

CHAPTER 43

(ASTIKA PARVA) Continued

Takshaka's bite

तक्षक उवाच

यदि दष्टं मयेह त्वं शक्तः किञ्चिच्चिकित्सितुम्।
ततो वृक्षं मया दष्टमिमं जीवय काश्यप॥ १॥

Takshaka said :

O Kashyapa, if you are able to cure any creature bitten by me, then revive this tree bitten by me.

परं मन्त्रबलं यत्ते तद्दर्शय यतस्व च।

न्यग्रोधमेनं धक्ष्यामि पश्यतस्ते द्विजोत्तम॥ २॥

O best of Brahmanas, I burn this banian tree in your sight. Try your best; and show me your skill in Mantras of which you have just spoken.

काश्यप उवाच

दश नागेन्द्र वृक्षं त्वं यद्येतदभिमन्यसे।

अहमेनं त्वया दष्टं जीवयिष्ये भुजंगम॥ ३॥

Kashyapa said :

O snake, if you are so minded, bite (the tree then). I shall revive it, though bitten by you.

सौतिरुवाच

एवमुक्तः स नागेन्द्रः काश्यपेन महात्मना।
अदशद्वृक्षमभ्येत्य न्यग्रोधं पन्नगोत्तमः॥४॥

Sauti said :

The king of the snakes, thus addressed by the illustrious Kashyapa, bit that banian tree.

स वृक्षस्तेन दष्टस्तु पन्नगेन महात्मना।
आशीविषविषोपेतः प्रजज्वाल समन्ततः॥५॥

The tree, bitten by the illustrious snake and having embibed his poison, blazed up all around.

तं दग्ध्वा स नगं नागः काश्यपं पुनरब्रवीत्।
कुरु यत्नं द्विजश्रेष्ठ जीवयैनं वनस्पतिम्॥६॥

Having thus burnt the tree, the snake spoke again to Kashyapa, "O best of Brahmanas, try your best and let this lord of the forest (the banian tree) be revived."

सौतिरुवाच

भस्मीभूतं ततो वृक्षं पन्नगेन्द्रस्य तेजसा।
भस्म सर्वं समाहृत्य काश्यपो वाक्यमब्रवीत्॥७॥

The tree was reduced to ashes by the poison of the king of snakes. But taking up the ashes, Kashyapa spoke these words.

विद्याबलं पन्नगेन्द्र पश्य मेऽद्य वनस्पतौ।
अहं संजीवयाम्येनं पश्यतस्ते भुजंगमः॥८॥

"O king of snakes, behold my power of learning in this lord of the forest. O snake, I shall revive it in your very presence."

ततः स भगवान्द्विद्वान्काश्यपो द्विजसत्तमः।
भस्मराशीकृतं वृक्षं विद्यया समजीवयत्॥९॥

And then that best of Brahmanas, the illustrious and learned Kashyapa, revived by his learning the tree which was reduced to a heap of ashes.

अंकुरं कृतवांस्तत्र ततः पर्णद्वयान्वितम्।
पलाशिनं शाखिनं च तथा विटपिनं पुनः॥१०॥

He first created the sprout, he then created two leaves in it. He then made the stem, then the branches and then the full-grown tree with leaves and all.

तं दृष्ट्वा जीवितं वृक्षं काश्यपेन महात्मना।
उवाच तक्षको ब्रह्मत्रैतदत्यद्भुतं त्वयि॥११॥

Seeing that the tree was really revived by the illustrious Kashyapa, Takshaka said, "O Brahmana, it is not (at all) wonderful.

द्विजेन्द्र यद्विषं हन्या मम वा मद्विषस्य वा।
कं त्वमर्थमभिप्रेप्सुर्यासि तत्र तपोधन॥१२॥

That you should destroy my poison or the poison of others like me. O king of Brahmanas, O Rishi, wishing to gain what wealth, are you bent on going there?

यत्तेभिलषितं प्राप्तुं फलं तस्मान्नृपोत्तमात्।
अहमेव प्रदास्यामि तत्ते यद्यपि दुर्लभम्॥१३॥

I shall give you the wealth you hope to get from the best of kings, however difficult may it be get it.

विप्रशापाभिभूते च क्षीणायुषि नराधिपे।
घटमानस्य ते विप्र सिद्धिः संशयिता भवेत्॥१४॥

O Brahmana, your success is doubtful, for that king is affected with a Brahmana's curse and the period of his life is also shortened.

ततो यशः प्रदीप्तं ते त्रिषु लोकेषु विश्रुतम्।
निरंशुरिव धर्माशुरन्तर्धानमितो ब्रजेत्॥१५॥

Your blazing fame, that has overspread the three worlds, will (then) disappear the sun deprived of his splendour.

काश्यप उवाच

धनार्थी याम्यहं तत्र तन्मे देहि भुजंगम।
ततोऽहं विनिवर्तिष्ये स्वापतेयं प्रगृह्य वै॥१६॥

Kashyapa said :

I go there for wealth. Give it to me, O snake, so that I may go back receiving it from you.

तक्षक उवाच

यावद्धनं प्रार्थयसे तस्माद्राज्ञस्ततोऽधिकम्।
अहमेव प्रदास्यामि निवर्तस्व द्विजोत्तम॥१७॥

Takshaka said :

O best of Brahmanas, I shall give you wealth more than you hope to get from the king. Therefore do not go.

सौतिरुवाच

तक्षकस्य वचः श्रुत्वा काश्यपो द्विजसत्तमः।
प्रदध्यौ सुमहातेजा राजानं प्रति बुद्धिमान्॥ १८॥

Sauti said :

Having heard what Takshaka said, the best of Brahmanas, the wise and greatly powerful Kashyapa, sat in meditation.

