

CHAPTER 2

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

(वेदव्यासेन कलियुगस्य, शूद्रणाम्, स्त्रियाञ्च महत्वस्य
वर्णनम्)

पराशर उवाच

व्यासश्चाह महाबुद्धिर्यदत्रैव हि वस्तुनि।

तच्छ्रूयतां महाभाग गदतो मम तत्त्वतः॥ १॥

Upon this subject, Maitreya, you shall hear what the wise Vyāsa has related, as it is communicated truly by me.

कस्मिन् कालेऽल्पको धर्मो ददाति सुमहत् फलम्।

मुनीनामित्यभूद् वादः कैश्चासौ क्रियते सुखम्॥ २॥

सन्देहनिर्णायार्थाय वेदव्यासं महामुनिम्।

ययुस्ते संशयं प्रष्टुं मैत्रेय मुनिपुङ्गवाः॥ ३॥

ददृशुस्ते मुनि तत्र जाह्नवीसलिले द्विजाः।

वेदव्यासं महाभागमर्द्धस्त्रातं महामतिम्॥ ४॥

स्नानावसानं तत्तस्य प्रतीक्षन्तो महर्षयः ।

तस्थस्तटे महानद्यास्तरुषण्डमुपाथिताः॥ ५॥

मनोऽथ जाह्नवीतोयादुत्थायाह सुतो मम।

कलिः, साधुः कलिः साधुरित्येवं श्रुण्वतां वचः॥ ६॥

तेषां मुनीनां भूयश्च ममज्ञ स नदीजले।

उत्थाय साधु साध्विति शूद्र धन्योऽसि चाब्रवीत्॥ ७॥

स निमग्नः समुत्थाय पुनः प्राह महामुनिः।

योषितः साधुदन्यास्तास्ताभ्यो धन्यतरोऽस्ति कः॥ ८॥

ततः स्नात्वा यथान्यायमायान्तं कृतसर्तृक्रियम्।

उपतस्थुर्महाभागं मुनयस्ते सुतं मम॥ ९॥

कृतसंवन्दनाश्चाह कृतासनपरिग्रहान्।

किमर्थमागता यूयमिति सत्यवतीसुतः॥ १०॥

तमूचुः संशयं प्रष्टुं भवन्तं वयमागता।

अलं तेनास्तु तावन्नः कथ्यतामपरं त्वया॥ ११॥

कलिः साध्विति यत् प्रोक्तं शूद्रः साध्विति योषितः ।

यदाह भगवान् साधु धन्याश्चेति पुनः पुनः॥ १२॥

तत् सर्वं श्रोतुमिच्छामो न चेद् गुह्यं महामुने।

तत् कथ्यतां ततो हृत्स्थं प्रक्षयामस्त्वां प्रयोजनम्॥ १३॥

It was once a matter of dispute amongst the sages, at what season the least moral merit obtained the greatest reward, and by whom it was most easily displayed. In order to terminate the discussion, they went to Veda Vyāsa to remove their doubts. They found the illustrious Muni, my son, half immersed in the water of the Ganges; and awaiting the close of his ablutions, the sages remained on the banks of the sacred stream, under shelter of a grove of trees. As my son plunged down into the water, and again rose up from it, the Munis heard him exclaim, "Excellent, is the Kali age!" Again he dived, and again rising, said in their hearing, "Well done, well done Śūdra; you are happy!" Again he sand down, and as he once more emerged they heard him say, "Well done, well done, women; they are happy! who are more fortunate than they?" After this, my son finished his bathing, and the sages met him as he approached to welcome them. After he had given them seats, and they had proffered their respects, the son of Satyavati said to them, "On what account have you come to me?" They replied, "We came to you to consult you on a subject on which we entertain some doubt; but that may be at present suspended: explained to us something else. We heard you say, 'Excellent is the Kali age! Well done, Śūdra! Well done, women!' Now we are desirous to know why this was said, why you called them repeatedly happy. Tell us the meaning of it, if it be not a mystery. We will then propose to you the question that occupies our thoughts."

इत्युक्तो मुनिभिर्व्यासः प्रहस्येदमथाब्रवीत्।

श्रूयतां भो मुनिश्रेष्ठा यदुक्तं साधु साध्विति॥ १४॥

यत्कृते दशभिवर्षेस्त्रेतायां हायनेन यत्।

द्वापरे यद्य मासेन अहोरात्रेण तत् कलौ॥ १५॥

तरसोब्रह्मचर्य्यस्य जपादेश्च फलं द्विजाः।

प्राप्नोति पुरुषस्तेन कलिः साध्विति भाषितम्॥ १६॥

ध्यायन् कृते यजन् यज्ञैस्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽर्चयन्।

