

Shloka

Salutation to Lord Vishnu incarnate, the benefactor of the people (*लोकानाम्*), the one who whisked away Draupadi's (*कृष्णायः*) grief, the guide (literally charioteer) of Arjuna (*पार्थः*).

Note the use of the चतुर्थी विभक्तिः in connection with the word नमः ("नमः स्वस्ति स्वाहा स्वधा अलं वषट् योगाच्च ।")

Main text

There is, among the places the Kurus ruled (*कुरुषु*), a city Hastinapura by name. Shantanu, the son of the light of the race of the moon (glorification as a shining scion of the line), Prateepa, ruled over it. He begot a son, Devavrata in Ganga. He (Devavrata), though attained of youth, vowed lifelong celibacy (*ब्रह्मचर्यम्*) for the sake of his father (*पितुरपेक्षया*). He became known as Bheeshma from then onward. The father, happy with him (at his gesture), granted him the boon of choice (in terms of time) in the matter of death (*स्वच्छन्दमरणं*), married a maiden of the fisher-people (*दाशकन्या*), Satyawati, begot a son Vichitraveerya from her, and himself was assigned an end by Dharma (died). Bheeshma, bore (*दधत्*) his child-brother's kingdom for him and later, after the latter had attained to youth, making him King, made (*चकार* *लिट्*) him a *Grhastha* (relevant: *गृहमेधिनं*) with the help of the daughters of the Kaashee King. He also having died (*उपरतः* : dead) not long from then, Satyawati, desiring propagation of the race, with Shantanu's son's (Bheeshma's) approval, engaged (*नियोजयामास* *लिट्*) her son Paaraashara (Parashaara's son, Shree Vedavyasa), the son of a young woman (*कानीनः* , begotten by the unmarried Satyawati), in the task of causing her elder daughter-in-law (*ज्येष्ठा स्नुषा*) Ambikaa to beget progeny. She (Ambikaa), disgusted (*बीभत्समाना* *शानच्*) at his form, approached him with her eyes closed (*स्वचक्षुषी पिधाय*). In her was born a son reflective of her stance (blind). Him they called (*आहुः*) Dhrtaraashtra. Dissatisfied with this grandson, that daughter of a fisherman's wife (*दाशेयी* , Satyawati), engaged him (*Vyaasa*) with (the task of ...) her younger daughter-in-law Ambaalikaa. She, on his arrival (*तत्समागमे*) became scared as a doe (*हरिणीभूतेवाभवत्* , might have blanched at the sight of Vyaasa). In her was born a son in that likeness (pale, perhaps weak). He was named Paandu. Assigned again to him by her mother-in-law (Satyawati), who was not satisfied (*अनभिमतः*) (with the outcome), that second one (in the order of daughter-in-laws in the family) sent a low-caste woman (*शूद्रा* , her servant, perhaps) made up and outfitted suitably (possibly in an attempt at impersonation). In that woman, in whom that very uncommon meeting roused eagerness was a son by name Vidura, endowed with all good qualities, born.

Owing to the eldest's (eldest brother's) blindness from birth on (*जात्यन्धता*) and the youngest's being the offspring of a Brahmin father and Shoodra mother (*पारशवः*), the middle (brother) Paandu became the king. The son of Ambika (*आमबिकेयः*) obtained the maiden of Subala, Gaandhaari as wife.

When she (Gaandhaari) heard (*शुश्राव*) about herself given away (*दत्तितम्* , *दातुम् इच्छा दित्वा*) to such a groom, so that in the husband jealousy may not arise, she covered her eyes well (*सम्यग्बद्ध्वा* , might mean tightly) too with a cloth (*पटैः*), becoming like a blind (woman), was thus true to fidelity. Pandu obtained two wives, Kunttee and Maadree by name.

