

THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

ĀDI PARVA

CHAPTER 1

(ANUKRAMANIKĀ PARVA)

Contents of subject

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम्।

देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत्॥

Having saluted the Supreme Deity (Narayana) and the highest of all male beings (Nara) and also the Goddess of Learning (Sarasvati), let us cry success!

लोमहर्षणपुत्र उग्रश्रवाः सौतिः पौराणिको नैमिषारण्ये

शौनकस्य कुलपतेर्द्वादशवार्षिके सत्रे॥ १॥

सुखासीनानभ्यगच्छद्ब्रह्मर्षीन् संशितव्रतान्।

विनयावनतो भूत्वा कदाचित् सूतनन्दनः॥ २॥

One day when the great sages of hard austerities, who were present at the twelve years' sacrifice of Kulapati Shaunaka, were comfortably sitting in the Naimisharanya, Rishi Lomaharshana's son, Ugrashrava, popularly known as Sauti, well-read in the Puranas, came to them with all humility.

तमाश्रममनुग्रासं नैमिषारण्यवासिनाम्।

चित्राः श्रोतुं कथास्तत्र परिवव्रुस्तपस्विनः॥ ३॥

(Thereupon) desirous of hearing his wonderful stories, the ascetics addressed him who had come to their hermitage of Naimisharanya.

अभिवाद्य मुनींस्तांस्तु सवनेिव कृताञ्जलिः।

अपृच्छत् स तपोवृद्धिं सद्भिश्चैवाभिपूजितः॥ ४॥

Having been welcomed with due respect by those holy Rishis, Sauti, with joined hands, asked them all how their depute penances were progressing.

अथ तेषूपविष्टेषु सर्वेष्वेव तपस्विषु।

निर्दिष्टमासनं भजे विनयाल्लौमहर्षणिः॥ ५॥

After the Rishis had taken their seats, Lomaharshana's son humbly took the seat assigned to him.

सुखासीनं ततस्तं तु विश्रान्तमुपलक्ष्य च।

अथापृच्छदृषिस्तत्र कश्चित् प्रस्तावयन् कथाः॥ ६॥

Seeing that he had comfortably seated and observing that he had some rest after the fatigue, one of the Rishis started the conversation, saying,

कुत आगम्यते सौते क्व चायं विहृतस्त्वया।

कालः कमलपत्राक्ष शंसैतत्पृच्छतो मम॥ ७॥

'O Lotus-eyed, whence have you come? Where have you been, Sauti? tell me, I ask you, (all the particulars of your travels).'

एवं पृष्टोऽब्रवीत् सम्यग् यथावल्लौमहर्षणिः।

वाक्यं वचनसंपन्नस्तेषां च चरिताश्रयम्॥ ८॥

तस्मिन् सदसि विस्तीर्णे मुनीनां भावितात्मनाम्।

When the accomplished speaker Sauti was thus questioned, he gave before that great assembly of contemplative Rishis a well and proper reply in words becoming their nature.

सौतिरुवाच

जनमेजयस्य राजर्षेः सर्पसत्रे महात्मनः॥ ९॥

समीपे पार्थिवेन्द्रस्य सम्यक् पारिक्षितस्य च।

कृष्णद्वैपायनप्रोक्ताः सुपुण्या विविधाः कथाः॥ १०॥

कथिताश्चापि विधिवद् या वैशम्पायनेन वै।

श्रुत्वाऽहं ता विचित्रार्था महाभारतसंश्रिताः॥ ११॥

Sauti said :

After listening to the various sacred and wonderful stories of the Mahabharata composed by Krishna Dvaipayana those that were fully recited by Vaishampayana at the great Snake-sacrifice held by that noble-hearted royal sage, the prince of all princes, the son of Parikshit, Janamejaya

बहूनि संपरिक्रम्य तीर्थान्यायतनानि च।

समन्तपञ्चकं नाम पुण्यं द्विजनिषेवितम्॥ १२॥

(O holy Rishis), I wandered about and visited many holy shrines and places of pilgrimages and came (at last) to Samantapan-chaka, a place venerated by the twice-born,

गतवानस्मि तं देशं युद्धं यत्राभवत् पुरा।

कुरूणां-पाण्डवानां च सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम्॥ १३॥

And where in the days of yore the sons of Kuru and Pandu had fought a deadly battle, in which all the Chiefs of India joined one side or the other.

