

कूर्मपुराणम्

पूर्वभागः

Kūrma Purāṇa

Pūrva-bhāga

Chapter-1

Beatitude of Indradyūmna

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम्।
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमदीरयेत्॥१॥

After bowing in reverence to Nārāyaṇa, Nara the best among the humans, the goddess Sarasvatī (the goddess of speech) initially, the Purāṇa should be started thereafter.¹

नमस्कृत्याप्रमेयाय विष्णवे कूर्मरूपिणे।

पुराणं संप्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं विश्वयोनिना॥१॥

I bowing in reverence to the immeasurable lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul, having the form of a Kūrma (divine form of tortoise), am going to narrate Kūrma Purāṇa which has been narrated initially by Viṣṇu, the lord of universe.

सत्रान्ते सूतमनघं नैमिषेया महर्षयः।

पुराणसंहितां पुण्यां पप्रच्छु रोमहर्षणम्॥२॥

At the conclusion of the Yajña a Naimiṣāranya, the ascetics of the place, the

1. This is a benedictory verse which occurs at the commencement of every Purāṇa and Mahābhārata. Agni Purāṇa describes about Nara and Nārāyaṇa thus: "The ten-fold devas (celestials) are the (first) transition from the natural or the quiescent condition of the soul. *Manas* or mind is the eleventh organ. Then came into existence the self-sprung Lord desirous of creating various creatures. He first created water and in it seeds. Waters are called Nara for they are the creation of Nara (the spirit of God); and since they were his first *Ayana* or place of motion, he hence is named Nārāyaṇa or moving on the waters. The egg engendered in the water was gold-hued. In it Brahmā himself was born and therefore the Śruti reveals him to us *Svayambhū* or self-born.

Maharṣis of that place inquired from the sinless Sūta,² named Romaharṣaṇa,³ about the Purāṇa Saṁhitā.

त्वया सूत महाबुद्धे भगवान् ब्रह्मवित्तमः।

इतिहासपुराणार्थं व्यासः सम्यगुपासितः॥३॥

तस्य ते सर्वरोमाणि वचसा हृषितानि यत्।

द्वैपायनस्य तु भवांस्ततो वै रोमहर्षणः॥४॥

They said, O Immensely wise Sūta, you for achieving the divine knowledge, have adored lord Vyāsa, the foremost among those well versed in the knowledge of Brahman. Your hair stood at ends at the speech of the sage Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Because of this, you came to be known as Romaharṣaṇa.

भवन्तमेव भगवान् व्याजहार स्वयं प्रभुः।

मुनीनां संहितां वक्तुं व्यासः पौराणिकीं पुरा॥५॥

In ancient times, the sage Vyāsadeva had requested you to narrate the Paurāṇika Saṁhitā of the sages.

त्वं हि स्वायम्भुवे यज्ञे सुत्याहे वितते सति।

संभूतः संहितां वक्तुं स्वांशेन पुरुषोत्तमः॥६॥

After a recess in the *yajña*, the bath was finished he had declared that you had been born as *aṁśa* of the lord for narrating the *Purāṇa Saṁhitā*.

तस्माद्भवन्तं पृच्छामः पुराणं कौर्ममुत्तमम्।

वक्तुमर्हसि चास्माकं पुराणार्थविशारद॥७॥

2. The word signifies the offspring of a Kṣatriya by a Brahmin woman. This mixed caste used to keep horses and drive cars in the days of yore. A particular family of this caste however became famous for its knowledge of Purāṇas and other sacred writings.

3. Another name Sūta, the pupil of Vyāsa and supposed narrator of the Purāṇas.

Therefore we are inquiring about the excellent *Kūrma Purāṇa*. O Sage, you are well-versed in the interpretation of the *Purāṇas*. Therefore you are competent to narrate the same.

