

Bharata's race, learned as you are, enlighten me on the question put by me.

सत्यं चेवानृतं चोभे लोकानावृत्य तिष्ठतः।

तयोः किमाचरेद् राजन् पुरुषो धर्मनिश्चितः॥२॥

Truth and falsehood exist, all over the world. Which of these two, O king, should a virtuous person follow.

किंस्वित् सत्यं किमनृतं किंस्विद् धर्म्यं सनातनम्।

कस्मिन्काले वदेत्सत्यं कस्मिन्कालेऽनृतं वदेत्॥३॥

What again is truth? What is falsehood? What, again, is eternal virtue? When should a person tell the truth, and when should he tell an untruth?

भीष्म उवाच

सत्यस्य वचनं साधु न सत्याद् विद्यते परम्।

तु लोकेषु दुर्ज्ञानं तत् प्रवक्ष्यामि भारत॥४॥

Bhishma said—

To tell the truth is righteous. There is nothing higher than truth. I shall now, O Bharata, tell you what men do not know generally.

भवेत् सत्यं न वक्तव्यं वक्तव्यमनृतं भवेत्।

यत्रानृतं भवेत् सत्यं सत्यं वाप्यनृतं भवेत्॥५॥

There, where falsehood prevails as truth, truth should not be said. There, again, where truth passes for falsehood, even falsehood should be said.

तादृशो बध्यते बालो यत्र सत्यमनिष्ठितम्।

सत्यानृते विनिश्चित्य ततो भवति धर्मवित्॥६॥

That ignorant person commits sin, who says truth which is not righteous. That person is a master of duties who can distinguish truth from untruth.

अप्यनार्योऽकृतप्रज्ञः पुरुषोऽप्यतिदारुणः।

सुमहत् प्राप्नुयात् पुण्यं बलाकोऽश्वधादिव॥७॥

Even a person, who is disreputable, who is of impure soul, and who is very truthless, may succeed in acquiring great merit as the hunter Balaka by killing the blind beast.

CHAPTER 109

(RAJADHARMANUSHASANAPARVA)

— Continued

The superiority of truth to falsehood

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

कथं धर्मे स्थातुमिच्छन् नरो वर्तेत भारत।

विद्वन् जिज्ञासमानाय प्रब्रूहि भरतर्षभ॥१॥

Yudhishthira said—

How, O Bharata, should a person act who wishes to follow virtue? O foremost of

किमाश्चर्यं च यन्मूढो धर्मकामोऽप्यधर्मवित्।

सुमहत् प्राप्नुयात् पुण्यं गङ्गायामिव कौशिकः॥८॥

How extraordinary it is that a foolish person though desirous of winning merit still perpetrated a sinful deed! An owl, again, living on the banks of the Ganges, acquired great merit.

तादृशोऽयमनुप्रश्नो यत्र धर्मः सुदुर्लभः।

दुष्करः प्रतिसंख्यातुं तत् केनात्र व्यवस्यति॥९॥

The question you have put to me a difficult one, because it is difficult to say what is righteousness. It is not easy to describe it. No one describing righteousness, can describe it accurately.

प्रभवार्थाय भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम्।

यः स्यात् प्रभवसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥१०॥

Righteousness was declared for the aggrandisement and growth of all creatures. Therefore, what brings on advancement and growth is righteousness.

धारणाद् धर्ममित्याहर्धर्मण विधृताः प्रजाः।

यः स्याद् धारणसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥११॥

Righteousness was declared for preventing creatures from injuring one another. Therefore, Righteousness is that which prevents injury to creatures.

अहिंसार्थाय भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम्।

यः स्यादहिंसासम्पृक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥१२॥

Righteousness is also so called because it maintains all creatures. In fact, all creatures are kept up Righteousness, Therefore, Righteousness is what is capable of upholding all creatures.

श्रुतिधर्म इति ह्येके नेत्याहुरपरे जनाः।

न च तत्रत्यसूयामो न हि सर्वं विधीयते॥१३॥

Some say that Righteousness is the injunction of the Shrutis. Others do not agree to this. I would into blame them that say so. Everything, again, has not been described in the Shrutis.

येऽन्यायेन जिहीर्षन्तो धनमिच्छन्ति कस्यचित्।

तेभ्यस्तु न तदाख्येयं स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥१४॥

Sometimes men, desirous of getting hold of the wealth of some one, make enquiries. One should never answer such enquiries. That is settled duty.

अकूजनेन चेन्मोक्षो नावकूजेत् कथंचन।

अवश्यं कूजितव्ये वा शङ्करन् वाप्यकूजनात्॥१५॥

श्रेयस्तत्रानृतं वक्तुं सत्यादिति विचारितम्।

यः पापैः सह सम्बन्धान्मुच्यते शपथादपि॥१६॥

If by becoming silent, one succeeds in escaping, one should remain silent, If, however, one's silence at a time when one must speak creates suspicion, it would be better then to say what is untrue than what is true. This is right conclusion. If one can escape from sinful men by an oath, one may take it without committing sin.