दिदक्षुरागतस्तस्मात् समीपं भवतामिह।

आयुष्मन्तः सर्व एव ब्रह्मभूता हि मे मताः।

अस्मिन् यज्ञे महाभागाः सूर्यपावकवर्चसः॥ १४॥

कृताभिषेकाः शुचयः कृतजप्याहुताग्नयः।

भवन्त आसने स्वस्था ब्रवीमि किमहं द्विजाः॥ १५॥

Being anxious to see you (all), I have now come before your (august) presence. O Revered sages, to you who are all to me as Brahma to you who are greatly learned and highly blessed, who shine with the fire of the Sun in this holy place of sacrifice, who are pure by sacred ablutions, who have performed and finished the deep meditation, who have kept up the sacred fire, who are beyond all cares, to you, O twice-born ones, what shall I speak?

पुराणसंहिताः पुण्याः कथा धर्मार्थसंश्रिताः।

इतिवृत्तं नरेन्द्राणामृषीणां च महात्मनाम्॥ १६॥

Shall I repeat to you the sacred stories of the Puranas, bearing on religious merites and worldly prosperity, or shall I recount to you the wonderful deeds of the great sages and saints and the sovereigns of mankind?

ऋषय ऊचुः

द्वैपायनेन यत् प्रोक्तं पुराणं परमर्षिणा।

सुरैर्ब्रह्मर्षिभिश्चैव श्रुत्वा यदभिपूजितम्॥ १७॥

The Rishis replied

The Purana which was told by the illustrious sage, Dvaipayana and which was greatly esteemed by the celestials and Brahmarshis when they heard it,

तस्याख्यानवरिष्ठस्य विचित्रपदपर्वणः

सूक्ष्मार्थन्याययुक्तस्य वेदार्थैर्भूषितस्य च॥ १८॥

And which, being full of various dictions and divisions, is (undoubtedly) the most eminent narrative (amongst all narratives) that exist, containing (as it does) subtle and logically combined meanings, enriched with (the essence of) the Vedas, is a sacred work.

भारतस्येतिहासस्य पुण्यां ग्रन्थार्थसंयुताम्।

संस्कारोपगतां ब्राह्मीं नानाशास्त्रोपबृंहिताम्॥ १९॥

जनमेजयस्य यां राज्ञो वैशंपायन उक्तवान्।

यथावत् स ऋषिस्तुष्ट्या सत्रे द्वैपायनाज्ञया॥ २०॥

वेदैश्चतुर्भिः संयुक्तां व्यासस्याद्भुतकर्मणः।

संहितां श्रोतुमिच्छामो धर्म्यां पापभयापहाम्॥ २१॥

It is composed in beautiful language and it includes all other works. It is explained by all Shastras and contains the sense of the four Vedas. (But Sauti), we desire to hear Bharata, the sacred history that drives away all fear, the holy composition of great Vyasa, just as it was beautifully narrated in the great Snake-sacrifice of Raja Janamejaya by Rishi Vaishampayana as directed by Krishna Dvaipayana himself.

सौतिरुवाच

आद्यं पुरुषमीशानं पुरुहूतं पुरुष्टुतम्।

ऋतमेकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्यक्ताव्यक्तं सनातनम्॥ २२॥

Sauti then said :

Bowing (most reverentially) my head to the original first being Ishana, who is adored by all and to whom all make offerings, who is the true unchangeable One, who is manifested and unmanifested, eternal and everlasting Brahma.

असच्चसदसच्चैव यद् विश्वं सदसत्परम्।

परावराणां स्रष्टारं पुराणं परमव्ययम्॥ २३॥

Who is both non-existing and existing, who is the (existing) universe and still distinct from both the existing and the non-existing world, who is the originator of all, both high and low, who is ancient, great and undecaying.

मङ्गल्यं मङ्गलं विष्णुं वरेण्यमनघं शुचिम्।

नमस्कृत्य हृषीकेशं चराचरगुरुं हरिम्॥ २४॥

Vishnu, who is pleasing and auspicious one, who is worthy of all worship, pure and sinless, who is Hari, the lord of the faculties, the guide of all the movable and the immovable.

महर्षेः पूजितस्येह सर्वलोकेर्महात्मनः।

प्रवक्ष्यामि मतं पुण्यं व्यासस्याद्भुतकर्मणः॥ २५॥

(O Rishis), I shall now describe to you the holy thoughts of the great Rishi of the wonderful deeds, (the sage) Vyasa, who is worshipped by all of you here.

आचख्युः कवयः केचित् संप्रत्याचक्षते परे।

आख्यास्यन्ति तथैवान्ये इतिहासमिमं भुवि॥ २६॥

Some bards have already sung this history; and some again are teaching it to others; others will no doubt do the same hereafter on earth.

