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One thing: you have to walk and create the way by your walking; you will not find a ready-made path. It is not so cheap, to reach to the ultimate realisation of truth. You will have to create the path by walking yourself; the path is not ready-made, lying there and waiting for you.”

—Osho



Prince Pandava and his wife Draupadi.

It's Valentine's Day. You have booked a nice restaurant and put a lot of thought into picking just the right gift. On D-day you arrange for your neighbourhood florist to deliver them to your beau's office to add an element of surprise. Easy.

But what if you had to cross a treacherous forest full of wild animals and fight a horde of fierce demons just to get some flowers your beloved? How would you fancy such an exciting Valentine's? Would you give up before you even tried or would you 'surrender to love' and rise to the occasion?

In the Indian epic *Mahabharata*, *Bhīma*, the mighty Pandava prince, took on such a challenge to please his wife Draupadi. And the yoga pose – *adhvasana* – is rooted in this myth. *Adhva* means 'path' or 'path to enlightenment' in Sanskrit.

After losing their kingdom by deceit to their cousins the Kauravas, the Pandavas were banished from the kingdom for 13 years. During their period of exile, the Pandava brothers decided to visit Gandhamadana Mountain. Gandhamadana means 'intoxicating fragrance' and this mythical mountain is purportedly located in the northernmost part of the Himalayas and close to Mount Kailash. It is the abode of several devas and a favoured dwelling place of Hanuman. Another Gandhamadana mountain is situated in Pamban Island close to Rameshwaram in southern India. This is the same mountain from where Hanuman is supposed to have taken his leap to Lanka in search of Sita.

Gandhamadana was the site where the celestial sages Nara and Narayana performed severe penance and the woods in that area contained many exotic plants and flowers. The Pandavas decided to rest there for a few weeks.

One day Draupadi chanced upon a rare flower – *saugandhika* – and was mesmerised by its sweet fragrance. She asked *Bhīma* to find some more *saugandhika* flowers for her to give to the other brothers. *Bhīma*, who

was suffering pangs of guilt for the hardships Draupadi had to endure, was happy to oblige, although he was not familiar with the forest.

He set out in the direction from which the flower had blown to them and kept going deeper into the forest, but was unable to locate the flowers. In agitation he started uprooting trees and frightening the animals. In the confusion a rogue

elephant rushed at him, but *Bhīma* grabbed him by his tusks and threw him to the ground, killing him.

Hanuman, who was living in the forest, heard the ruckus and grew concerned by his brother's attitude. He realised that he would need to guide and protect him. Both Hanuman and *Bhīma* were born through the divine assistance of Pavan-deva and were considered spiritual brothers. »



**ADHVASANA**  
MEANS PATH TO  
ENLIGHTENMENT

# Surrendering on the path of love

What if you had to fight fierce demons to see your beloved on Valentine's Day? Mayank Dhingra tells the story behind *adhvasana*



16th century  
Bhima painting

He decided to teach Bhīma a lesson and changed his appearance to that of an old monkey and lay on the path (adhva). When Bhīma reached him he arrogantly asked him to move aside. Hanuman replied in a feeble voice that he was too weak to move and if Bhīma needed to cross, he could lift Hanuman's tail aside and that would give him enough space.

Bhīma scoffed at the challenge but to his surprise he was unable to lift the tail. He used both hands but to no avail. Bhīma could not believe what was happening and tried all his strength, but the tail would not budge. He soon realised that he was in the presence of a higher divine being. Realising his mistake, he prostrated and asked the monkey to reveal his true self. Hanuman took his real form and appeared before Bhīma. He warned Bhīma that the arrogance he was demonstrating due to his physical strength was a mistake that could cost him dearly as he continued on his path towards the saugandhika flowers, which were guarded by Kuber's demons.

Bhīma accepted his mistakes and asked to be pardoned. He also requested Hanuman to show him the form that he took to cross the

## TRUE LOVE ONLY SURFACES WHEN THE EGO IS SUBLIMATED

ocean to Lanka. Hanuman obliged and grew to the gigantic size that he had taken to reach Ravana's kingdom. Bhīma stood in awe and Hanuman then reduced himself to his normal proportions and hugged Bhīma. In that embrace Bhīma felt a surge of strength and protective energy entering him. With Hanuman's blessings, he continued on his way and soon reached the celestial lake that held the saugandhika flowers. But just as he was about to pick the flowers he was attacked by hundreds of demons that were guarding the lake. Although he was vastly outnumbered, he remembered Hanuman's advice and used his skill and dexterity to defeat them one by one. Had he tried using only brute force, he would probably not have been successful in routing the Rakshasas. He then gathered the saugandhika flowers for Draupadi and made his way back to her.

Adhva means path to

enlightenment and enlightenment is another form of 'awakening'. Awakening is only possible when the false ego or pride is renounced. Similarly, true love only surfaces when the ego is sublimated. When the ego is still in play, attachment is mistaken for love. For a relationship to move forward on the path of love and to mature, both individuals have to surrender to love and let the ego die. It's only then that a depth of understanding akin to awakening develops. The path is bound to be strewn with challenges and obstacles just as Bhīma's route was; the initial reaction could be to overcome these with arrogance and force like Bhīma did, but victory will only be possible when pride and superciliousness are vanquished and the fragrance of love is allowed to blossom.

Choose your path wisely and let love flourish this Valentine's Day. And don't forget the flowers. ❀