabdha ugra-tapasi**) according to the vānaprastha rules (**vaikhānasa-susammate**), with unbroken vows (**adābhya-niyamah**), using the same effort with which he previously achieved victory over the earth (**yathā sva-vijaye purā**).

|| 4.23.5 ||

kanda-mūla-phalāhārah
śuṣka-parṇāśanaḥ kvacit
ab-bhakṣaḥ katicit pakṣān
vāyu-bhakṣas tataḥ param

He ate only roots like radish and fruits (**kanda-mūla-phalāhārah**), and sometimes ate only dry leaves (**śuṣka-parṇa aśanaḥ kvacit**). He began drinking only water without food for several months at a time (**ab-bhakṣaḥ katicit pakṣān**). Finally he only consumed only air (**vāyu-bhakṣah tataḥ param**).

|| 4.23.6 ||

grīṣme pañca-tapā vīro
varṣāsv āsāraṣāṅ muniḥ
ākaṅṭha-magnaḥ śisire
udake sthaṅḍile-śayaḥ

In the summer he placed fires around himself in the four directions, with the sun burning overhead (**grīṣme pañca-tapā vīrah**). During the monsoon season he tolerated the torrents of rain (**varṣāsv āsāraṣāṅ muniḥ**). During the dewy season he stood up to his neck in cold water (**śisire udake ākaṅṭha-magnaḥ**) and slept on the earth (**sthaṅḍile-śayaḥ**).

|| 4.23.7 ||

titikṣur yata-vāg dānta
ūrdhva-retā jitānilaḥ
ārirādhayiṣuḥ kṛṣṇam
acarat tapa uttamam

Being tolerant (**titikṣuh**), controlling words and senses (**yata-vāg dānta**), controlling sexual impulse (**ūrdhva-retā**) and his life airs (**jita anilaḥ**), his only desire being to worship Kṛṣṇa (**ārirādhayiṣuḥ kṛṣṇam**), he performed the highest austerities (**acarat tapa uttamam**).

|| 4.23.8 ||

tena kramānusiddhena
dhvasta-karmāmalāśayaḥ
prāṇāyāmaiḥ sanniruddha-
ṣaḍ-vargaś chinna-bandhanaḥ

By gradual perfection of austerities (**tena krama anusiddhena**) he destroyed karma (**dhvasta-karma**), developed a joyful heart (**amala āśayaḥ**), controlled the mind and sense by prāṇāyāma (**prāṇāyāmaiḥ sanniruddha ṣaḍ-vargah**), and cut his bondage to the material world (**chinna-bandhanaḥ**).

|| 4.23.9 ||

sanat-kumāro bhagavān
yad āhādhyātmikaṁ param
yogaṁ tenaiva puruṣam
abhajat puruṣarṣabhaḥ

The best of men (**puruṣa rṣabhaḥ**) worshipped the Supreme Lord (**puruṣam abhajat**) by the highest process (**tena eva param**) called adhyātma-yoga (bhakti-yoga) (**adhyātmikaṁ yogaṁ**) which Sanatkumāra had taught (**yad āha sanat-kumāro bhagavān**).

|| 4.23.10 ||

**bhagavad-dharminah sādhoḥ
śraddhayā yatataḥ sadā
bhaktir bhagavati brahmaṇy
ananya-viṣayābhavat**

Constantly endeavouring with faith (**śraddhayā yatataḥ sadā**), dedicated to the Lord (**bhagavad-dharminah**), Pṛthu (**sādhoḥ**) performed bhakti (**bhaktir abhavat**) to the Supreme Lord (**bhagavati brahmaṇy**) alone (**ananya-viṣayā**).

|| 4.23.11 ||

tasyānayaḥ bhagavataḥ parikarma-śuddha-
sattvātmanas tad-anusmāraṇānupūrtiā
jñānam viraktimad abhūn niśitena yena
ciccheda saṁśaya-padam nija-jīva-kośam

By bhakti (**anayā**) filled with continual remembrance of the Lord (**bhagavataḥ anu-saṁsmāraṇa-ānupūrtiā**), Pṛthu, his mind becoming śuddha-sattva (**tasya śuddha-sattva ātmanah**) by service (**parikarma**), developed intense jñāna endowed with detachment (**niśitena viraktimad jñānam abhūt**), by which he destroyed the subtle body (**ciccheda nija-jīva-kośam**), which was a cause of doubt for Pṛthu (**saṁśaya-padam**).