इदं तु त्रिषु लोकेषु महज्जानं प्रतिष्ठितम्।

विस्तरैश्च समासैश्च धार्यते यदिद्वजातिभिः॥ २७॥

It is a great source of knowledge all through the three worlds. It is possessed by the twice-born in detailed and compendious forms.

अलंकृतं शुभैः शब्दैः समयैर्दिव्यमानुषैः।

छन्दोवृत्तैश्च विविधैरन्वितं विदुषां प्रियम्॥ २८॥

It is embellished with elegant expressions, with human and divine conversations and with various poetical metres. It is, therefore, the great delight of the learned.

निष्पभेऽस्मिन्निरालोके सर्वतस्तमसावृते।

बृहदण्डमभूदेकं प्रजानां बीजमयव्यम्॥ २९॥

In this universe, when there was no brightness and no light and when all was enveloped in darkness, there came into being a Mighty Egg, the one inexhaustible Seed of all created beings.

युगस्यादौ निमित्तं तन्महद्विव्यं प्रचक्षते।

यस्मिन्संश्रूयते सत्यं ज्योतिर्ब्रह्म सनातनम्॥ ३०॥

अद्भुतं चाप्यचिन्त्यं च सर्वत्र समतां गतम्।

अव्यक्तं कारणं सूक्ष्मं यत्तत् सदसदात्मकम्॥ ३१॥

It is called Mahaddivya and was created at the beginning of the Yuga. In it existed the true Light, Brahma, the eternal One, the wonderful and inconceivable Being, the omnipresent, invisible and subtle Cause, the Entity and Non-entity-natured Self.

यस्मात् पितामहो जज्ञे प्रभुरेकः प्रजापतिः।

ब्रह्मा सुरगुरुः स्थाणुर्मनुः कः परमेष्ठयथा॥ ३२॥

प्राचेतसस्तथा दक्षो दक्षपुत्राश्च सप्त वै।

ततः प्रजानां पतयः प्राभवन्नेकविंशतिः॥ ३३॥

पुरुषश्चाप्रमेयात्मा यं सर्वऋषयो विदुः।

विश्वेदेवास्तथादित्या वसवोथाश्विनावपि॥ ३४॥

From this Egg was born the Lord Pitamaha, Brahma, the one only Prajapati, with Suraguru and Sthanu, Manu, Ka (Vishnu) and Parameshti. Prachetasas, Daksha and the seven sons of Daksha. Then also twenty one Prajapatis were born. The Purusha of inconceivable nature whom all the Rishis know. Then appeared Vishvedevas, the Adityas, the Vasus and the two Ashvins.

यक्षाः साध्याः पिशाचाश्च गुह्यकाः पितरस्तथा।

ततः प्रसूता विद्वांसः शिष्टा ब्रह्मर्षि-सत्तमाः॥ ३५॥

राजर्षयश्च बहवः सर्वैः समुदिता गुणैः।

आपो द्यौः पृथिवी वायुरन्तरिक्षं दिशस्तथा॥ ३६॥

The Yakshas, the Sadhyas, the Pisachas, the Guhyakas and the Pitris. Then were produced the wise and the most holy Brahmarshi and the numerous Rajarshis, distinguished for every noble quality, then the water, the heavens, the earth, the sky and the points of the heavens.

संवत्सरर्तवो मासाः पक्षाहोरात्रयः क्रमात्।

यच्चान्यदपि तत्सर्वं संभूतं लोकसाक्षिकम्॥ ३७॥

यदिदं दृश्यते किञ्चिद्भूतं स्थावरजंगमम्।

पुनः संक्षिप्यते सर्वं जगत्प्राप्ते युगक्षये॥ ३८॥

The years, the seasons, the months, the fortnights and the day and night in succession. And again, at the end of the world and of the Yuga, whatever is seen in the universe, all created things, both animate and inanimate, will be turned into chaos.

यथर्तावृतुलिङ्गानि नानारूपाणि पर्यये।

दृश्यन्ते तानि तान्येव तथा भावा युगादिषु॥ ३९॥

And at the beginning of other (new) Yugas, all things will be again produced; and like the various fruits of the earth will succeed one another in the dye order of their seasons.

एवमेतदनाद्यन्तं भूतसंहारकारकम्।

अनादिनिधनं लोके चक्रं संपरिवर्तते॥४०॥

This mysterious wheel, which causes, the destruction and production of all things, revolves thus perpetually in the world, without beginning and without an end.

