

यक्षप्रश्नः

Yaksha Prasnah

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Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

अथ यक्षप्रश्नः

Chapter 296 of Aranyaka Parva in Mahabharata

वैशम्पायन उवाच

ततो युधिष्ठिरो राजा नकुलं वचनमब्रवीत् ।

आरुह्य वृक्षं माद्रेय निरीक्षस्व दिशो दश ॥ ५

Vaisampayana continued, "Then king Yudhishtira addressed Nakula saying, 'Do thou, O son of Madri, climb this tree and look around the ten points of the horizon.

पानीयमन्तिके पश्य वृक्षान्वाप्युदकाश्रयान् ।

इमे हि भ्रातरः श्रान्तास्तव तात पिपासिताः ॥ ६

Do thou see whether there is water near us or such trees as grow on watery grounds! O child, these thy brothers are all fatigued and thirsty.'

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नकुलस्तु तथेत्युक्त्वा शीघ्रमरुह्य पादपम् ।

अब्रवीद् भ्रातरं ज्येष्ठमभिवीक्ष्य समन्ततः ॥ ७

Thereupon saying, 'So be it,' Nakula speedily climbed up a tree, and having looked around, said unto his eldest brother;

पश्यामि बहुलान् राजन्वृक्षानुदकसंश्रयान् ।

सारसानां च निर्हृदमत्रोदकमसंशयम् ॥ ८

'O king, I see many a tree that groweth by the water-side, and I hear also the cries of cranes. Therefore, without doubt, water must be somewhere here.'

ततो ब्रवीत्सत्यधृतिः कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

गच्छ सौम्य ततः शीघ्रं तूर्णं पनीयमानय ॥ ९

Hearing these words, Kunti's son Yudhishtira, firm in truth, said, 'O amiable one, go thou and fetch water in these quivers!'

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नकुलस्तु तथेत्युक्त्वा भ्रातुर्ज्येष्ठस्य शासनात् ।

प्राद्रवद्यत्र पानीयं शीघ्रं चैवान्वपद्यत ॥ १०

Saying, 'So be it,' at the command of his eldest brother Nakula quickly proceeded towards the place where there was water and soon came upon it.

स दृष्ट्वा विमलं तोयं सारसैः परिवारितम् ।

पातुकामस्ततो वाचमन्तरिक्षात्स शुश्रुवे ॥ ११

मा तात साहसं कार्षीर्मम पूर्वपरिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुक्त्वा तु माद्रेय ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ १२

And beholding a crystal lake inhabited by cranes he desired to drink of it, when he heard these words from the sky, 'O child, do not commit this rash act! This lake hath already been in my possession. Do thou, O son of Madri, first answer my questions and then drink of this water and take away (as much as thou requirest).

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अनादृत्य तु तद्वाक्यं नकुलः सुपिपासितः ।

अपिबच्छीतलं तोयं पीत्वा च निपपात ह ॥ १३

Nakula, however, who was exceedingly thirsty, disregarding these words, drank of the cool water, and having drunk of it, dropped down dead.

चिरायमाणे नकुले कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

अब्रवीद्धातरं वीरं सहदेवमरिन्दमम् ॥ १४

भ्राता चिरायते तात सहदेव तवाग्रजः ।

तं चैवानय सोदर्यं पानीयञ्च त्वमानय ॥ १५

And, O represser of foes, seeing Nakula's delay, Yudhishtira the son of Kunti said unto Sahadeva, the heroic brother of Nakula, 'O Sahadeva, it is long since our brother, he who was born immediately before thee, hath gone from hence! Do thou, therefore, go and bring back thy uterine brother, together with water.'

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सहदेवस्तथेत्युक्त्वा ताम् दिशां प्रत्यपद्यत ।

ददर्श च हतं भूमौ भ्रातरं नकुलं तदा ॥ १६

At this, Sahadeva, saying, 'So be it,' set out in that direction; and coming to the spot, beheld his brother lying dead on the ground.

भ्रातृशोकाभिसंतप्तस्तृषया च प्रपीडितः ।

अभिदुद्राव पानीयं ततो वागभ्यभाषत ॥ १७

मा तात साहसं कार्षीर्मम पूर्वपरिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुक्त्वा यथाकामं ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ १८

And afflicted at the death of his brother, and suffering severely from thirst, he advanced towards the water, when these words were heard by him, 'O child, do not commit this rash act! This lake hath already been in my possession. First answer my question, and then drink of the water and take away as much as thou mayst require.'

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अनादृत्य तु तद्वाक्यं सहदेवः सुपिपासितः ।

अपिबच्छीतलं तोयं पीत्वा च निपपात ह ॥ १९

Sahadeva, however, who was extremely thirsty, disregarding these words, drank of the water, and having drunk of it, dropped down dead.

अथाब्रवीत्स विजयं कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

भ्रातरौ ते परिगतौ बीभत्सो शत्रुकर्शन ॥ २०

तौ चैवानय भद्रं ते पानीयं च त्वमानय ।

एवमुक्तो गुडाकेशः प्रगृह्य सशरं धनुः ॥ २१

आमुक्तखड्गो मेधावी तत्सरः प्रत्यपद्यत ।

Then Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, said unto Vijaya, 'It is long since, O Vibhatsu, that thy two brothers have gone, O represser of foes! Blessed be thou! Do thou bring them back, together with water. Thou art, O child, the refuge of us all when plunged in distress!' Thus addressed, the intelligent Gudakesa, taking his bow and arrows

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and also his naked sword, set out for that lake of waters and soon came upon it.

यतः पुरुषशार्दूलौ पानीयहरणे गतौ ॥ २२

तौ ददर्श हतौ तत्र भ्रातरौ श्वेतवाहनः ।

प्रसुप्ताविव तौ दृष्ट्वा नरसिंहः सुदुःखितः ॥ २३

धनुरुद्यम्य कौन्तेयो व्यलोकयत तद्वनम् ।

नापश्यत् तत्र किञ्चित्स भूतं तस्मिन्महावने ॥ २४

सव्यसाची ततः श्रान्तः पानीयं सोऽभ्यधावत ।

And reaching that spot, he whose car was drawn by white steeds beheld those tigers among men, his two younger brothers who had come to fetch water, lying dead there. And seeing them as if asleep, that lion among men, exceedingly aggrieved, raised his bow and began to look around that wood. But he found none in that mighty forest. And, being fatigued, he who was capable of drawing the bow by his left hand as well, rushed in the direction of the water.

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अभिधावंस्ततो वाचमन्तरिक्षात्स शुश्रुवे ॥ २५

किमासीदसि पानीयं नैतच्छक्यं बलात्त्वया ।

कौन्तेय यदि वै प्रश्नान्मयोक्तान्प्रतिपत्स्यसे ॥ २६

ततः पास्यसि पानीयं हरिष्यसि च भारत ॥

And as he was rushing (towards the water), he heard these words from the sky, 'Why dost thou approach this water? Thou shalt not be able to drink of it by force. If thou, O Kaunteya, can answer the question I will put to thee, then only shalt thou drink of the water and take away as much as thou requirest, O Bharata!'