यदाप्नोति तदाप्नोति कलौ सङ्कीर्त्यं केशवम्॥ १७॥

धर्मात्कर्षमतीवात्र प्राप्नोति पुरुषः कलौ।
 अल्पायासेन धर्मज्ञास्तेन तुष्टोऽस्म्यहं कलेः॥ १८॥
 व्रतचर्यापरैर्ग्राह्यो वेदः पूर्वं द्विजातिभिः।
 ततः स्वधर्मसम्प्राप्तैर्यष्टव्यं विधिनाध्वरैः॥ १९॥
 वृथा कथा वृथाभोज्यं वृथेज्या च द्विजन्मनाम्।
 पतनाय तथा भाव्यं तैस्त्वसंयमिभिः सदा॥ २०॥
 असम्यक्करणे दोषस्तेषां सर्वेषु कर्मसु।
 भोज्यपेयादिकञ्चैषां नेच्छाप्राप्तिकरं द्विजाः॥ २१॥
 पारतन्त्र्यं समस्तेषु तेषां कार्येषु वै ततः ।
 जयन्ति ते निजात् लोकान् क्लेशेन महता द्विजाः॥ २२॥
 द्विजशुश्रूषयैवैष पाकयज्ञाधिकारवान्।
 निजान् जयति वै लोकाञ् शूद्रो धन्यतरस्ततः॥ २३॥
 भक्ष्याभक्ष्येषु नास्यास्ति पेयापेयेषु वै यतः।
 नियमो मुनिशार्ङ्गलास्तेनासौ साध्वित्तिरितः॥ २४॥
 स्वधर्मस्याविरोधेन नरैर्लब्धं धनं सदा।
 प्रतिपादनीयं पात्रेषु यष्टव्यञ्च यथाविधि॥ २५॥
 तस्यार्द्धेन महाक्लेशः पालने च द्विजोत्तमाः।
 तथा सद् विनियोगाय विज्ञेयं गहनं नृणाम्॥ २६॥
 एभिरन्यैस्तथा क्लेशैः पुरुषा द्विजसत्तमाः।
 निजान् जयन्ति वै लोकाज्जापत्यादिकान् क्रमात्॥ २७॥
 योषिच्छुश्रूषणं भर्तुः कर्मणा मनसा गिरा।
 कुर्वतो समवाप्नोति तत्सालोक्यं यतो द्विजाः॥ २८॥
 नातिक्लेशेन महता तानेव पुरुषो यथा।
 तृतीयं व्याहृतं तेन मया साध्वित्ति योषितः॥ २९॥
 एतद् वः कथितं विप्रा यन्निमित्तमिहागताः।
 तत् पृच्छध्वं यथाकामं सर्वं वक्ष्यामि वः स्फुटम्॥ ३०॥

Being thus addressed by the Munis, Vyāsa smiled, and said to them, "Hear excellent sages, why I uttered the words 'Well done, well done.' The fruit of penance, of continence, of silent prayer, and the like, practised in the Kṛta age for ten years, in the Treta for one year, in the Dvāpara for a month, is obtained in the Kali age in a day and night: therefore did I exclaim, 'Excellent, excellent, is the Kali age!' That reward which a man obtains in the Kṛta by abstract meditation, in the Treta by sacrifice, in the Dvāpara by adoration, he receives in the Kali by merely

reciting the name of Keśava. In the Kali age a man displays the most exalted virtue by every little exertion; therefore, pious sages, who know what virtue is, I was pleased with the Kali age. Formerly the Vedas were to be acquired by the twice-born through the diligent observances of self-denial; and it was their duty to celebrate sacrifices conformably to the ritual, Then idle prayers, idle feasts, and fruitless ceremonies, were practised but to mislead the twice-born; for although observed by them devoutly, yet, in consequence of some irregularity in their celebration, sin was incurred in all their works, and what they ate, or what they drank, did not effect the fulfilment of their desires. In all their objects the twice-born enjoyed no independence, and they attained their respective spheres only with exceeding pain. The Sūdra, on the contrary, more fortunate than they, reaches his assigned station by rendering them service, and performing merely the sacrifice of preparing food, in which no rules determine what may or may not be eaten, what may or may not be drunk. Therefore, most excellent sages, is the Sūdra fortunate.

"Riches are accumulated by men in modes not incompatible with their peculiar duties, and they are then to be bestowed upon the worthy, and expended in constant sacrifice. There is great trouble in their acquisition; and great grief for their loss. Thus, eminent Brāhmaṇas, through these and other sources of anxiety, men attain their allotted spheres of Prajāpati and the rest only by exceeding labour and suffering. This is not the case with women: a woman has only to honour her husband, in act, thought, and speech, to reach the same region to which he is elevated; and she thus accomplishes her object without any great exertion. This was the purport of my exclamation, 'Well done!' the third time. I have thus related to you what you asked. Now demand the question you came to put to me, in any way you please, and I will make you a distinct reply."