त्रयस्त्रिंशत्सहस्राणि त्रयस्त्रिंशच्छतानि च।

त्रयस्त्रिंशच्च देवानां सृष्टिः संक्षेपलक्षणा॥४१॥

To cite a brief example, The generation of Devas, was thirty three thousand, thirty three hundred and thirty three.

दिवःपुत्रो बृहद्भानुश्चक्षुरात्मा विभावसुः।

सविता स ऋचीकोऽर्को भानुराशावहो रविः॥४२॥

The sons of Diva were Brihadbhanus, Chakshus, Atma, Vibhavasus, Savita, Richika, Arka, Bhanu, Ashavaha and Ravi.

पुरा विवस्वतः सर्वे मह्यस्तेषां तथावरः।

देवभ्राट् तनयस्तस्य सुभ्राडिति ततः स्मृतः॥४३॥

सुभ्राजस्तु त्रयः पुत्राः प्रजावन्तो बहुश्रुताः।

दशज्योतिः शतज्योतिः सहस्रज्योतिरेव च॥४४॥

Of these Vivasvanas, old Mahya was the youngest whose son was Devabhata.

Devabhata had one son, named Subhata who had three sons, namely Dashajyoti, Shatajyoti and Sahasrajyoti, each of whom gave birth to innumerable offsprings.

दशपुत्रसहस्राणि दशज्योतेर्महात्मनः।

ततो दशगुणाश्चान्ये शतज्योतेरिहात्मजाः॥४५॥

भूयस्ततो दशगुणाः सहस्रज्योतिषः सुताः।

तेभ्योऽयं कुरुवंशश्च यदूनां भरतस्य च॥४६॥

ययातीक्ष्वाकुवंशश्च राजर्षीणां च सर्वशः।

संभूता बहवो वंशा भूतसर्गाः सुविस्तराः॥४७॥

Famous Dashajyoti had ten thousands, Shatajyoti had ten times that number and Sahasrajyoti, ten times the number of the offsprings of Shatajyoti. From them descended the race of the Kurus, Yadus and Bharata and also that of Yayati and Ikshvaku and all the Rajarshis. There were also produced numerous other generations.

भूतस्थानानि सर्वाणि रहस्यं त्रिविधं च यत्।

वेदा योगः सविज्ञानो धर्मोऽर्थः काम एव च॥४८॥

And innumerable creatures and their abodes. There were produced the three fold Mysteries, the Vedas, Yoga and Vijnana: Dharma, Artha and Kama.

धर्मकामार्थयुक्तानि शास्त्राणि विविधानि च।

लोकयात्राविधानं च सर्वं तद्दृष्टवानृषिः॥४९॥

The various books on Dharma, Artha and Kama; the rules for the conduct of mankind.

इतिहासाः सवैयाख्या विविधाः श्रुतयोऽपि च।

इह सर्वमनुक्रान्तमुक्तं ग्रन्थस्य लक्षणम्॥५०॥

The histories and discourse and various Shrutis. These are the signs of this work (Mahabharata).

विस्तीर्यैतन्महज्ज्ञानमृषिः संक्षिप्य चाब्रवीत्।

इष्टं हि विदुषां लोके समासव्यासधारणम्॥५१॥

मन्वादि भारतं केचिदास्तीकादि तथापरे।

तथोपरिचराद्यन्ये विप्राः सम्यगधीयते॥५२॥

All this, having been seen by Rishi Vyasa, is mentioned here in due order as a specimen of the book. Rishi Vyasa declared this mass of knowledge in both abridged and detailed forms. The learned of the world wish to possess both the detailed and the abridged accounts. Some read the Bharata from the first Mantra, some from the story of Astika, some again from Uparichara, while some Brahmanas read the whole.

विविधं संहिताज्ञानं दीपयन्ति मनीषिणः।

व्याख्यातुं कुशलाः केचिद्ग्रन्थान्धारयितुं परे॥५३॥

तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण व्यस्य वेदं सनातनम्।

इतिहासमिमं चक्रे पुण्यं सत्यवतीसुतः॥५४॥

Learned men display their various knowledge of Smritis in commenting on this composition. Some are skillful in explaining it while others in remembering it. The son of Satyavati (Vyasa,) by penances and mediation, having classified the ever-lasting Veda, composed this holy history.

पराशरात्मजो विद्वान्ब्रह्मर्षिः संशितव्रतः।

तदाख्यानवरिष्ठं स कृत्वा द्वैपायनः प्रभुः॥५५॥

कथमध्यापयानीह शिष्यानित्यन्वचिन्तयत्।

तस्य तच्चिन्तितं ज्ञात्वा ऋषेर्द्वैपायनस्य च॥५६॥

When the learned and the strict vowed Brahmarshi, Dvaipayana Vyasa, the son of Parashara, completed this greatest of narrations, he began to consider how he could teach it to his pupils.