वारितस्त्वब्रवीत्पार्थो दृश्यमानो निवारय ।

यावद्वाणैर्विनिर्भिन्नः पुनर्नैवं वदिष्यसि ॥ २७

एवमुक्त्वा ततः पार्थः शरैरस्त्रानुमन्त्रितैः ।

ववर्ष तां दिशं कृत्स्नां शब्दवेधं च दर्शयन् ॥ २८

कर्णीनालीकनाराचानुत्सृजन्भरतर्षभ ।

अनेकैरिषुसंघातैरन्तरिक्षे ववर्ष ह ॥ २९

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Thus forbidden, the son of Pritha said, 'Do thou forbid me by appearing before me! And when thou shalt be sorely pierced with my arrows, thou wilt not then again speak in this way!' Having said this, Partha covered all sides with arrows inspired by mantras. And he also displayed his skill in shooting at an invisible mark by sound alone. And, O bull of the Bharata race, sorely afflicted with thirst, he discharged barbed darts and javelins and iron arrows, and showered on the sky innumerable shafts incapable of being baffled.

यक्ष उवाच

किं विघातेन ते पार्थ प्रश्नानुत्त्वा ततः पिब ।

अनुत्त्वा तु ततः प्रश्नान्पीत्वैव न भविष्यसि ॥ ३०

Thereupon, the invisible Yaksha said, 'What need of all this trouble, O son of Pritha? Do thou drink only after answering my questions! If thou drink, however, without answering my questions, thou shalt die immediately after.'

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स त्वमोघानिषून्मुक्त्वा तृष्णयाभिप्रपीडितः ।

अविज्ञायैव तान्प्रश्नान्पीत्वैव निपपात ह ॥ ३१

Thus addressed, Pritha's son Dhananjaya capable of drawing the bow with his left hand as well, disregarding those words, drank of the water, and immediately after dropped down dead.

अथाब्रवीत्भीमसेनं कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

नकुलः सहदेवश्च बीभत्सुश्चापराजितः ॥ ३२

चिरं गतास्तोयहेतोर्न चागच्छन्ति भारत ।

तांश्चैवानय भद्रं ते पानीयं च त्वमानय ॥ ३३

And (seeing Dhananjaya's delay) Kunti's son Yudhishtira addressed Bhimasena, saying, 'O represser of foes, it is a long while that Nakula and Sahadeva and Bibhatsu (*Arjuna*) have gone to fetch water, and they have not come yet, O Bharata! Good betide thee! Do thou bring them back, together with water!'

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भीमसेनस्तथेत्युक्त्वा तां दिशं प्रत्यपद्यत ।

यत्र ते पुरुषव्याघ्रा भ्रातरोऽस्य निपतिताः ॥ ३४

Thereupon saying, 'So be it,' Bhimasena set out for that place where those tigers among men, his brothers, lay dead.

तान्दृष्ट्वा दुःखितो भीमस्तृषया च प्रपीडितः ।

अमन्यत महाबाहुः कर्म तद्यक्षरक्षसाम् ।

And beholding them, Bhima afflicted though he was with thirst, was exceedingly distressed. And that mighty armed hero thought all that to have been the act of some Yaksha or Rakshasa.

स चिन्तयामास तदा योद्धव्यं ध्रुवमद्य मे ॥ ३५

पास्यामि तावत्पानीयमिति पार्थो वृकोदरः ।

ततोऽभ्यधावत्पानीयं पिपासुः पुरुषर्षभः ॥ ३६

And Pritha's son Vrikodara thought, 'I shall surely

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have to fight today. Let me, therefore, first appease my thirst.' Then that bull of the Bharata race rushed forward with the intention of drinking.

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मा तात साहसं कार्षीर्मम पूर्वपरिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुत्त्वा तु कौन्तेय ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ ३७

Thereupon the Yaksha said, 'O child, do not commit this rash act! This lake hath already been in my possession. Do thou first answer my questions, and then drink and take away as much water as thou requirest!'

वैशम्पायन उवाच

एवमुक्तस्ततो भीमो यक्षेणामिततेजसा ।

अविज्ञायैव तान्प्रश्नान्पीत्वैव निपपात ह ॥ ३८

Vaisampayana continued, "Thus addressed by that Yaksha of immeasurable energy, Bhima, without answering his questions, drank of the water. And as soon as he drank, he fell down dead on the spot.

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ततः कुन्तीसुतो राजा विचिन्त्य पुरुषर्षभः ।

समुत्थाय महाबाहुर्दह्यमानेन चेतसा ॥ ३९

अपेतजननिर्घोषं प्रविवेश महावनम् ।

रुरुभिश्च वराहैश्च पक्षिभिश्च निषेवितम् ॥ ४०

नीलभास्वरवर्णैश्च पादपैरुपशोभितम् ।

भ्रमरैरुपगीतं च पक्षिभिश्च महायशाः ॥ ४१

स गच्छन्कानने तस्मिन्हेमजालपरिष्कृतम् ।

ददर्श तत्सरः श्रीमान्विश्वकर्मकृतं यथा ॥ ४२

Then thinking that his brothers had left him long since, Yudhishtira waited for some time. And the king said unto himself again and again, 'Why is it that the two sons of Madri are delaying? And why doth the wielder also of the Gandiva delay? And why doth Bhima too, endued with great strength, delay? I shall go to search for them!' And resolved to do this, the mighty-armed Yudhishtira then rose up, his heart burning in grief. And that bull among men, the royal son of Kunti thought within himself. 'Is this forest under some malign

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influence? Or, is it infested by some wicked beasts? Or, have they all fallen, in consequence of having disregarded some mighty being? Or, not finding water in the spot whither those heroes had first repaired, they have spent all this time in search through the forest? What is that reason for which those bulls among men do not come back?' And speaking in this strain, that foremost of monarchs, the illustrious Yudhishtira, entered into that mighty forest where no human sound was heard and which was inhabited by deer and bears and birds, and which was adorned with trees that were bright and green, and which echoed with the hum of the black-bee and the notes of winged warblers. As he was proceeding along, he beheld that beautiful lake which looked as if it had been made by the celestial artificer himself.

उपेतं नलिनीजालैः सिन्धुवारैश्च वेतसैः ।

केतकैः करवीरैश्च पिप्पलैश्चैव संवृतम् ।

श्रमार्तस्तदुपागम्य सरो दृष्ट्वाथ विस्मितः ॥ ४३

And it was adorned with flowers of a golden hue and with lotuses and Sindhuvars. And it abounded

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with canes and Ketakas and Karaviras and Pippalas, and fatigued with toil, Yudhishtira saw that tank and was struck with wonder."

इति श्रीमहाभारते आरण्यकपर्वणि षण्णवत्यधिकद्विशततमोध्यायः २९६

Thus ends chapter 296 in Aranyaka Parva in Mahabharata

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अथ श्रीमहाभारते आरण्यकपर्वणि षण्णवत्यधिकद्विशततमोध्यायः

Chapter 297 in Aranyaka Parva in Mahabharata

स ददर्श हतान्भ्रातृल्लोकपालानिव च्युतान् ।

युगान्ते समनुप्राप्ते शक्रप्रतिमगौरवान् ॥

Vaisampayana said, "Yudhishthira saw his brothers, each possessed of the glory of Indra himself, lying dead like the Regents of the world dropped from their spheres at the end of the Yuga.