मुनीनां वचनं श्रुत्वा सूतः पौराणिकोत्तमः।

प्रणम्य मनसा प्राह गुरुं सत्यवतीसुतम्॥८॥

Hearing the words of the sages, Sūta, the foremost among the knowers of *Purāṇa*, said to his preceptor, the son of Satyavati, with reverence in his mind.

रोमहर्षण उवाच

नमस्कृत्य जगद्योनिं कूर्मरूपधरं हरिम्।

वक्ष्ये पौराणिकीं दिव्यां कथां पापप्रणाशिनीम्॥९॥

यां श्रुत्वा पापकर्मापि गच्छेत परमां गतिम्।

न नास्तिके कथां पुण्यामिमां ब्रूयात्कदाचन॥१०॥

Romaharṣaṇa said, "After offering my salutation to lord Viṣṇu in the form of Kūrma, I shall narrate the story of this divine *Purāṇa*, listening to which even a sinner shall achieve the highest position. But this auspicious story should not be revealed to the non-believers.

श्रद्धधानाय शान्ताय धार्मिकाय द्विजातये।

इमां कथामनुब्रूयात्साक्षान्नारायणेऱिताम्॥११॥

This auspicious story should be narrated to faithfals, peaceful, religious minded people, the Brāhmaṇas and those with a religious bent of mind, because it has been narrated by lord Nārāyaṇa himself.

सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च।

वंशानुचरितञ्चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम्॥१२॥

The *Purāṇa* comprises of *Sarga* (primary creation of the universe), *Pratisarga* (secondary creation),¹ *Vamśa* (dynasties of the monarchs and the *ṛsis*) *Manvantara* (span of Manu's age) and *Vamśānucarita* or the history of the ancient rulers.

ब्राह्मं पुराणं प्रथमं पादं वैष्णवमेव च।

1. A secondary or continued creation out of the primitive matter or a portion of a *Purāṇa* which trends of destruction and renovation of the world. MW, p. 672.

शैवं भागवतञ्चैव भविष्यं नारदीयकम्॥१३॥

मार्कण्डेयमथानेयं ब्रह्मवैवर्तमेव च।

लैङ्गं तथा च वाराहं स्कान्दं वामनमेव च॥१४॥

कौर्म मात्स्यं गारुडञ्च वायवीयमनन्तरम्।

अष्टादशं समुद्दिष्टं ब्रह्माण्डमिति संज्ञितम्॥१५॥

अन्यान्युपपुराणानि मुनिभिः कथितानि तु।

अष्टादश पुराणानि श्रुत्वा संक्षेपतो द्विजाः॥१६॥

The following eighteen *Purāṇas* are comparable with the Brahman.

(1) Brāhma *Purāṇa*, (2) Padma *Purāṇa* (3) Viṣṇu *Purāṇa*, (4) Śiva *Purāṇa* (5) Bhāgavata *Purāṇa*, (6) Bhaviṣya *Purāṇa*, (7) Nārādīya *Purāṇa* (8) Mārkaṇḍeya *Purāṇa*, (9) Agni *Purāṇa*, (10) Brahmavaivarta *Purāṇa*, (11) Liṅga *Purāṇa*, (12) Varāha *Purāṇa*, (13) Skanda *Purāṇa*, (14) Vāmana *Purāṇa*, (15) Kūrma *Purāṇa*, (16) Matsya *Purāṇa*, (17) Garuḍa *Purāṇa*, (18) Vāyu *Purāṇa*.

These eighteen *Purāṇas* as said to be equating the globe. "O Brāhmaṇa, listening to the briefs of these eighteen *Purāṇas*, the sages have composed other *upa-purāṇas*.

आद्यं सनत्कुमारोक्तं नारसिंहमतः परम्।

तृतीयं स्कान्दमुद्दिष्टं कुमाररेण तु भाषितम्॥१७॥

The first *upa-Purāṇa* has been composed by Sanatkumāra. Thereafter comes *Nṛsimha-upa-purāṇa* and the third is *Skanda-upa-purāṇa*, which has been composed by Kumāra Kārttikeya.