|| 4.23.12 ||

chinnānya-dhīr adhigatātma-gatir nirīhas
tat tatyaje 'cchinad idam vayunena yena
tāvan na yoga-gatibhir yatir apramatto
yāvad gadāgraja-kathāsu ratim na kuryāt

Having destroyed the concept of being his body (**chinna anyadhīh**), having realizing the form of Paramātmā (**adhigata ātmagatih**), and being without desire for siddhis (**nirīhah**), Pṛthu destroyed his subtle body (**idam acchinad**) by jnana (**vayunena**) and then rejected that jñāna (**tat tatyaje**). As long as one does not have attraction for the topics of the Lord (**yāvad gadāgraja-kathāsu ratim na kuryāt**), the jñānī (**tāvad yatih**) will be attached (**apramattah**) to yoga siddhis and liberation (**yoga-gatibhih**).

॥ 4.23.13 ॥

evam sa vīra-pravarah
saṁyojyātmānam ātmani
brahma-bhūto dr̥ḍham kāle
tatyāja svam kalevaram

The best of heroes (**sa vīra-pravarah**), joining (**evam saṁyojya**) his determined mind (**dr̥ḍham ātmānam**) with his spiritual body (**ātmani**) and becoming purely spiritual (**brahma-bhūtah**), gave up his body at that time (**kāle tatyāja svam kalevaram**).

|| 4.23.14 ||

sampīḍya pāyum pārṣṇibhyām
vāyum utsārayaṅ chanaiḥ
nābhyām koṣṭheṣv avasthāpya
hṛd-urah-kaṅṭha-śīrṣaṇi

Pressing the anus with both ankles (**sampīḍya pāyum pārṣṇibhyām**), he gradually led the air (**śanaiḥ vāyum utsārayaṅ**) from the mūlādhara-cakra to the svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra (**nābhyām koṣṭheṣv avasthāpya**), maṇipūraka-cakra, anāhata-cakra, viśuddhi-cakra and ājñā-cakra (**hṛd-urah-kaṅṭha-śīrṣaṇi**).

॥ 4.23.15 ॥

utsarpayaṁs tu taṁ mūrdhni
krameṇāveśya niḥspr̥haḥ
vāyum vāyau kṣitau kāyaṁ
tejas tejasy ayūyujat

He gradually led the air to the brahma-randhra (**krameṇa tu taṁ utsarpayaṁs mūrdhni**), and without desire (**niḥspr̥haḥ**), merged the air in his body with the totality of air (**vāyum vāyau āveśya**), and the earth and fire of his body with the totality of earth and fire (**kṣitau kāyaṁ tejas tejasy ayūyujat**).

|| 4.23.16 ||

khāny ākāśe dravam toyē
yathā-sthānam vibhāgaśaḥ
kṣitim ambhasi tat tejasy
ado vāyau nabhasy amum

He merged the ether in his body with the totality of ether (**khāny ākāśe**), and the water in his body with the totality of water (**dravam toyē yathā-sthānam vibhāgaśaḥ**). He merged earth into water, water into fire (**kṣitim ambhasi tat tejasy**), fire into air and air into ether (**ado vāyau nabhasy amum**).

॥ 4.23.17 ॥

indriyeṣu manas tāni
tan-mātreṣu yathodbhavam
bhūtādināmūny utkr̥ṣya
mahaty ātmani sandadhe

He merged the mind into the senses (**indriyeṣu manah**) and the senses into the sense objects (**tāni tan-mātreṣu**), according to order of their appearance (**yathā udbhavam**). He merged the senses objects into ahaṅkāra (**amūny bhūtādina utkr̥ṣya**) and ahaṅkāra into mahat-tattva (**mahaty ātmani sandadhe**).

|| 4.23.18 ||

taṁ sarva-guṇa-vinyāsam
jīve māyāmaye nyadhāt
taṁ cānuśayam ātma-stham
asāv anuśayī pumān
jñāna-vairāgya-vīryeṇa
svarūpa-stho 'jahāt prabhuḥ

He placed (**nyadhāt**) the mahat-tattva (**taṁ sarva-guṇa-vinyāsam**) into prakṛti (**māyāmaye**), the covering on the jīva (**jīve**). Pṛthu, fully capable (**prabhuḥ ātma-stham**), the shelter of prakṛti (**taṁ ca anuśayam**), then gave up prakṛti (**asāv ajahāt**) situated beside him (**anuśayī**), by the power of jñāna and vairāgya (**jñāna-vairāgya-vīryeṇa**), though he was already situated in his spiritual body (**svārūpa-sthah**).