विप्रकीर्णधनुर्बाणं दृष्ट्वा निहतमर्जुनम् ।

भीमसेनं यमौ चोभौ निर्विचेष्टान्गतायुषः ॥ २

स दीर्घमुष्णं निःश्वस्य शोकबाष्पपरिप्लुतः ।

बुद्ध्या विचिन्तयामास वीराः केन नितापिताः ॥ ३

And beholding Arjuna lying dead, with his bow and arrows dropped on the ground,

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and also Bhimasena and the twins motionless and deprived of life, the king breathed a hot and long sigh, and was bathed in tears of grief and began to reflect in his mind as to who had slain those heroes.

नैषां शस्त्रप्रहारोऽस्ति पदं नेहास्ति कस्यचित् ।

भूतं महदिदं मन्ये भ्रातरो येन मे हताः ।

एकाग्रं चिन्तयिष्यामि पीत्वा वेत्स्यामि वा जलम् ॥ ४

'There are no strokes of weapons upon these, nor is any one's foot-print here. The being must be mighty I ween, by whom my brothers have been slain. Earnestly shall I ponder over this, or, let me first drink of the water, and then know all.

स्यात्तु दुर्योधनेनेदमुपांशुविहितं कृतम् ।

गांधारराजरचितं सततं जिह्मबुद्धिना ॥ ५

यस्य कार्यमकार्यं वा सममेव भवत्युत ।

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कस्तस्य विश्वसेद्वीरो दुर्मतेरकृतात्मनः ॥ ६

अथवा पुरुषैगूढैः प्रयोगोऽयं दुरात्मनः ।

भवेदिति महाबाहुर्बहुधा समचिन्तयत् ॥ ७

तस्यासीन्न विषेणेदमुदकं दूषितं यथा ।

मुखवर्णा प्रसन्ना मे भ्रातृणामित्यचिन्तयत् ॥ ८

It may be that the habitually crooked-minded Duryodhana hath caused this water to be secretly placed here by the king of the Gandharvas. What man of sense can trust wicked wight of evil passions with whom good and evil are alike? Or, perhaps, this may be an act of that wicked-souled one through secret messengers of his.' And it was thus that that highly intelligent one gave way to diverse reflections. He did not believe that water to have been tainted with poison, for though dead no corpse-like pallor was on them. 'The colour on the faces

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of these my brothers hath not faded!' And it was thus that Yudhishtira thought.

एकैकशश्चौघबलान् इमान्पुरुषसत्तमान् ।

कोऽन्यः प्रतिसमासेन कालान्तकयमादते ॥ ९

And the king continued, 'Each of these foremost of men was like unto a mighty cataract. Who, therefore, save Yama himself who in due time bringeth about the end of all things, could have baffled them thus.'

एतेनाध्यवसायेन तत्तोयमवगाढवान् ।

गाहमानश्च तत्तोयमन्तरिक्षात्स शुश्रुवे ॥ १०

यक्ष उवाच

अहं बकः शैवलमत्स्यभक्षो मया नीताः प्रेतवशं तवानुजाः ।

त्वं पञ्चमो भविता राजपुत्र न चेत्प्रश्नान्पृच्छतो व्याकरोषि ॥ ११

मा तात साहसं कार्षीर्मम पूर्वपरिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुत्त्वा तु कौन्तेय ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ १२

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

And having concluded this for certain, he began to perform his ablutions in that lake. And while he descended into it, he heard these words from the sky, uttered by the Yaksha, -'I am a crane, living on tiny fish. It is by me that thy younger brothers have been brought under the sway of the lord of departed spirits. If, thou, O prince, answer not the questions put by me, even thou shalt number the fifth corpse. Do not, O child, act rashly! This lake hath already been in my possession. Having answered my questions first, do thou, O Kunti's son, drink and carry away (as much as thou requirest)!'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

रुद्राणां वा वसूनां वा मरुतां वा प्रधानभाक् ।

पृच्छामि को भवान् देवो नैतच्छकुनिना कृतम् ॥ १३

हिमवान्परियात्रश्च विंध्यो मलय एव च ।

चत्वारः पर्वताः केन पातिता भुवि तेजसा ॥ १४

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Hearing these words, Yudhishtira said, 'Art thou the foremost of the Rudras, or of the Vasus, or of the Marutas? I ask, what god art thou? This could not have been done by a bird! Who is it that hath overthrown the four mighty mountains, viz., the Himavat, the Paripatra, the Vindhya, and the Malaya? Great is the feat done by thee, thou foremost of strong persons!

अतीव ते महत्कर्म कृतं बलवतां वर ।

यन्न देवा न गंधर्वा नासुरा न च राक्षसाः ।

विषहेरन्महायुद्धे कृतं ते तन्महाद्भुतम् ॥ १५

न ते जानामि यत्कार्यं नाभिजानामि काङ्क्षितम् ।

कौतूहलं महज्जातं साध्वसं चागतं मम ॥ १६

Those whom neither gods, nor Gandharvas nor Asuras, nor Rakshasas could endure in mighty conflict, have been slain by thee! Therefore, exceedingly wonderful is the

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

deed done by thee! I do not know what thy business may be, nor do I know thy purpose. Therefore, great is the curiosity and fear also that have taken possession of me?

येनास्म्युद्विग्नहृदयः समुत्पन्नशिरोज्वरः ।

पृच्छामि भगवंस्तस्मात्को भवानिह तिष्ठति ॥ १७

My mind is greatly agitated, and as my head also is aching, I ask thee, therefore, "O worshipful one, who art thou that stayest here?"

यक्ष उवाच

यक्षोऽहमस्मि भद्रं ते नास्मि पक्षी जलेचरः ।

मयैते निहताः सर्वे भ्रातरस्ते महौजसः ॥ १८

Hearing these words the Yaksha said, 'I am, good betide thee, a Yaksha, and not an amphibious bird. It is by me that all these

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

brothers of thine, endued with mighty prowess, have been slain!"

वैशम्पायन उवाच

ततस्तामशिवां श्रुत्वा वाचं स परुषक्षराम् ।

यक्षस्य ब्रुवतो राजन्नुपक्रम्य तदा स्थितः ॥ १९

विरूपाक्षं महाकायं यक्षं तलसमुच्छ्रयम् ।

ज्वलनार्कप्रतीकाशमधृष्यं पर्वतोपमम् ॥ २०

सेतुमाश्रित्य तिष्ठन्तं ददर्श भरतर्षभः ।

मेघगंभीरया वाचा तर्जयन्तं महाबलम् ॥ २१

Vaisampayana continued, 'Hearing these accursed words couched in harsh syllabus¹, Yudhishtira, O king, approaching the Yaksha who had spoken then, stood there. And that bull among the Bharatas then

¹ *Lit. Letters*

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

beheld that Yaksha of unusual eyes and huge body tall like a palmyra-palm and looking like fire or the Sun, and irresistible and gigantic like a mountain, staying on a tree, and uttering a loud roar deep as that of the clouds.

यक्ष उवाच

इमे ते भ्रातरो राजन्वार्यमाणा मया सकृत् ।

बलात्तोयं जिहीर्षन्तस्ततो वै सूदिता मया ॥ २२

न पेयमुदकं राजन्प्राणानिह परीप्सता ।

पार्थ मा साहसं कार्षीर्मम पूर्व परिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुक्त्वा तु कौन्तेय ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ २३

And the Yaksha said, 'These thy brothers, O king, repeatedly forbidden by me, would forcibly take away water. It is for this that they have been slain by me! He that wisheth to live, should not, O king, drink this water! O son of Pritha, act not rashly! This lake hath

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

already been in my possession. Do thou, O son of Kunti, first answer my questions, and then take away as much as thou likest!