चतुर्थं शिवधर्माख्यं साक्षान्नन्दीशभाषितम्।

दुर्वासोक्तमाश्रयं नारदीयमतः परम्॥१८॥

The fourth one is an *upa-purāṇa*, known by the title of *Śivadharma*, which has been composed by Nandī himself. Then follows *Nārādīya Purāṇa* which is quite astonishing and was composed by the sage Durvāsā.

कापिलं वामनञ्चैव तथैवोशनसेरितम्।

ब्रह्माण्डं वारुणञ्चैव कालिकाह्वयमेव च॥१९॥

माहेश्वरं तथा साम्बं सौरं सर्वार्थसञ्चयम्।

पराशरोक्तं मारीचं तथैव भार्गवाह्वयम्॥२०॥

Then follow *Kāpila* and *Vāmana upa-Purāṇas* which were composed by (Uṣaṇā)

Śukrācārya.¹ Then comes the *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Varuṇa*, *Kālikā*, *Maheśvara*, *Sāmba*, *Saura upa-Purāṇas*, besides *Mārīca* and *Bhārgava upa-purāṇas* which were composed by Parāśara.

Story of Kūrma Purāṇa

इदन्तु पञ्चदशकं पुराणं कौर्ममुत्तमम्।
चतुर्द्धा संस्थितं पुण्यं संहितानां प्रभेदतः॥ २१॥
ब्राह्मी भागवती सौरी वैष्णवी च प्रकीर्तिताः।
चतस्रः संहिताः पुण्या धर्मकामार्थमोक्षदाः॥ २२॥

This excellent *Kūrma Purāṇa* is listed as 15th in the list. This holy *Purāṇa* contains the four different *Samhitās*. These are known under the titles of *Brāhmī*, *Bhāgavatī*, *Saurī* and *Vaiṣṇavī*. All this *Samhitās* bestow *dharma*, (righteousness) *kāma*, (all kinds of desires) *artha* (riches) and *mokṣa* (final emancipation) respectively, besides being extremely auspicious.

इयन्तु संहिता ब्राह्मी चतुर्वेदैस्तु सस्मिता।
भवन्ति षट् सहस्राणि श्लोकानामत्र संख्यया॥ २३॥

This *Brāhmī Samhitā* is equated with the four Vedas, which comprises of six thousand verses.

यत्र धर्मार्थकामानां मोक्षस्य च मुनीश्वराः।
माहात्म्यमखिलं ब्रह्मन् ज्ञायते परमेश्वरः॥ २४॥

O Best of the sages, Immense glory of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* is contained therein. The complete knowledge of Supreme Brahman is also achieved from this.

सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च।
वंशानुचरितं पुण्या दिव्या प्रासङ्गिकी कथा॥ २५॥
ब्राह्मणाद्यैरियं धार्या धार्मिकैर्वेदपारगैः।
तामहं वर्णयिष्यामि व्यासेन कथितां पुरा॥ २६॥

It describes of *Sarga*, *Pratisarga*, *Vamśa*, history of *vamśas* or royal dynasties, and *vamśānucarita*, the auspicious stories of royal dynasties. The *Brāhmaṇas* devoted to *dharma* besides the people of other castes, should patronise this story. I shall now repeat the story which had earlier been narrated by Vyāsa.

पुरामृतार्थं दैतेयदानवैः सह देवताः।
मन्यान् मन्दरं कृत्वा ममन्युः क्षीरसागरम्॥ २७॥
मध्यमाने तदा तस्मिन्कूर्मरूपी जनाईनः।
बभार मन्दरं देवो देवानां हितकाम्यया॥ २८॥

In earlier times, the gods together with the Daityas and Dānavas,² using the mountain Mandarācala³ as the churning rod, churned the ocean of milk. During the churning of the ocean Viṣṇu in the form of Kūrma, for the welfare of the gods, carried the mountain Mandarācala over his back.