॥ 4.23.19 ॥

arcir nāma mahā-rājñī
tat-patny anugatā vanam
sukumāry atad-arhā ca
yat-padbhyām sparśanam bhuvah

The great queen, Arci (**arcir nāma mahā-rājñī**), his wife (**tat-patny**), whose feet should not touch the ground (**yat-padbhyām sparśanam bhuvah**), and thus was not suited to austerity (**sukumāry atad-arhā**), followed him to the forest (**anugatā vanam**).

॥ 4.23.20 ॥

atīva bhartur vrata-dharma-niṣṭhayā
śuśrūṣayā cārṣa-deha-yātrayā
nāvindatārtim parikarśitāpi sā
preyaskara-sparśana-māna-nirvṛtiḥ

Although she became thin (**sā parikarśitā api**), she did not experience pain (**na avindata ārtim**) by living like a sage (**ārṣa-deha-yātrayā**), serving with determination (**śuśrūṣayā niṣṭhayā**) the vows of her intent husband (**atīva bhartur vrata-dharma**), taking pleasure (**nirvṛtiḥ**) in his respect (**māna**) and touch of his hand (**preyaskara-sparśana**).

॥ 4.23.21 ॥

deham vipannākhila-cetanādikam
patyuhḥ pṛthivyā dayitasya cātmanahḥ
ālakṣya kiñcic ca vilapya sā satī
citām athāropayad adri-sānuni

Seeing that the body (**ālakṣya deham**) of her merciful husband (**dayitasya ātmanahḥ patyuhḥ**), master of the earth (**pṛthivyā**), was without life symptoms (**vipanna akhila-cetanādikam**), after lamenting a little (**kiñcit ca vilapya**), she placed it on a pyre (**sā satī citām atha āropayad**) on a summit of a hill (**adri-sānuni**).

॥ 4.23.22 ॥

vidhāya kṛtyam hradinī-jalāplutā
dattvodakam bhartur udāra-karmaṇaḥ
natvā divi-sthāms tridaśāms triḥ parītya
viveśa vahniṁ dhyāyatī bhartṛ-pādaḥ

Performing the rites (**vidhāya kṛtyam**), taking bath in a lake (**hradinī-jalāplutā**), offering water to her husband (**dattvā udakam bhartuh**) of great fame (**udāra-karmaṇaḥ**), and offering respects to the thirty devatās (**natvā divi-sthāms tridaśām**), she circumambulated the pyre three times (**triḥ parītya**) and entered the fire (**viveśa vahniṁ**) while meditating on the feet of her husband (**dhyāyatī bhartṛ-pādaḥ**).

॥ 4.23.23 ॥

vilokyānugatām sādhvīm
pṛthum vīra-varam patim
tuṣṭuvur varadā devair
deva-patnyaḥ sahasraśaḥ

Seeing her follow her husband Pṛthu (**vilokya anugatām pṛthum patim**) who was the best of warriors (**vīra-varam**), thousands of wives of the devatās (**deva-patnyaḥ sahasraśaḥ**), capable of giving blessings (**varadā**), began praising her (**tuṣṭuvuh**) as did the devatās (**devaih**).

॥ 4.23.24 ॥

**kurvatyaḥ kusumāsāraṁ
tasmin mandara-sānuni
nadatsv amara-tūryeṣu
gṛṇanti sma parasparam**

While drums of the devatās sounded (**nadatsu amara-tūryeṣu**) and the wives of the devatās showered flowers (**kurvatyaḥ kusumāsāraṁ**) from the peak of Mandara mountain (**tasmin mandara-sānuni**), the devatās spoke among themselves (**gṛṇanti sma parasparam**).