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

नैवाहं कामये यक्ष तव पूर्वपरिग्रहम् ।

कामं नैतत्प्रशंसन्ति सन्तो हि पुरुषाः सदा ॥ २४

यदात्मना स्वमात्मानं प्रशंसेत्पुरुषः प्रभो ।

यथाप्रज्ञं तु ते प्रश्नान्प्रतिवक्ष्यामि पृच्छ माम् ॥ २५

Yudhishtira said, 'I do not, O Yaksha, covet, what is already in thy possession! O bull among male beings, virtuous persons never approve that one should applaud his own self (without boasting, I shall, therefore, answer thy questions, according to my intelligence). Do thou ask me!'

यक्ष उवाच

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

किं स्विदादित्यमुन्नयति के च तस्याभितश्चराः ।

कश्चैनमस्तं नयति कस्मिंश्च प्रतितिष्ठति ॥ २६

The Yaksha then said, 'What is it that maketh the Sun rise? Who keeps him company? Who causeth him to set? And in whom is he established?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

ब्रह्मादित्यमुन्नयति देवास्तस्याभितश्चराः ।

धर्मश्चास्तं नयति च सत्ये च प्रतितिष्ठति ॥ २७

Yudhishtira answered, 'Brahma maketh the Sun rise: the gods keep him company: Dharma causeth him to set: and he is established in truth².'

² Behind the plain and obvious meanings of the words employed both in the question and the answer, there is a deeper signification of a spiritual kind. I think Nilakantha has rightly understood the passage. By Aditya, which of course commonly means the Sun, is

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

केनस्विच्छ्रोत्रियो भवति केनस्विद्विन्दते महत् ।

केनस्विद्वितीयवान्भवति राजन् केन च बुद्धिमान् ॥ २८

The Yaksha asked, 'By what doth one become learned? By what doth he attain

indicated the unpurified soul (from adatte sabdadin indriadivis etc.). The first question then, becomes, 'Who is it that exalteth the unpurified soul?' The act of exaltation implies a raising of the soul from its earthly connections. The answer to this is, 'Brahma, i.e., Veda or self-knowledge.' The second question--'What are those that keep company with the soul during its progress of purification?' The answer is, Self-restraint and other qualities, which are all of a god-like or divine nature.' The third question is.-Who lead the soul to its place (state) of rest? The answer is, Dharma, i.e., reitude, morality, and religious observances.' It is often asserted that one must pass through the observances (Karma) before attaining to a state of Rest or Truth or Pure Knowledge. The last question is,-'On what is the soul established!' The answer, according to all that has been previously said, is 'Truth or Pure Knowledge.' For the soul that is emancipated from and raised above all carnal connections, is no longer in need of observances and acts (Karma) but stays unmoved in True Knowledge (Janana).

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

what is very great? How can one have a second? And, O king, how can one acquire intelligence?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

श्रुतेन श्रोत्रियो भवति तपसा विन्दते महत् ।

धृत्या द्वितीयवान्भवति बुद्धिमान् वृद्धसेवया ॥ २९

Yudhishtira answered, 'It is by the (study of the) Srutis that a person becometh learned; it is by ascetic austerities that one acquireth what is very great: it is by intelligence that a person acquireth a second and it is by serving the old that one becometh wise³.'

³ Nilakantha explains both Dhriti and Dwitiya in a spiritual sense. There is no need, however, of a spiritual explanation here. By Dhriti is meant steadiness of intelligence; by Dwitiya lit, a second. What Yudhishtira says is that a steady intelligence serves the purposes of a helpful companion.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

किं ब्राह्मणानां देवत्वं कश्च धर्मः सतामिव ।

कश्चैषां मानुषो भावः किमेषामसतामिव ॥ ३०

The Yaksha asked, 'What constituteth the divinity of the Brahmanas? What even is their practice that is like that of the pious? What also is the human attribute of the Brahmanas? And what practice of theirs is like that of the impious?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

स्वाध्याय एषां देवत्वं तप एषां सतामिव ।

मरणं मानुषो भावः परिवादोऽसतामिव ॥ ३१

Yudhishtira answered, 'The study of the Vedas constitutes their divinity: their asceticism constitutes behaviour that is like that of the pious; their liability to death is

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

their human attribute and slander is their impiety.'

यक्ष उवाच

किं क्षत्रियाणां देवत्वं कश्च धर्मः सतामिव ।

कश्चैषां मानुषो भावः किमेषामसतामिव ॥ ३२

The Yaksha asked, 'What institutes the divinity of the Kshatriyas? What even is their practice that is like that of the pious? What is their human attribute? And what practice of theirs is like that of the impious?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

इध्वस्त्रमेषां देवत्वं यज्ञ एषां सतामिव ।

भयं वै मानुषो भावः परित्यागोऽसतामिव ॥ ३३

Yudhishtira answered, 'Arrows and weapons are their divinity: celebration of sacrifices is that act which is like that of the pious: liability to fear is their human

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

attribute; and refusal of protection is that act of theirs which is like that of the impious.'

यक्ष उवाच

किमेकं यज्ञियं साम किमेकं यज्ञियं यजुः ।

का चैषां वृणुते यज्ञं कां यज्ञो नातिवर्तते ॥ ३४

The Yaksha asked, 'What is that which constitutes the Sama of the sacrifice? What the Yajus of the sacrifice? What is that which is the refuge of a sacrifice? And what is that which sacrifice cannot do without?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

प्राणो वै यज्ञियं साम मनो वै यज्ञियं यजुः ।

ऋगेका वृणुते यज्ञं तां यज्ञो नातिवर्तते ॥ ३५

Yudhishtira answered, 'Life is the Sama of the sacrifice; the mind is the Yajus of the sacrifice: the Rik is that which is the refuge

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

of the sacrifice; and it is Rik alone which sacrifice cannot do without⁴.'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्विदापततां श्रेष्ठं किंस्विन्निपततां वरम् ।

किंस्वित्प्रतिष्ठमानानां किंस्वित्प्रसवतां वरम् ॥ ३६

⁴ Nilakantha explains this correctly, as I imagine, by supposing that by 'sacrifice' is meant the spiritual sacrifice for the acquisition of pure knowledge. In the objective sacrifice which one celebrates, the Sama, the Yajus, and the Rik mantras are all necessary. In the subjective sacrifice the acquisition of true knowledge, life and mind are as necessary as the mantras from the Sama and the Yajur Vedas in an objective one. And as no objective sacrifice can do without the Riks, being principally dependent on them, so the subjective sacrifices for acquiring true knowledge can never do without prayerfulness, which, I imagine, is represented as the Riks. To understand this passage thoroughly would require an intimate acquaintance with the ritual of a sacrifice like the Agnishtoma or any other of that kind.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

The Yaksha asked, 'What is of the foremost value to those that cultivate? What is of the foremost value to those that sow? What is of the foremost value to those that wish for prosperity in this world? And what is of the foremost value to those that bring forth?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

वर्षमापततां श्रेष्ठं बीजं निपततां वरम् ।

गावः प्रतिष्ठमानानां पुत्रः प्रसवतां वरः ॥ ३७

Yudhishtira answered, 'That which is of the foremost value to those that cultivate is rain: that of the foremost value to those that sow is seed: that of the foremost value to those that bring forth is offspring⁵.