That king, accompanied by a great host (*बलेन* , with army) and his wife (*भार्यया सहितः सभार्या*) went to a forest on a hunt on a certain occasion. He, killing (*घ्नन्* , *शतृ*) deer (*मृगान्*), boars (*वराहान्*), buffaloes (*महिषान्*), wild dogs (*श्वपदान्*), and others (as he roamed) here and there (*तत्र तत्र*), suddenly (*यदृच्छया*) made the male (*पुमांसम्*) of a deer couple (*हरिणमिथुनस्य*) in play the target (*शरव्यम्*) of his arrow. He (the deer), pierced (*ताडितः*) strongly (*बलवत्* , seen in an instance of *अनुनासिक सन्धिः*) in the heart (*मर्मणि*) by that arrow, giving up his deer form and in the form of a sage, said with grief (*सव्यथमाह*): "O King! (*राजन्* , *सम्बोधन प्रथमा विभक्तिः*), am I not (*अहं किल*) a sage by name Kindama? With desire to enjoy freely by my own impulse, I followed (was) in a dual state (*द्वन्द्वधर्मम्*) (as a sage and a deer). This being the state of affairs (*ईदृशे* , *ईदृशे सति* , *सति सप्तमी प्रयोगः*), seeing what (*कम्*) slight (*लवम्*) crime (in it) have you assaulted (me)? It is not as per custom (*साम्प्रतम्*) for you to harm (*पीडयितुम्*) innocent (*निरपराधो*) well respected people like me (as a sage) or a deer going about non-violently on the journey of life. The King's weapon (*शस्त्रम्*) is for containing the violent person (*हिंस्रस्य*) and not to cause grief to troubled (or poor) people. If you killed me without analysis, on that account, let your death result by contact with a female", and having thus cursed him, passed away (*विरतासुरभूत्*).

On hearing that, the King thought: "What is this? Upon my venturing to do something, something else came to pass. One without control (निरङ्कुशः) does not discriminate (विमृशति) between the good and the bad. A Lordly person (ईश्वरः पुरुषः, in terms of wordly rank) does not empathise (संवेदयते) with another's happiness and sorrow. He does not mind (as the results of his actions) his own (आत्मनो) benefit or harm. Wandering about (परिभ्रमन्, शतृ) (in life) like an elephant blinded with pride (मदान्धो गजो इव), falls into a grief-inducing pit (व्यसनमहागर्ते) just anywhere and deteriorates (सीदति). The root of intoxication (मदस्य मूलम्) is worldly authority (प्रभुत्वम्) and not the drink (मद्यम्, intoxicant) itself. In abstinence (क्षपणेन) and penance (तपसा) only, and not in enjoyment (भोगेन), therefore, does the remainder of my life deserve to be spent (यापयितव्यः)", and being of disturbed mind (व्यवसितमतिः), intensely sorrowful, had his retinue somehow returned (sent) to the city. Then as implored (अभ्यर्थितः) by the people of the city (नागरैः, नगरे भवाः नागराः) Dhrtaraashtra, upon being permitted (अनुमतः) by his father (through mental communication, perhaps), the son of Ganga, and younger brother Vidura, himself assumed control over the kingdom.