तत्राजगाम भगवान्ब्रह्मा लोकगुरुः स्वयम्।

प्रीत्यर्थं तस्य चैवर्षेर्लोकानां हितकाम्यया॥५७॥

Then did that preceptor of the world, the possessor of the six attributes, Brahma, knowing the anxiety of Rishi Dvaipayana; came in person to the place where the Rishi was, so that he might gratify the Saint and benefit the people.

तं दृष्ट्वा विस्मितो भूत्वा प्राञ्जलिः प्रणतः स्थितः।

आसनं कल्पयामास सर्वैर्मुनिगणैर्वृतः॥५८॥

When Vyasa, who was surrounded by all the classes of Munis, saw him, he was much surprised. Standing with his joined hands, he bowed at his feet and ordered a seat to be brought.

हिरण्यगर्भमासीनं तस्मिन्स्तु परमासने।

परिवृत्यासनाभ्यासे वासवेयः स्थितोऽभवत्॥५९॥

Then going round to the side of the distinguished seat on which sat Hiranyagarbha, he stood near it.

अनुज्ञातोऽथ कृष्णास्तु ब्रह्मणा परमेष्ठिना।

निषसादासनाभ्यासे प्रीयमाणः शुचिस्मितः॥६०॥

But being commanded by Parameshti, Brahma, full of love, he sat down near the seat; smiling in joy.

उवाच स महातेजा ब्रह्माणं परमेष्ठिनम्।

कृतं मयेदं भगवान्काव्यं परमपूजितम्॥६१॥

Then addressing Brahma, the greatly glorious Vyasa thus said: "O Divine Brahma, a poem, which is greatly respected, had been composed by me."

ब्रह्मन्वेदरहस्यं च यच्चान्यत्स्थापितं मया।

साङ्गोपनिषदां चैव वेदानां विस्तरक्रिया॥६२॥

It contains the mystery of Vedas and other subject that have been explained by me; (it contains) the various hymns of the Vedas, Upanishads with their Angas.

इतिहासपुराणानामुन्मेषं निर्मितं च यत्।

भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च त्रिविधं कालसंज्ञितम्॥६३॥

And a compilation of the Puranas and the history which has been composed by me and named after, the three divisions of time, namely, Past, Present and Future.

जरामृत्युभयव्याधिभावाभावविनिश्चयः।

विविधस्य च धर्मस्य ह्याश्रमाणां च लक्षणम्॥६४॥

And it contains the nature of decay, death, fear, disease existence and non-existence; a description of creeds and the account of various modes of life.

चातुर्वर्ण्यविधानं च पुराणानां च कृत्स्नशः।

तपसो ब्रह्मचर्यस्य पृथिव्याश्चन्द्रसूर्ययोः॥६५॥

And it also contains the rules of the four castes and the essence of all the Puranas, an account of asceticism and rules for the religious student; the dimensions of the earth, of the sun and moon.

ग्रहनक्षत्रताराणां प्रमाणं च युगैः सह।

ऋचो यजूषि सामानि वेदाध्यात्मं तथैव च॥६६॥

Planets, stars and constellations and the length of the duration of the four Yugas and it further more contains Rik, Saman, Yajur Vedas, the Adhyatma.

न्यायशिक्षा चिकित्सा च दानं पाशुपतं तथा।

हेतुनैव समं जन्म दिव्यमानुषसंज्ञितम्॥६७॥

Nyaya, orthoecopy and pathology, Charity, Pashupata and celestial and human births for particular purposes.

तीर्थानां चैव पुण्यानां देशानां चैव कीर्तनम्।

नदीनां पर्वतानां च वनानां सागरस्य च॥६८॥

It contains a description of pilgrimages and holy places, of rivers, mountains, forests, seas.

पुराणां चैव दिव्यानां कल्पानां युद्धकौशलम्।

वाक्यजातिविशेषाश्च लोकयात्राक्रमश्च यः॥६९॥

Of celestial cities and of the Kalpas; the art of war, different kinds of nations and the languages and the manners of the people.

यच्चापि सर्वं वस्तु तच्चैव प्रतिपादितम्।

परं न लेखकः कश्चिदेतस्य भुवि विद्यते॥७०॥

All these have been placed in this poem, but a writer for this work is not to be found on earth.