⁵ Some texts read *apatatam* for *uvapatam*. If the former be the correct reading, the meaning would be-'What is the best of things that fall?' Nilakantha explains both *avapatam* *nivapatam* in a spiritual sense. By the first he understands-'They that offer oblation to the gods,' and by the second, 'They that offer oblations

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

इन्द्रियार्थाननुभवन् बुद्धिमाँल्लोकपूजितः ।

संमतः सर्वभूतानामुच्छ्वसन् को न जीवति ॥ ३८

The Yaksha asked, 'What person, enjoying all the objects of the senses, endued with intelligence, regarded by the world and liked by all beings, though breathing, doth not offer anything to these five, viz., gods, guests, servants, Pitris, and himself, though endued with breath, is not yet alive.'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

देवतातिथिभृत्यानां पितृणामात्मनश्च यः ।

न निर्वपति पञ्चानामुच्छ्वसन्न स जीवति ॥ ३९

to the Pitris.' The necessity of a spiritual interpretation, however, is not very apparent.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

The Yaksha asked, 'What is weightier than the earth itself? What is higher than the heavens?' What is fleeter than the wind? And what is more numerous than grass?'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्विदुरुतरं भूमेः किंस्विदुच्चतरं च खात् ।

किंस्विच्छीघ्रतरं वायोः किंस्विद्बहुतरं तृणात् ॥ ४०

Yudhishtira answered, 'The mother is weightier than the earth; the father is higher than the heaven; the mind is fleeter than the wind; and our thoughts are more numerous than grass.'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

माता गुरुतरा भूमेः खात् पितोच्चतरस्तथा ।

मनः शीघ्रतरं वाताच्चिन्ता बहुतरी तृणात् ॥ ४१

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishthira answered, 'The mother is weightier than the earth; the father is higher than the heaven; the mind is fleeter than the wind; and our thoughts are more numerous than grass.'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्वित्सुप्तं न निमिषति किंस्विज्जातं न चोपति ।

कस्यस्विद्धृदयं नास्ति किंस्विद्वेगेन वर्धते ॥ ४२

The Yaksha asked, 'What is that which doth not close its eyes while asleep; What is that which doth not move after birth? What is that which is without heart? And what is that which swells with its own impetus?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

मत्स्यः सुप्तो न निमिषत्यण्डं जातं न चोपति ।

अश्मनो हृदयं नास्ति नदी वेगेन वर्धते ॥ ४३

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishtira answered, 'A fish doth not close its eyes while asleep: an egg doth not move after birth: a stone is without heart: and a river swelleth with its own impetus.'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्वित्प्रवसतो मित्रं किंस्विन्मित्रं गृहे सतः ।

आतुरस्य च किं मित्रं किंस्विन्मित्रं मरिष्यतः ॥ ४४

The Yaksha asked, 'Who is the friend of the exile? Who is the friend of the householder? Who is the friend of him that ails? And who is the friend of one about to die?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

सार्थः प्रवसतो मित्रं भार्या मित्रं गृहे सतः ।

आतुरस्य भिषङ्मित्रं दानं मित्रं मरिष्यतः ॥ ४५

Yudhishtira answered, 'The friend of the exile in a distant land is his companion, the

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

friend of the householder is the wife; the friend of him that ails is the physician: and the friend of him about to die is charity.

यक्ष उवाच

कोऽतिथिः सर्वभूतानां किंस्विद्धर्म सनातनम् ।

अमृतं किंस्विद्राजेन्द्र किंस्वित् सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ ४६

The Yaksha asked, - 'Who is the guest of all creatures? What is the eternal duty? What, O foremost of kings, is Amrita? And what is this entire Universe?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

अतिथिः सर्वभूतानामग्निः सोमो गवामृतम् ।

सनातनोऽमृतो धर्मो वायुः सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ ४७

Yudhishtira answered, "Agni is the guest of all creatures: the milk of kine is amrita:

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Homa (therewith) is the eternal duty: and this Universe consists of air alone⁶.”

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्विदेको विचरते जातः को जायते पुनः ।

किंस्विद्धिमस्य भैषज्यं किंस्विदावपनं महत् ॥ ४८

The Yaksha asked, -'What is that which sojourneth alone? What is that which is re-born after its birth? What is the remedy against cold? And what is the largest field?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

सूर्य एको विचरते चन्द्रमा जायते पुनः ।

अग्निर्हिमस्य भैषज्यं भूमिरापवनं महत् ॥ ४९

⁶ Yudhishtira has the authority of the Srutis for saying that the one pervading element of the universe is air.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishtira answered,-'The sun sojourns alone; the moon takes birth anew: fire is the remedy against cold: and the Earth is the largest field.'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्विदेकपदं धर्म्यं किंस्विदेकपदं यशः ।

किंस्विदेकपदं स्वर्ग्यं किंस्विदेकपदं सुखम् ॥ ५०

The Yaksha asked,-'What is the highest refuge of virtue? What of fame? What of heaven? And what, of happiness?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

दाक्ष्यमेकपदं धर्म्यं दानमेकपदं यशः ।

सत्यमेकपदं स्वर्ग्यं शीलमेकपदं सुखम् ॥ ५१

Yudhishtira answered,- 'Liberality is the highest refuge of virtue: gift, of fame: truth,

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of heaven: and good behaviour, of happiness.'

यक्ष उवाच

किंस्विदात्मा मनुष्यस्य किंस्विदैवकृतः सखा ।

उपजीवनं किंस्विदस्य किंस्विदस्य परायणम् ॥ ५२

The Yaksha asked,-'What is the soul of man? Who is that friend bestowed on man by the gods? What is man's chief support? And what also is his chief refuge?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

पुत्र आत्मा मनुष्यस्य भार्या दैवकृतः सखा

उपजीवनं च पर्जन्यो दानमस्य परायणम् ॥ ५३

Yudhishtira answered,-'The son is a man's soul: the wife is the friend bestowed on man

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

by the gods; the clouds are his chief support;
and gift is his chief refuge.'

यक्ष उवाच

धन्यानामुत्तमं किंस्विद् धनानां स्यात् किमुत्तमम् ।

लाभानामुत्तमं किंस्यात् सुखानां स्यात्किमुत्तमम् ॥ ५४

The Yaksha asked,-'What is the best of all laudable things? What is the most valuable of all his possessions? What is the best of all gains? And what is the best of all kinds of happiness?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

धन्यानामुत्तमं दाक्ष्यं धनानामुत्तमं श्रुतम् ।

लाभानां श्रेय आरोग्यं सुखानां तुष्टिरुत्तमा ॥ ५५

Yudhishtira answered,-'The best of all laudable things is skill; the best of all possessions is knowledge: the best of all

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

gains is health: and contentment is the best of all kinds of happiness.'

यक्ष उवाच

कश्च धर्मः परो लोके कश्च धर्मः सदा फलः ।

किं नियम्य न शोचन्ति कैश्च सन्धिर्न जीर्यते ॥ ५६

The Yaksha asked,-'What is the highest duty in the world? What is that virtue which always beareth fruit? What is that which if controlled, leadeth not to regret? And who are they with whom an alliance cannot break?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

आनृशंस्यं परो धर्मस्त्रयी धर्मः सदा फलः ।

मनो यम्य न शोचन्ति सन्धिः सद्भिर्न जीर्यते ॥ ५७

Yudhishtira answered,-'The highest of duties is to refrain from injury: the rites

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

ordained in the Three (Vedas) always bear fruit: the mind, if controlled, leadeth to no regret: and an alliance with the good never breaketh.'