॥ 4.23.25 ॥

devya ūcuḥ

aho iyaṁ vadhūr dhanyā
yā caivaṁ bhū-bhujām patim
sarvātmanā patim bheje
yajñeśaṁ śrīr vadhūr iva

The wives of the devatās said: Oh, she is most fortunate (**aho iyaṁ vadhūr dhanyā**)! She worshipped her husband (**yā patim bheje**), King of kings (**bhū-bhujām patim**), with her whole soul (**sarvātmanā**), just as Lakṣmī worships Viṣṇu (**yajñeśaṁ śrīr vadhūr iva**).

॥ 4.23.26 ॥

saiṣā nūnaṁ vrajaty ūrdhvam
anu vainyaṁ patim satī
paśyatāsmān atītyārcir
durvibhāvyena karmaṇā

That must be her traveling in the sky (**sa eṣā nūnaṁ vrajaty ūrdhvam**). See her following her husband Pṛthu (**paśyata anu vainyaṁ patim satī**). Arci has surpassed us (**arcih āsmān atītya**) in inconceivable actions (**durvibhāvyena karmaṇā**).

|| 4.23.27 ||

teṣāṃ durāpaṃ kiṃ tv anyan
martyānāṃ bhagavat-padam
bhuvī lolāyūṣo ye vai
naiṣkarmyaṃ sādhayanty uta

What else is difficult to obtain (**kiṃ anyat tu durāpaṃ**) for human beings of short lifespan (**teṣāṃ lola āyūṣo martyānāṃ**) on earth (**bhuvī**) who attain the abode of the Lord (**ye vai bhagavat-padam sādhayanty**), which is free of material action and reaction (**naiṣkarmyaṃ**)?

|| 4.23.28 ||

sa vañcito batātma-dhruk
kṛcchreṇa mahatā bhuvī
labdhvāpavargyaṁ mānuṣyaṁ
viṣayeṣu viṣajjate

Having with great difficulty (**mahatā kṛcchreṇa**) attained a human form of life (**labdhvā bhuvī mānuṣyaṁ**), suitable for liberation (**āpavargyaṁ**), a person who becomes attached to sense objects (**viṣayeṣu viṣajjate**) is certainly cheated (**sah bata vañcītaḥ**) and a killer of the self (**ātma-dhruk**).

॥ 4.23.29 ॥

maitreya uvāca

stuvatīṣv amara-strīṣu

pati-lokaṁ gatā vadhūḥ

yam vā ātma-vidāṁ dhuryo

vainyaḥ prāpācyutāśrayaḥ

Maitreya said: While the women were glorifying her (**stuvatīṣv amara-strīṣu**), Arci reached the planet where her husband had gone (**pati-lokaṁ gatā vadhūḥ**). There (**yam**), Pṛthu, the best of knowers of the Lord (**vainyaḥ ātma-vidāṁ dhuryaḥ**), attained the shelter of the Lord (**prāpa acyuta āśrayaḥ**).

॥ 4.23.30 ॥

ittham-bhūtānubhāvo 'sau
pṛthuḥ sa bhagavattamaḥ
kīrtitaṁ tasya caritam
uddāma-caritasya te

Pṛthu was the best of devotees (**pṛthuḥ sah bhagavat tamaḥ**) and great authority (**asau bhūta anubhāvah**) as described (**ittham**). I have described to you the story of Pṛthu (**kīrtitaṁ te tasya caritam**), of splendid character (**uddāma-caritasya**).

॥ 4.23.31 ॥

ya idaṁ sumahat puṇyaṁ
śraddhayāvahitaḥ paṭhet
śrāvayec chr̥ṇuyād vāpi
sa pṛthoḥ padavīm iyāt

The person (**yah**) who with faith and attention (**śraddhayā avahitaḥ**) reads, makes others hear (**paṭhet śrāvayet**), or hears (**śr̥ṇuyād vāpi**) this great, pure story of Pṛthu (**idaṁ sumahat puṇyaṁ**) will attain the abode that Pṛthu attained (**sah pṛthoḥ padavīm iyāt**).

॥ 4.23.32 ॥

brāhmaṇo brahma-varcasvī
rājanyo jagatī-patiḥ
vaiśyaḥ paṭhan viṭ-patiḥ syāc
chūdraḥ sattamatām iyāt

The brāhmaṇa becomes most learned (**brāhmaṇo brahma-varcasvī**), the kings become leaders of the world (**rājanyo jagatī-patiḥ**), the merchants become masters of cows (**vaiśyaḥ paṭhan viṭ-patiḥ syāt**), and laborers becomes the best devotee (**śūdraḥ sat-tamatām iyāt**).