दिव्यज्ञानः स तेजस्वी ज्ञात्वा तं नृपतिं तदा।
क्षीणायुषं पाण्डवेयमपावर्तत काश्यपः॥ १९॥
लब्ध्वा वित्तं मुनिवरस्तक्षकाद्यावदीप्सितम्।
निवृत्ते काश्यपे तस्मिन्समयेन महात्मनि॥ २०॥

The greatly powerful man (Kashyapa), ascertaining by his ascetic powers that the period of the life of the king of the Pandava race had really run out, went back, after receiving from Takshaka as much wealth as he desired to possess. On the great Rishi Kashyapa's departure, Takshaka went with speed towards Hastinapur.

जगाम तक्षकस्तूर्णं नगरं नागसाह्वयम्।
अथ शुश्राव गच्छन्स तक्षको जगतीपतिम्॥ २१॥
मन्त्रैर्गदैर्विषहरै रक्ष्यमाणं प्रयत्नतः।

Takshaka heard, on his way, that the king of the world was living very carefully, protected by poison-neutralising Mantras and medicines.

सौतिरुवाच

स चिन्तयामास तदा मायायोगेन पार्थिवः।
मया वञ्चयितव्योऽसौ क उपायो भवेदिति॥ २२॥

Thereupon the snake reflected, saying. "The king must be deceived by me by my Maya (power of delusion). But what must be the means?"

ततस्तापसरूपेण प्राहिणोत्स भुजंगमान्।
फलदर्भोदकं गृह्य राज्ञे नागोऽथ तक्षकः॥ २३॥

Takshaka then sent some snakes in the guise of Brahmanas with fruits Kussha grass and water as presents.

तक्षक उवाच

गच्छध्वं यूयमव्यग्रा राजानं कार्यवत्तया।
फलपुष्पोदकं नाम प्रतिग्राहयितुं नृपम्॥ २४॥

Takshaka said :

Go you all to the king, saying that you have urgent business and showing no impatience, as if you want to make him a present of the fruits, flowers and water.

सौतिरुवाच

ते तक्षकसमादिष्टास्तथा चक्रुर्भुजंगमाः।
उपनिन्युस्तथा राज्ञे दर्भानापः फलानि च॥ २५॥

Sauti said :

The snakes, thus commanded by Takshaka, did (as they were ordered to do) They took to the king, Kussha grass, water and fruits.

तच्च सर्वं स राजेन्द्रः प्रतिजग्राह वीर्यवान्।
कृत्वा तेषां च कार्याणि गम्यतामित्युवाच तान्॥ २६॥

The greatly powerful king of kings accepted their presents and when their business was finished, he said, "Now retire."

गतेषु तेषु नागेषु तापसच्छास्त्ररूपिषु।
अमात्यान्सुहृदश्चैव प्रोवाच स नराधिपः॥ २७॥
भक्षयन्तु भवन्तो वै स्वादूनीमानि सर्वशः॥ २८॥

When those disguised snakes had gone away, the king addressed his ministers and friends, saying-

"Eat with me all these fruits of excellent taste, brought by the ascetics."

तापसैरुपनीतानि फलानि सहिता मया।
ततो राजा ससचिवः फलान्यादातुमैच्छत॥ २९॥

Empelled by Fate and the words of the Rishi, the king with his ministers desired to eat those fruits.

विधिना संप्रयुक्तो वै ऋषिवाक्येन तेन तु।
यस्मिन्नेव फले नागस्तमेवाभक्षयत्स्वयम्॥ ३०॥
ततो भक्षयतस्तस्य फलात्कृमिरभुदणुः।

ह्रस्वकः कृष्णनयनस्तामवर्णोऽथ शौनकः॥ ३१॥

He himself ate the fruit within which Takshaka lay hidden. O Shaunaka, when he was eating the fruit, there appeared from the fruit an ugly insect, of shape scarcely discernible, of black eyes and coppery colour. The best of kings, taking up the insect, said to his councillors,

स तं गृह्य नृपश्रेष्ठः सचिवानिदमब्रवीत्।
 अस्तमभ्येति सविता विषादद्य न मे भयम्॥ ३२॥
 सत्यवागस्तु स मुनिः कृमिर्मा दशतामयम्।
 तक्षको नाम भूत्वा वै तथा परिहृतं भवेत्॥ ३३॥

“The sun is setting. I have no longer any fear from the poison today. Therefore, let this insect, becoming Takshaka, bite me, so that my sinful act be expiated and the word of the ascetic may be true. And those councillors, impelled by Fate, approved of the speech of the king.

ते चैनमन्ववर्तन्त मन्त्रिणः कालचोदिताः।
 एवमुक्त्वा स राजेन्द्रो ग्रीवायां संनिवेश्य ह॥ ३४॥

The monarch smiled and placed the insect on his head. His hour (of death) having come, he lost his senses.

कृमिकं प्राहसत्तूर्णं मुमूर्षुर्नष्टचेतनः।
 प्रहसन्नेव भोगेन तक्षकेण त्ववेष्ट्यत॥ ३५॥
 तस्मात्फलाद्विनिष्क्रय यत्तद्राज्ञे निवेदितम्।
 वेष्टयित्वा च वेगेन विनद्य च महास्वनम्।
 अदशत्पृथिवीपालं तक्षकः पन्नगेश्वरः॥ ३६॥

And when the king was smiling, Takshaka, who has come out of the fruit that was offered to the king, coiled himself round the neck of the king. Uttering a tremendous roar, the king of the snakes immediately bit that protector of the world.