यक्ष उवाच

किं नु हित्वा प्रियो भवति किं नु हित्वा न शोचति ।

किं नु हित्वाऽर्थवान्भवति किं नु हित्वा सुखी भवेत् ॥ ५८

The Yaksha asked, - 'What is that which, if renounced, maketh one agreeable? What is that which, if renounced, leadeth to no regret? What is that which, if renounced, maketh one wealthy? And what is that which if renounced, maketh one happy?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

मानं हित्वा प्रियो भवति क्रोधं हित्वा न शोचति ।

कामं हित्वाऽर्थवान्भवति लोभं हित्वा सुखी भवेत् ॥ ५९

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishtira answered, -'Pride, if renounced, maketh one agreeable; wrath, if renounced leadeth to no regret: desire, if renounced, maketh one wealthy: and avarice, if renounced, maketh one happy.'

यक्ष उवाच

किमर्थं ब्राह्मणे दानं किमर्थं नटनर्तके ।

किमर्थं चैव भृत्येषु किमर्थं चैव राजसु ॥ ६०

The Yaksha asked, -'For what doth one give away to Brahmanas? For what to mimes and dancers? For what to servants? And for what to king?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

धर्मार्थं ब्राह्मणे दानं यशोर्थं नटनर्तके ।

भृत्येषु भरणार्थं वै भयार्थं चैव राजसु ॥ ६१

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishthira answered,-'It is for religious merit that one giveth away to Brahmanas: it is for fame that one giveth away to mimes and dancers: it is for supporting them that one giveth away to servants: and it is for obtaining relief from fear that one giveth to kings.'

यक्ष उवाच

केन स्विदावृतो लोकः केन स्विन्न प्रकाशते ।

केन त्यजति मित्राणि केन स्वर्गं न गच्छति ॥ ६२

The Yaksha asked,-'With what is the world enveloped? What is that owing to which a thing cannot discover itself? For what are friends forsaken? And for what doth one fail to go to heaven?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

अज्ञानेनावृतो लोकस्तमसा न प्रकाशते ।

लोभात्त्यजति मित्राणि सङ्गात् स्वर्गं न गच्छति ॥ ६३

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishtira answered, -'The world is enveloped with darkness. Darkness doth not permit a thing to show itself. It is from avarice that friends are forsaken. And it is connection with the world for which one faileth to go to heaven.'

यक्ष उवाच

मृतः कथं स्यात्पुरुषः कथं राष्ट्रं मृतं भवेत् ।

श्राद्धं मृतं कथं वा स्यात् कथं यज्ञो मृतो भवेत् ॥ ६४

The Yaksha asked, -'For what may one be considered as dead? For what may a kingdom be considered as dead? For what may a Sraddha be considered as dead? And for what, a sacrifice?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

मृतो दरिद्रः पुरुषो मृतं राष्ट्रमराजकम् ।

मृतमश्रोत्रियं श्राद्धं मृतो यज्ञस्त्वदक्षिणः ॥ ६५

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishthira answered,-'For want of wealth may a man be regarded as dead. A kingdom for want of a king may be regarded as dead. A Sraddha that is performed with the aid of a priest that hath no learning may be regarded as dead. And a sacrifice in which there are no gifts to Brahmanas is dead.'

यक्ष उवाच

का दिक्किमुदकं प्रोक्तं किमन्नं किंच वै विषम् ।

श्राद्धस्य कालमाख्याहि ततः पिब हरस्व च ॥ ६६

The Yaksha asked,-'What constitutes the way? What, hath been spoken of as water? What, as food? And what, as poison? Tell us also what is the proper time of a Sraddha, and then drink and take away as much as thou likest!'

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

सन्तो दिग्जलमाकाशं गौरन्नं प्रार्थना विषम् ।

श्राद्धस्य ब्राह्मणः कालः कथं वा यक्ष मन्यसे ॥ ६७

Yudhishtira answered, - 'They that are good constitute the way⁷. Space hath been spoken of as water⁸. The cow is food⁹. A request is poison. And a Brahmana is regarded as the proper time of a Sraddha¹⁰. I do not know what thou mayst think of all this, O Yaksha?'

⁷ The word used in the question is *dik*, literally, direction. Obviously, of course, it means in this connection way. Yudhishtira answers that the way which one is to tread along is that of the good.

⁸ The *Srutis* actually speak of space as water. These are questions to test Yudhishtira's knowledge of the Vedic cosmogony.

⁹ The *Srutis* speak of the cow as the only food, in the following sense. The cow gives milk. The milk gives butter. The butter is used in Homa. The Homa is the cause of the clouds. The clouds give rain. The rain makes the seed to sprout forth and produce food. Nilakantha endeavours to explain this in a spiritual sense. There is however, no need of such explanation here.

¹⁰ What Yudhishtira means to say is that there is no special time for a *Sraddha*. It is to be performed.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

तपः किलक्षणं प्रोक्तं को दमश्च प्रकीर्तितः ।

क्षमा च का परा शोक्ता का च हृईः परिकीर्तिता ॥ ६८

The Yaksha asked,-'What hath been said to be the sign of asceticism? And what is true restraint? What constitutes forgiveness. And what is shame?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

तपः स्वधर्मवर्तित्वं मनसो दमनं दमः ।

क्षमा द्वन्द्वसहिष्णुत्वं हृईरकार्यनिवर्तनम् ॥ ६९

Yudhishthira answered,-'Staying in one's own religion is asceticism: the restraint of the mind is of all restraints the true one: forgiveness consists in enduring enmity; and

whenever a good and able priest may be secured.

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

shame, in withdrawing from all unworthy acts.'

यक्ष उवाच

किं ज्ञानं प्रोच्यते राजन् कः शमश्च प्रकीर्तितः ।

दया च का परा प्रोक्ता किञ्चार्जवमुदाहृतम् ॥ ७०

The Yaksha asked, '-What, O king is said to be knowledge? What, tranquillity? What constitutes mercy? And what hath been called simplicity?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

ज्ञानं तत्त्वार्थसंबोधः शमश्चित्तप्रशान्तता ।

दया सर्वसुखैषित्वमार्जवं समचित्तता ॥ ७१

Yudhishtira answered, '-True knowledge is that of Divinity. True tranquillity is that of the heart. Mercy consists in wishing

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

happiness to all. And simplicity is equanimity of heart.'

यक्ष उवाच

कः शत्रुर्दुर्जयः पुंसां कश्च व्यादिरनन्तकः ।

कीदृशश्च स्मृतः साधुरसाधुः कीदृशः स्मृतः ॥ ७२

The Yaksha asked, -'What enemy is invincible? What constitutes an incurable disease for man? What sort of a man is called honest and what dishonest?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

क्रोधः सुदुर्जयः शत्रुर्लोभो व्यादिरनन्तकः ।

सर्वभूतहितः साधुरसादुर्निर्दयः स्मृतः ॥ ७३

Yudhishtira answered, -'Anger is an invincible enemy. Covetousness constitutes an incurable disease. He is honest that

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

desires the weal of all creatures, and he is dishonest who is unmerciful.'