देवश्च तुष्टुवुर्देवं नारदाद्या महर्षयः।
कूर्मरूपधरं दृष्ट्वा साक्षिणं विष्णुमव्ययम्॥ २९॥
Then Nārada⁴ looking at the imperishable

2. The mythological account of this war between the gods and the demons or the *Suras* and *Asuras* is as follows :

(Viṣṇu wanted to make his favourites the gods, immortal and powerful. He asked them to churn the ocean of milk so that ambrosia might be provided. The demons offered their services to the gods which they did not decline. When ambrosia was produced Viṣṇu, assuming the form of a beautiful damsel, distributed the whole amongst the *Suras*. Hence the quarrel arose. It continued for thousands of years. The demons were very powerful and some of them became invincible and unconquerable by the grace of their god Śiva. Though they could not exterminate the gods, yet they defeated them often, drove them from the celestial region and took possession of it.)

3. The first mountain of the world.
4. He is one of the well-known celestial sages. In the Vedas, he is described as one of the descendants of Kaṇva and author of several hymns of the Rg-veda. In mythology he is often associated with Parvata and acts like a messenger of gods to men and is known as the son of Brahṁā. He is the friend of Kṛṣṇa and is the inventor of *Vīṇā* or lute. In the Mahābhārata he is described as the king of the celestial musicians.-

The following account of Nārada's telling Vālmiki about Rāma occurs in the first chapter of Rāmāyaṇa: The ascetic Vālmiki asked that best of sages and foremost of those conversant with words, ever engaged in austerities and Vaidika studies, Nārada saying, "Who at present in this world is alike crowned with qualities and endowed with prowess, knowing duty and grateful and truthful and firm in vow, who is qualified by

1. He was the priest of the Daityas and the presiding priest of the Sacrifice undertaken by Bali.

Viṣṇu, who is witness of all started eulogising the lord with the gods and the sages.

तदन्तरेऽभवद्देवी श्रीनारायणवल्लभा।

जग्राह भगवान् विष्णुस्तामेव पुरुषोत्तमः॥ ३०॥

During the said churning of the ocean, the extremely beloved goddess of lord Viṣṇu, also emerged out of the ocean. Lord Puruṣottama-Viṣṇu, accepted her as his wife.

तेजसा विष्णुमव्यक्तं नारदाद्या महर्षयः।

मोहिताः सह शक्रेण श्रेयोवचनमब्रुवन्॥ ३१॥

भगवन् देवदेवेश नारायण जगन्मया।

कैषा देवी विशालाक्षी यथावद्ब्रूहि पृच्छताम्॥ ३२॥

Indra as well as other gods and the ṛṣis were attracted towards the goddess because of her beauty and asked lord Viṣṇu speaking the welfare words, "O Lord of gods, O Nārāyaṇa who is this lady with vast eyes. You kindly speak out the reality about her at our request."

श्रुत्वा तेषां तदा वाक्यं विष्णुर्दानवमर्दनः।

प्रोवाच देवीं संप्रेक्ष्य नारदादीनकल्मषान्॥ ३३॥

इयं सा परमा शक्तिर्मन्मयी ब्रह्मरूपिणी।

माया मम प्रियानन्ता ययेदं धार्यते जगत्॥ ३४॥

Then listening to the words of the gods, lord Viṣṇu who shattered the Dānavas, looking at the goddess spoke to the sinless sages like Nārada and others, "This is the supreme energy of my form and embodiment of Brahman. This endless Māyā is beloved to me by whom this universe is held.

virtue of his character and who is ever studious of the welfare of all creatures? Who is learned, has studied society and know the art of pleasing his subjects? And who alone is ever lovely to behold? Who has subdued his heart and controlled his anger, is endowed with personal grace and devoid of malice and whom, enraged in battle, do even the gods, fear? Great is my curiosity to hear of such a person. You can, O Mahārṣi, tell me of a man of this description." Hearing Vālmīki's words, Nārada, cognizant of the three worlds, said with alacrity, "Do you listen! Rare as are the qualities mentioned by you, I will, O sage, having duly considered, describe to you a person endowed with them. There is one sprung from the line of Ikṣvāku, known by the name of Rāma.