न तेभ्योऽपि धनं देयं शक्ये सति कथंचन।

पापेभ्यो हि धनं दत्तं दातारमपि पीडयेत्॥१७॥

One should not, even if he is able, give away his wealth to sinful men. Wealth given to sinful men assails even the giver.

स्वशरीरोपरोधेन धनमादातुमिच्छतः।

सत्यसम्प्रतिपत्त्यर्थं यद् ब्रूयुः साक्षिणः क्वचित्॥१८॥

अनुक्त्वा तत्र तद्वाच्यं सर्वे तेऽनृतवादिनः।

प्राणात्यये विवाहे च वक्तव्यमनृतं भवेत्॥१९॥

If a creditor wishes to take from his debtor a payment of the load by bodily service, the witnesses would all perjure, it, summoned by the creditor for establishing the truth of the agreement, they did not say what should be said. When life is in danger, or on occasions of marriage, one may say an untruth.

अर्थस्य रक्षणार्थाय परेषां धर्मकारणात्।

परेषां सिद्धिमाकाङ्क्षन् नीचः स्याद् धर्मभिक्षुकः॥२०॥

One, who seeks for virtue, does not commit a sin by saying a falsehood, if it be said to save the wealth and prosperity of others, or for religious purposes.

प्रतिश्रुत्य प्रदातव्यः स्वकार्यस्तु बलात्कृतः।

यः कश्चिद् धर्मसमयात् प्रच्युतो धर्मसाधनः॥२१॥

दण्डनैव स हन्तव्यस्तं पन्थानं समाश्रितः।

च्युतः सदैव धर्मेभ्योऽमानवं धर्ममास्थितः॥२२॥

शठः स्वधर्ममुत्सृज्य तमिच्छेदुपजीवितुम्।

Having promised to pay, one is bound to satisfy his promise, If failing, the self-appropriator must be forcibly enslaved. If a person without satisfying a fair engagement acts improperly, he should, forsooth, be punished with the rod of punishment for behaving thus. Deviating from all duties and abandoning those of his own order, a deceitful person always wishes to follow the conduct of Asuras for maintaining life.

सर्वोपायैर्निहन्तव्यः पापो निकृतिजीवनः॥२३॥

धनमित्येव पापानां सर्वेषामिह निश्चयः।

Such a sinful wight living by deceit should be killed by all means. Such sinful creatures do not see anything in this world superior to wealth.

अविषह्या ह्यसम्भोज्या निकृत्या पतनं गताः॥२४॥

च्युता देवमनुष्येभ्यो यथा प्रेतास्तथैव ते।

Such men should never be tolerated. No one should eat with them. They should be considered as degraded for their sins. Indeed, degraded from the status of humanity and shut out from the grace of the gods, they are even like evil genie.

निर्यज्ञास्तपसा हीना मा स्म तैः सह सङ्गमः॥२५॥

धननाशाद् दुःखतरं जीविताद् विप्रयोजनम्।

Abandon their companionship who do not perform sacrifices and penances. If their wealth be lost, they commit even suicide which is highly pitiable.

अयं ते रोचतां धर्म इति वाच्यः प्रयत्नतः॥२६॥

न कश्चिदस्ति पापानां धर्म इत्येष निश्चयः।

Of those sinful men there is none to whom you can say, This is your duty. Let your heart

be to it!— Their firm belief is that there is nothing in this world which is equal to wealth.

तथागतं च यो हन्यान्नासौ पापेन लिप्यते॥२७॥

स्वकर्मणा हतं हन्ति हत एव स हन्यते।

The person that would kill such a creature would commit no sin. He, who slays him, slays one that has been already killed by his own acts. If killed, it is the dead that is killed.

तेषु यः समयं कश्चित् कुर्वीत हतबुद्धिषु॥२८॥

यथा काकाश्च गृध्राश्च तथैवोपधिजीविनः।

ऊर्ध्वं देहविमोक्षात् ते भवन्त्येतासु योनिषु॥२९॥

He, who promises to kill those persons of lost senses, should keep his promise. Such sinners are like the crow and the vulture who live by deceit. When their bodies are dissolved, they are born again as crows and vultures.

यस्मिन् यथा वर्तते यो मनुष्यं

स्तस्मिंस्तथा वर्तितव्यं स धर्मः।

मायाचारो मायया बाधितव्यः

साध्वाचारः साधुना प्रत्युपेयः॥३०॥

One should treat another as the latter does him. A deceitful person should be thwarted with deceit, while an honest man should be treated with honesty.