

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 does not have first-hand experience (अभिज्ञः) of such (pleasures or things) as fondling (उपलालयन्, शतृ) the child (अर्भकम्) climbed onto (गतम्) the lap (उत्सङ्गः), embracing (आलिङ्गन्) 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 (उभयलोकसुख), progeny (अपत्ये), unsupported like Trishanku (त्रिशङ् कुरिव). 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 (त्रिवर्ग). 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.