Pandu, with those two wives who followed (अनुवर्तमानाभ्याम्, शानच्) him even in the face of such sorrow (व्यसनेऽपि), with conduct fit for ascetics (मुनिजनोचितया वृत्त्या), spending (गमयन्) his time living by a set of rules (a controlled life) at that place itself completely (पराम्) retired from even engaging in the affairs of the state. Once, jealous (क्षुभितमतिः), after being informed by a citizen (पौरमुखेन) that the Queen (Gaandhaaree) was pregnant (अन्तर्वत्नीम्), himself desiring a son (पुत्रीयन्, पुत्रं कामयति इति, शतृ), in secret (रहसि) said this to his elder wife Kuntée: "Say, it is heard (by me) that the world unattainable (असाध्यम्) even by much difficult (दुश्चरेण) penance is achieved with the help of (to one that possesses) a son (प्रजया). Even the manes (पितरः) like their son (पुत्रवतैव, Paandu, for instance), are curious (कुतुकिनो) about the offered (न्युप्ते) water and rice? (जलाञ्जलौ) (as to who would offer these to them). He who has not first-hand experience (अभिज्ञः) of such (pleasures or things) as fondling (उपलालयन्, शतृ) the child (अर्भकम्) climbed onto (गतम्) the lap (उत्सङ्गं), embracing (आलिङ्गनं) it, inarticulate (कलं) words (of the child), his delight is in (observing or being with) others' children, but this is not as satisfying as the former, say the wise (विदुषः). I am thus (considering one on the negative side of all that has been said), by my own fault (स्वदोषेण) become (संवृत्तः) disappointed (निराशः) in the matter of what is ordinarily the cause of pleasure in both worlds (उभयलोकसुखं), progeny (अपत्ये), unsupported like Trishanku (त्रिशङ्कुरिव). Help (धारयस्व, support) me! A son is like a desire-granting creeper (कल्पलता), and the wife, the procreator (प्रसूति) of the attainments of the three kinds (त्रिवर्गा). Expertise (निपुणता), dexterity (दक्षता), and contrivance (उपायज्ञता) are (among) women's natural endowment. So, O Auspicious one (भद्रे, सम्बोधन प्रथमा विभक्तिः)! Deliver (त्रायस्व) me, who has no other refuge (अनन्यगतिकम्) from the Put hell (पुत्राम्नो नरकात्)", wiping (मुञ्चन्, शतृ) tears (अश्रूणि) away. "Lord!, hear me for a bit. Many years back (Might be the best translation for पुरा in this context) while in (वर्तमानायाम्) my father's house, the Aatreya (son of Atri) sage by name Durvaasaa, shining both on account of his penance and mercilessness? like fire (ज्वलनं) itself, come of his own will, and well looked after (सत्कृतो) by me (मयि), asked my father: "I have come to live here freely (स्वच्छन्देन) for a long time (चिरं); (Do) permit me to". His (Kuntée's father) having accepted politely, for his (Durvaasaa's) service (शुश्रूषा) I was appointed. Owing to that sage's being difficult to propitiate (दुराराध्यतया), much (भृशम्) anxious (उद्विग्ना) (not to displease him) with great restraint (नियमेन) (discipline), like observing (चरन्ती, शतृ) the penance (व्रतं) (difficult task) of (walking on) a sword's edge (असिधारा), I conducted myself as per his wishes (or *served him well*, might be the best translation for अचरम् in this context) him for long (चिरं). That Lord on a certain occasion, told me: 'Daughter Prthaa (पृथे, सम्बोधन प्रथमा विभक्तिः, Kuntée)! Though much troubled (क्लेशितापि) by me being yourself not saddened (अखिन्नैव) (might indicate cheerfulness) you served (उपास्से, उपासे उपासाते उपासेते उपास्से ...) me. Not even slight indifference did you show. By your purity and absence of laziness I am much (अतितरां) pleased (प्रीये). Not does the anger or grace (प्रसादो) of one like me deserve to be fruitless (निष्फलो). Therefore, take (प्रतीच्छ) this mystic phrase (मन्त्रम्). With it's help (अनेन) whichever celestial being you call she (follows the gender of देवता) will immediately (सद्यं) fulfil your wish', and pleased, did that phrase in me fix (सङ्क्रमयामास, लिट्) (fix in my mind). If you think it right (मन्यसे), now (अधुना) it can be used. Which god should be called?" thus offering (निवेदयन्ती, शतृ), she, with his permission (approval) meditated upon the son of the Sun (वैवस्वतं), Dharmaraaja (Yama), and by his grace, gave birth to a son by name Yudhishtira. He, by his good qualities, later (पश्चात्) became known as Ajaatashatru (One whose enemy is not born, one without an enemy). By the graciousness (प्रसादात्) of Vaayu, (she) got (अविन्दत, "विन्द् प्राप्तौ", लङ्) a son by name Bheemasena who is called (Note use of लट् here) Vrkodara (Wolf-bellied, वृकस्य उदरं इव उदरं यस्य सः, उपमा बहुव्रीहि समासः) and Bheema as well. By Indra's grace, (she) got (लेभे, लिट्?) a son named Arjuna. He was born under the star (when the ascendant star was) Uttaraphalguni, and thus is also called (उच्यते, "ब्रू व्यक्ता वाचि") Phalguni. Paandu's other (अपरा) wife Maadri too, with that phrase (मन्त्रः), by the grace of the Ashwini Gods, gave birth to twins (यमलौ, नित्य द्विवचनम्) by name Nakula and Sahadeva. Thus the five

Paandavaas (पाण्डवा, विसर्गलोपः) were born (सुतावसूत, वान्तादेशः).

Gandhaari, having borne (her womb's) for three years (संवत्सरत्रयं), when she heard that Kuntee's eldest son was born, with anger (अमर्षेण) hitting (घ्नती) her stomach, produced a mass of flesh (मांसपेशीमसूयत). On the orders of the lofty Vyaasa (द्वैपायनस्य, one born on an island) who arrived (there) at that moment, she having divided () that mass into a hundred and one (pieces)(), placed them one by one () in pots () filled with clarified butter (ghee)(), sprinkled () them with cold water daily, thus protected them, and in time gained a hundred sons of whom Duryodhana was the principal one, and a younger girl () by name Dushshalaa. Dhrtaraashtra, while his wife was undergoing the pangs of child-birth, produced () a son by name Yuyutsu in (from) a woman of ill-fame. Thus the Dhaartaraashtraas were a hundred and one (in number).