यक्ष उवाच

को मोहः प्रोच्यते राजन् कश्च मानः प्रकीर्तितः ।

किमालस्यं च विज्ञेयं कश्च शोकः प्रकीर्तितः ॥ ७४

The Yaksha asked,-'What, O king, is ignorance? And what is pride? What also is to be understood by idleness? And what hath been spoken of as grief?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

मोहो हि धर्ममूढत्वं मानस्त्वात्माभिमानिता ।

धर्मनिष्क्रियताऽऽलस्यं शोकस्त्वज्ञानमुच्यते ॥ ७५

Yudhishtira answered,-'True ignorance consists in not knowing one's duties. Pride is a consciousness of one's being himself an actor or sufferer in life. Idleness consists in

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

not discharging one's duties, and ignorance in grief.'

यक्ष उवाच

किं स्थैर्यमृषिभिः प्रोक्तं किं च धैर्यमुदाहृतम् ।

स्नानं च किं परं प्रोक्तं दानं च किमिहोच्यते ॥ ७६

The Yaksha asked,-'What hath steadiness been said by the Rishis to be? And what, patience? What also is a real ablution? And what is charity?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

स्वधर्मे स्थिरता स्थैर्यं धैर्यमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।

स्नानं मनोमलत्यागो दानं वै भूतरक्षणम् ॥ ७७

Yudhishtira answered,-'Steadiness consists in one's staying in one's own religion, and true patience consists in the subjugation of the senses. A true bath consists in washing

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the mind clean of all impurities, and charity consists in protecting all creatures.'

यक्ष उवाच

कः पण्डितः पुमान् ज्ञेयो नास्तिकः कश्च उच्यते ।

को मूर्खः कश्च कामः स्यात् को मत्सर इति स्मृतः ॥ ७८

The Yaksha asked, '-What man should be regarded as learned, and who should be called an atheist? Who also is to be called ignorant? What is called desire and what are the sources of desire? And what is envy?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

धर्मज्ञः पण्डितो ज्ञेयो नास्तिको मूर्ख उच्यते ।

कामः संसारहेतुश्च हृत्तापो मत्सरः स्मृतः ॥ ७९

Yudhishtira answered, '-He is to be called learned who knoweth his duties. An atheist is he who is ignorant and so also he is

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ignorant who is an atheist. Desire is due to objects of possession, and envy is nothing else than grief of heart.'

यक्ष उवाच

कोऽहङ्कार इति प्रोक्तः कश्च दंभः प्रकीर्तितः ।

किं तद्वैवं परं प्रोक्तं किं तत्पैशुन्यमुच्यते ॥ ८०

The Yaksha asked, '-What is pride, and what is hypocrisy? What is the grace of the gods, and what is wickedness?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

महाज्ञानमहङ्कारो दम्भो धर्मो ध्वजोच्छ्रयः ।

दैवं दानफलं प्रोक्तं पैशुन्यं परदूषणम् ॥ ८१

Yudhishtira answered, '-Stolid ignorance is pride. The setting up of a religious standard is hypocrisy. The grace of the gods is the

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fruit of our gifts, and wickedness consists in speaking ill of others.'

यक्ष उवाच

धर्मश्चार्थश्च कामश्च परस्परविरोधिनः ।

एषां नित्यविरुद्धानां कथमेकत्र सङ्गमः ॥ ८२

The Yaksha asked,-'Virtue, profit, and desire are opposed to one another. How could things thus antagonistic to one another exist together?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

यदा धर्मश्च भार्या च परस्परवशानुगौ ।

तदा धर्मार्थकामानां त्रयाणामपि सङ्गमः ॥ ८३

Yudhishtira answered,-'When a wife and virtue agree with each other, then all the three thou hast mentioned may exist together.'

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

अक्षयो नरकः केन प्राप्यते भरतर्षभ ।

एतन्मे पृच्छतः प्रश्नं तच्छीघ्रं वक्तुमर्हसि ॥ ८४

The Yaksha asked, -'O bull of the Bharata race, who is he that is condemned to everlasting hell? It behoveth thee to soon answer the question that I ask!'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

ब्राह्मणं स्वयमाहूय याचमानमकिञ्चनम् ।

पश्चान्नस्तीति यो ब्रूयात् सोऽक्षयं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥ ८५

वेदेषु धर्मशास्त्रेषु मिथ्या यो वै द्विजातिषु ।

देवेषु पितृधर्मेषु सोऽक्षयं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥ ८६

विद्यमाने धने लोभादानभोगविवर्जितः ।

पश्चान्नस्तीति यो ब्रूयात् सोऽक्षयं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥ ८७

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

Yudhishtira answered, -'He that summoneth a poor Brahmana promising to make him a gift and then tells him that he hath nothing to give, goeth to everlasting hell. He also must go to everlasting hell, who imputes falsehood to the Vedas, the scriptures, the Brahmanas, the gods, and the ceremonies in honour of the Pitris, He also goeth to everlasting hell who though in possession of wealth, never giveth away nor enjoyeth himself from avarice, saying, he hath none.'

यक्ष उवाच

राजन् कुलेन वृत्तेन स्वाध्यायेन श्रुतेन वा ।

ब्राह्मण्यं केन भवति प्रब्रूहेतत् सुनिश्चितम् ॥ ८८

The Yaksha asked, -'By what, O king, birth, behaviour, study, or learning doth a person become a Brahmana? Tell us with certitude!'

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युधिष्ठिर उवाच

शृणु यक्ष कुलं तात न स्वाध्यायो न च श्रुतम् ।

कारणं हि द्विजत्वे च वृत्तमेव न संशयः ॥ ८९

वृत्तं यत्नेन संरक्ष्यं ब्राह्मणेन विशेषतः ।

अक्षीणवृत्तो न क्षीणो वृत्ततस्तु हतो हतः ॥ ९०

पठकाः पाठकाश्चैव ये चान्ये शास्त्रचिन्तकाः ।

सर्वे व्यसनिनो मूर्खा यः क्रियावान् स पण्डितः ॥ ९१

चतुर्वेदोऽपि दुर्वृत्तः स शूद्रादतिरिच्यते ।

योऽग्निहोत्रपरो दान्तः स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥ ९२

Yudhishtira answered, - 'Listen, O Yaksha! It is neither birth, nor study, nor learning, that is the cause of Brahmanahood, without doubt, it is behaviour that constitutes it. One's behaviour should always be well-guarded, especially by a Brahmana. He who maintaineth his conduct unimpaired, is never impaired himself. Professors and

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pupils, in fact, all who study the scriptures, if addicted to wicked habits, are to be regarded as illiterate wretches. He only is learned who performeth his religious duties. He even that hath studied the four Vedas is to be regarded as a wicked wretch scarcely distinguishable from a Sudra (if his conduct be not correct). He only who performeth the Agnihotra and hath his senses under control, is called a Brahmana!

यक्ष उवाच

प्रियवचनवादी किं लभते विमृशितकार्यकरः किं लभते ।

बहुमित्रकरः किं लभते धर्मे रतः किं लभते कथय ॥ ९३

The Yaksha asked, - 'What doth one gain that speaketh agreeable words? What doth he gain that always acteth with judgment? What doth he gain that hath many friends? And what he, that is devoted to virtue?'