अनयैव जगत्सर्वं सदेवासुरमानुषम्।

मोहयामि द्विजश्रेष्ठा ग्रसामि विसृजामि च॥ ३५॥

O best of the Brāhmaṇas, she is Māyā with the use of whom, I delude the whole world including gods, Asuras, and human beings, besides devouring it or consigning the same.

उत्पत्तिं प्रलयं चैव भूतानामागतिं गतिम्।

विद्यया वीक्ष्य चात्मानं तरन्ति विपुलामिमाम्॥ ३६॥

Which is the creator as well as the destroyer of the world which regulates the birth and death in the universe. By the means of knowledge, the people realise Self and cross this vast Maya.

अस्यास्त्वंशानधिष्ठाय शक्तिमन्तोऽभवन् सुराः।

ब्रह्मेशानादयः सर्वे सर्वशक्तिरियं मम॥ ३७॥

This Māyā is my total strength. All the gods including Brahmā and Śiva, become powerful with the achieving of a part or a ray of the same.

सैषा सर्वजगत्पूतिः प्रकृतिस्त्रिगुणात्मिका।

प्रागेव मत्तः संजाता श्रीःकल्पे पद्मवासिनी॥ ३८॥

She produces the entire universe, known as Prakṛti of three guṇas or qualities is known as Lakṣmī dwelling over the lotus, who was born earlier than me in the kalpa.

चतुर्भुजा शङ्खचक्रपद्महस्ता स्रगन्विता।

कोटिसूर्यप्रतीकाशा मोहिनी सर्वदेहिनाम्॥ ३९॥

She is four-armed holding a conch, cakra and a lotus. She is adorned with a garland of gems having luster of crores of suns. She can confuse all the living beings.

नालं देवा न पितरो मानवा वासवोऽपि च।

मायामेतां समुत्तर्तुं ये चान्ये भुवि देहिनः॥ ४०॥

All the gods, ancestors, humans, vasus and all other creatures on earth are unable to overcome her."

इत्युक्त्वा वासुदेवेन मुनयो विष्णुमब्रुवन्।

ब्रूहि त्वं पुण्डरीकाक्ष यद्धि कालक्षयेऽपि च॥ ४१॥

At these words spoken by lord Vāsudeva, the sages then spoke to lord Viṣṇu, O Lord with lotus like eyes, you kindly speak to us about the ancient times.

अथोवाच हृषीकेशो मुनीन्मुनिगणार्चितः।

अस्ति द्विजातिप्रवर इन्द्रद्युम्न इति श्रुतः॥४२॥
 पूर्वजन्मनि राजासावधृष्यः शङ्करादिभिः।
 दृष्ट्वा मां कूर्मसंस्थानं श्रुत्वा पौराणिकीं स्वयम्॥४३॥
 संहितां मन्मुखद्विव्यां पुरस्कृत्य मुनीश्वरान्।

The lord Ṛṣikeśa, who had been adored by the sages, spoke to them, “In earlier times there lived a Brāhmaṇa named Indradyumna, who had been quite popular. He had been a king in the earlier birth, and was invincible from the gods like Śiva and others. Finding me in the form of a tortoise, he himself heard the story of this *Purāṇa* from my mouth.

संहितां मन्मुखद्विव्यां पुरस्कृत्य मुनीश्वरान्।
 ब्रह्माणञ्च महादेवं देवांश्चान्यान् स्वशक्तिभिः॥४४॥
 मच्छक्तौ संस्थितान् बुद्ध्वा मामेव शरणं गतः।
 संभाषितो मया चाथ विप्रयोनिं गमिष्यति॥४५॥

Thereafter, O Sages, Brahmā, Śiva and other gods listened to this divine *Purāṇa Samhitā* from my mouth. Then believing that he was under my strength, he took refuge under me. Then I said to him, “You will take a birth as a Brāhmaṇa.