॥ 4.23.33 ॥

triḥ kṛtva idam ākarṇya
naro nāry athavādr̥tā
aprajah suprajatamo
nirdhano dhanavattamah

Hearing this story three times (**triḥ kṛtva idam ākarṇya**) with attention (**ādr̥tā**), a man or woman (**naro athavā nāry**) without children (**aprajah**) becomes blessed with many good children (**suprajatamah**) and the poor man becomes the richest (**nirdhano dhanavat tamah**).

॥ 4.23.34 ॥

aspaṣṭa-kīrtiḥ suyaśā
mūrkhō bhavati paṇḍitaḥ
idaṁ svasty-ayanam puṁsām
amaṅgalya-nivāraṇam

A person with no reputation becomes famous (**aspaṣṭa-kīrtiḥ suyaśā**) and a fool becomes learned (**mūrkhō bhavati paṇḍitaḥ**). This story brings auspiciousness (**idaṁ svasty-ayanam puṁsām**) and destroys inauspiciousness (**amaṅgalya-nivāraṇam**).

॥ 4.23.35 ॥

**dhanyaṃ yaśasyaṃ āyuṣyaṃ
svargyaṃ kali-malāpaham
dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇāṃ
samyak siddhim abhīsubhiḥ
śraddhayaitad anuśrāvyāṃ
caturṇāṃ kāraṇāṃ param**

Those desiring perfection (**samyak siddhim abhīsubhiḥ**) of wealth, fame, long life (**dhanyaṃ yaśasyaṃ āyuṣyaṃ**), Svarga, destruction of Kali-yuga's influence (**svargyaṃ kali-malāpaham**), dharma, artha, kāma or mokṣa (**dharmā-artha-kāma-mokṣāṇāṃ**) should hear with faith this story (**śraddhayā etad anuśrāvyāṃ**), which is the cause of the four benedictions (**caturṇāṃ kāraṇāṃ param**).

॥ 4.23.36 ॥

vijayābhimukho rājā
śrutvaitad abhiyāti yān
balim tasmai haranty agre
rājānaḥ pṛthave yathā

Hearing this story (**etad śrutvā**), a king wanting victory (**vijaya abhimukho rājā**) sets forth and attacks the enemy (**abhiyāti yān**). Other kings will offer him tribute (**rājānaḥ balim tasmai haranty**), just as they did to Pṛthu previously (**agre pṛthave yathā**).

|| 4.23.37 ||

muktānya-saṅgo bhagavaty
amalām bhaktim udvahan
vainyasya caritaṁ puṇyam
śṛṇuyāc chrāvayet paṭhet

One should hear, make others hear, and recite (**śṛṇuyāc śrāvayet paṭhet**) this pure story of Pṛthu (**vainyasya caritaṁ puṇyam**) while giving up all other results (**mukta-anya-saṅgo**), in order to cultivate pure bhakti to the Lord (**bhagavaty amalām bhaktim udvahan**).

॥ 4.23.38 ॥

vaicitravīryābhihitam
mahan-māhātmya-sūcakam
asmin kṛtam atimartyam
pārthavīm gatim āpnuyāt

O Vidura (**vaicitravīrya**)! I have explained (**abhihitam**) this superhuman story indicating the greatness of the devotee (**mahat-māhātmya-sūcakam**). One should attain the destination of Pṛthu (**pārthavīm atimartyam gatim āpnuyāt**) described in the story (**asmin kṛtam**).

॥ 4.23.39 ॥

anudinam idam ādareṇa śṛṇvan
pṛthu-caritam śṛṇvan vimukta-saṅgaḥ
bhagavati bhava-sindhu-pota-pāde
sa ca nipuṇām labhate ratim manuṣyaḥ

Whoever hears or recites this story of Pṛthu (**sa ca nipuṇām manuṣyaḥ idam pṛthu-caritam śṛṇvan**) daily with respect (**anudinam ādareṇa**), avoiding material association (**vimukta-saṅgaḥ**), will attain rati to the Lord (**bhagavati ratim labhate**) whose feet are a boat for crossing the ocean of material existence (**bhava-sindhu-pota-pāde**).