पराशर उवाच

ततस्ते मुनयः प्रोचुर्यत् प्रष्टव्यं महामुने।
 अन्यस्मिन्नेव तत् पुष्टे यथावत् कथितं त्वया॥ ३१॥
 ततः प्रहस्य तान् प्राह कृष्णद्वैपायनो मुनिः।
 विस्मयोत्फुल्लनयनांस्तापसांस्तानुपागतान्॥ ३२॥
 मयैष भवतां प्रश्नो ज्ञातो दिव्येन चक्षुषा।
 तता हि वः प्रसङ्गेन साधु साध्विति भाषितम्॥ ३३॥
 स्वल्पेनैव प्रयत्नेन धर्मं सिध्यति वै कलौ।
 नरैरात्मगुणाभ्योभिः क्षालिताखिलकल्विषैः॥ ३४॥
 शूद्रैश्च द्विजशुश्रूषातत्परैर्मुनिसत्तमाः।
 तथा स्त्रीभिरनाया सं पतिशुश्रूषयैव हि॥ ३५॥
 ततस्त्रितमयष्येतन्मम धन्यतमं मतम्।
 धर्मसंसाधने क्लेशो द्विजातीनां कृतादिषु॥ ३६॥
 भवद्भिर्यदभिप्रेतं तदेतत् कथितं मया।
 अपृष्टेनापि धर्मज्ञाः किमन्यत् कथ्यतां द्विजाः॥ ३७॥

The Munis then said to Vyāsa, "The question we intended to have asked you has been already answered by you in your reply to our subsequent inquiry." On hearing which Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana laughed, and said to the holy persons who had come to see him, whose eyes were wide open with astonishment, "I perceived, with the eye of divine knowledge, the question you intended to ask, and in allusion to it I uttered the expressions, Well done, well done.' In truth, in the Kali age duty is discharged with very little trouble by mortals, whose faults are all washed away by the water of their individual merits; by Śūdras, through diligent attendance only upon the twice-born; and by women, through the slight effort of obedience to their husbands. Therefore, Brāhmaṇas, did I thrice express my admiration of their happiness; for in the Kṛta and other ages great were the toils of the regenerate to perform their duty. I waited not for your inquiry, but replied at once to the question you purposed to ask. Now, ye who know what virtue is, what else do you wish me to tell you?"

ततः सम्पूज्य ते व्यासं प्रशस्य च पुनः पुनः।
 यथागतं द्विजा जग्मुर्व्यासोक्तिक्षतसंशयाः॥ ३८॥
 भवतोऽपि महाभाग! रहस्यं कथितं मया॥ ३९॥
 अत्यन्तदुष्टस्य कलेरयमेको महान् गुणः।
 कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तबन्धः परं व्रजेत्॥ ४०॥
 यद्याहं भवता पृष्टो जगतामुपसंहतिम्।
 प्राकृतामान्तरालाञ्च तामप्येष वदामि ते॥ ४१॥

इति श्रीविष्णुपुराणे षष्ठांशे द्वितीयः अध्यायः॥

The Munis then saluted and praised Vyāsa, and, being freed by him from uncertainty, departed as they came. To you also, excellent Maitreya, have I imparted this secret, this one great virtue of the otherwise vicious Kali age. The dissolution of the world, and the aggregation of the elements, I will now describe to you.¹

NOTES

1. The illustration of the efficacy of devotion to Viṣṇu given in this chapter is peculiar to this Purāna, but the doctrine is common to it and the Bhāgavata. It is repeatedly inculcated in that work. The parallel passage in the twelfth book is the following. "Puruṣottama, abiding in the hearts of men, takes away all the sins of the Kali age, produced by place or property. Bhagavān, abiding in the heart, the heard, repeated, read of, worshipped, or honoured, dissipates the ills of men for ten thousand births. As fire, entering into the substance of gold, purifies it from the allows with which it is debased in the mine, so Viṣṇu, united with the devotee, is the refiner from all that is evil. By learning, penance, suppression of breath, friendship, pilgrimage, ablution, mortification, gifts, prayer, the soul attains not that exceeding purity which it derives from the presence of Viṣṇu. Therefore, with all your soul, O king, hold Keśava ever present in your heart. Let one about to die be most careful in this; for so he goes to supreme felicity. Let the name of the supreme god, Viṣṇu, be repeated diligently by all in their last moments; for he who desires liberation shall attain it by the frequent repetition of the name of Kṛṣṇa. Final felicity is derived in the Kṛta age from holy study;

in the Treta, from religious rites. In the Dvāpara it is attained by pious services; but in the Kali age it is secured by repeating the name of Hari." Similar doctrines are taught in the Gīṭa, and other Vaiṣṇava works. See *As. Res.* vol. XVI. p. 116.