इन्द्रद्युम्न इति ख्यातो जातिं स्मरसि पौर्विकीम्।
 सर्वेषामेव भूतानां देवानामप्यगोचरम्॥४६॥
 वक्तव्यं यद्गुह्यतमं दास्ये ज्ञानं तवानघ।
 लब्ध्वा तन्मामकं ज्ञानं मामेवान्ते प्रवेक्ष्यसि॥४७॥

Your name would be Indradyumna and you will also know about your earlier birth. O Sinless one. Then I shall impart the divine knowledge to you which is beyond the reach of the living beings as well as the gods. After achieving the divine knowledge, you will get absorbed in me.

अंशान्तरेण भूम्यां त्वं तत्र तिष्ठ सुनिर्वृतः।
 वैवस्वतेऽन्तरेऽतीते कार्यार्थं मां प्रवेक्ष्यसि॥४८॥

You stay on earth in your other form with another particle of yours. After the lapse of the Manvantara, you will again be absorbed in me.”

मां प्रणम्य पुरीं गत्वा पालयामास मेदिनीम्।
 कालधर्मं गतः कालाच्छ्वेतद्वीपे मया सह॥४९॥
 भुक्त्वा तान्वैष्णवान् भोगान्योगिनामप्यगोचरान्।

मदाज्ञया मुनिश्रेष्ठा जज्ञे विप्रकुले पुनः॥५०॥

Then he, offering his salutation to me, returned to his abode and started ruling the earth. In due course of time, he passed away. In Śvetadvīpa, O Sages, he enjoyed all the pleasures with me, which are beyond the reach of the great Yogins in Viṣṇuloka. Thereafter at my command, he was reborn in the race of Brāhmaṇas.

ज्ञात्वा मां वासुदेवाख्यं तत्र द्वे निहितेऽक्षरे।
 विद्याविद्ये गूढरूपं यद्ब्रह्म परमं विदुः॥५१॥
 सोऽर्चयामास भूतानामाश्रयं परमेश्वरम्।
 व्रतोपवासनियमैर्होमैर्ब्राह्मणतर्पणैः॥५२॥

Taking me to be the supreme Brahman, by name Vasudeva, in whom the two eternal *vidyā* and *avidyā* are enshrined, Indradyumna, continued to perform *Vratas*, fasting, *homas*, besides oblations prescribed for the Brāhmaṇas, following all the rules and adored lord Parameśvara, who happens to be the refuge of all beings.

तदाशीस्तन्नमस्कारस्तन्निष्ठस्तत्परायणः।
 आराधयन् महादेवं योगिनां हृदि संस्थितम्॥५३॥

He adored lord Mahādeva, with his blessings, offering salutation to him, with full faith and devotion in graet lord Śiva.

तस्यैवं वर्तमानस्य कदाचित्परमा कला।
 स्वरूपं दर्शयामास दिव्यं विष्णुसमुद्भवम्॥५४॥

With this type of performance by the king, lord Viṣṇu displayed before him his divine form.

दृष्ट्वा प्रणम्य सिरसा विष्णोर्भगवतः प्रियाम्।
 संस्तूय विविधैः स्तोत्रैः कृताञ्जलिरभाषत॥५५॥

Finding Lakṣmī, the beloved of lord Viṣṇu, there, he offered his salutation to her and recited with folded hands many *stotras* in her favour.

इन्द्रद्युम्न उवाच

का त्वं देवि विशालाक्षि विष्णुचिह्नाङ्किते शुभे।
 याथातथ्येन वै भावं त्वेदानीं ब्रवीहि मे॥५६॥

Indradyumna said, “O Goddess, having vast eyes, auspicious signs of Viṣṇu, who are you?