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युधिष्ठिर उवाच

प्रियवचनवादी प्रियो भवति विमृशितकार्यकरोऽधिकं जयति ।

बहुमित्रकरः सुखं वसते यश्च धर्मरतः स गतिं लभते ॥ ९४

Yudhishtira answered, - 'He that speaketh agreeable words becometh agreeable to all. He that acteth with judgment obtaineth whatever he seeketh. He that hath many friends liveth happily. And he that is devoted to virtue obtaineth a happy state (in the next world).'

यक्ष उवाच

को मोदते किमाश्चर्यं कः पन्थाः का च वार्तिका ।

वद मे चतुरः प्रश्नान् मृता जीवन्तु बान्धवाः ॥ ९५

The Yaksha asked, - 'Who is truly happy? What is most wonderful? What is the path? And what is the news? Answer these four

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questions of mine and let thy dead brothers revive.'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

पञ्चमेऽहनि षष्ठे वा शाकं पचति स्वे गृहे ।

अनृणी चाप्रवासी च स वारिचर मोदते ॥ ९६

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालयम् ।

शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥ ९७

तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयो विभिन्ना नैको ऋषिर्यस्य मतं प्रमाणम् ।

धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥ ९८

अस्मिन् महामोहमये कटाहे सूर्याग्निना रात्रिदिवेन्धनेन ।

मासर्तुदर्वीपरिघट्टनेन भूतानि कालः पचतीति वार्ता ॥ ९९

Yudhishtira answered, 'O amphibious creature, a man who cooketh in his own house, on the fifth or the sixth part of the day, with scanty vegetables, but who is not

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in debt and who stirreth not from home, is truly happy.

Day after day countless creatures are going to the abode of Yama, yet those that remain behind believe themselves to be immortal. What can be more wonderful than this?

Argument leads to no certain conclusion, the Srutis are different from one another; there is not even one Rishi whose opinion can be accepted by all; the truth about religion and duty is hid in caves: therefore, that alone is the path along which the great have trod.

This world full of ignorance is like a pan. The sun is fire, the days and nights are fuel. The months and the seasons constitute the wooden ladle. Time is the cook that is cooking all creatures in that pan (with such aids); this is the news.'

Yaksha Prasnah (यक्षप्रश्नः)

यक्ष उवाच

व्याख्याता मे त्वया प्रश्ना याथातथ्यं परन्तप ।

पुरुषं त्विदानीं व्याख्याहि यश्च सर्वधनी नरः ॥ १००

The Yaksha asked,-'Thou hast, O represser of foes, truly answered all my questions! Tell us now who is truly a man, and what man truly possesseth every kind of wealth.'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

दिवं स्पृशति भूमिं च शब्दः पुण्येन कर्मणा ।

यावत्स शब्दो भवति तावत्पुरुष उच्यते ॥ १०१

तुल्ये प्रियाप्रिये यस्य सुखदुःखे तथैव च ।

अतीतानागते चोभे स वै सर्वधनी नरः ॥ १०२

Yudhishtira answered,-'The report of one's good action reacheth heaven and spreadeth over the earth. As long as that report lasteth,

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so long is a person to whom the agreeable and the disagreeable, weal and woe, the past and the future, are the same, is said to possess every kind of wealth.'

यक्ष उवाच

व्याख्यातः पुरुषो राजन्यश्च सर्वधनी नरः ।

तस्मात्त्वमेकं भ्रातृणां यमिच्छसि स जीवतु ॥ १०३

The Yaksha said, -'Thou hast, O king truly answered who is a man, and what man possesseth every kind of wealth. Therefore, let one only amongst thy brothers, whom thou mayst wish, get up with life!'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

श्यामो य एष रक्ताक्षो बृहच्छाल इवोत्थितः ।

व्यूढोरस्को महाबाहुर्नकुलो यक्ष जीवतु ॥ १०४

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Yudhishtira answered,-'Let this one that is of darkish hue, whose eyes are red, who is tall like a large Sala tree, whose chest is broad and arms long, let this Nakula, O Yaksha, get up with life!

यक्ष उवाच

प्रियस्ते भीमसेनोऽयमर्जुनो वः परायणम् ।

स कस्मान्नकुलो राजन्सापत्नं जीवमिच्छसि ॥ १०५

यस्य नागसहस्रेण दशसङ्घेन वै बलम् ।

तुल्यं तं भीममुत्सृज्य नकुलं जीवमिच्छसि ॥ १०५

तथैनं मनुजाः प्राहुर्भीमसेनं प्रियं तव ।

अथ केनानुभावेन सापत्नं जीवमिच्छसि ॥ १०६

यस्य बाहुबलं सर्वे पाण्डवाः समुपासते ।

अर्जुनं तमपाहाय नकुलं जीवमिच्छसि ॥ १०७

The Yaksha rejoined,-'This Bhimasena is dear unto thee, and this Arjuna also is one

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upon whom all of you depend! Why, then, O king dost thou, wish a step-brother to get up with his life! How canst thou, forsaking Bhima whose strength is equal to that of ten thousand elephants, wish Nakula to live? People said that this Bhima was dear to thee. From what motive then dost thou wish a step-brother to revive? Forsaking Arjuna the might of whose arm is worshipped by all the sons of Pandu, why dost thou wish Nakula to revive?'

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।

तस्माद्धर्मं न त्यजामि मा नो धर्मो हतोऽवधीत् ॥ १०८

आनृशंस्यं परो धर्मः परमार्थाच्च मे मतम् ।

आनृशंस्यं चिकीर्षामि नकुलो यक्ष जीवतु ॥ १०९

धर्मशीलः सदा राजा इति मां मानवा विदुः ।

स्वधर्मान्न चलिष्यामि नकुलो यक्ष जीवतु ॥ ११०

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कुन्ती चैव माद्री च द्वे भार्ये तु पितुर्मम ।

उभे सपुत्रे स्यातां वै इति मे धीयते मतिः ॥ १११

यथा कुन्ती तथा माद्री विशेषो नास्ति मे तयोः ।

मातृभ्यां सममिच्छामि नकुलो यक्ष जीवतु ॥ ११२

Yudhishtira said, -'If virtue is sacrificed, he that sacrificeth it, is himself lost. So virtue also cherisheth the cherisher. Therefore taking care that virtue by being sacrificed may not sacrifice us, I never forsake virtue. Abstention from injury is the highest virtue, and is, I ween, even higher than the highest object of attainment. I endeavour to practise that virtue.

Therefore, let Nakula, O Yaksha, revive! Let men know that the king is always virtuous! I will never depart from my duty. Let Nakula, therefore, revive! My father had two wives, Kunti and Madri. Let both of them have children. This is what I wish. As Kunti is to



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me, so also is Madri. There is no difference between them in my eye. I desire to act equally towards my mothers. Therefore, let Nakula live'

यक्ष उवाच

यस्य तेऽर्थाच्च कामाच्च आनृशंस्यं परं मतम् ।

तस्मात्ते भ्रातरः सर्वे जीवन्तु भरतर्षभ ॥ ११३

The Yaksha said,-'Since abstention from injury is regarded by thee as higher than both profit and pleasure, therefore, let all thy brothers live, O bull of Bharata race!'

इति श्रीमहाभारते आरण्यके पर्वणि आरण्यपर्वणि यक्षप्रश्नः