

|| Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya ||

- 1) When the Pandavas were ruling the Earth with devotion towards Sri Krishna, the lord of the Yajnas, one excellent Brahmana came to Yudhishthira at night with the intention of performing Yajnas.
- 2) When Dharmaraja said that he would give in the morning, the Brahmana, being in a hurry, asked Bhima. Listening to what Yudhishthira had said, Bhima immediately gave him his armlet.
- 3) Having obtained that invaluable armlet that was shining like fire and studded with precious stones, that excellent Brahmana left with a feeling of accomplishment. Bhima then got the Nandighosha beaten loudly.

Note: Nandighosha is the custom of beating a drum or bell to indicate happiness or victory.

- 4) Hearing that sound of victory at an odd time, Dharmaraja sent messenger after messenger to enquire with Bhima who replied – “Being in a mortal body, Dharmaraja has certainty about his lifespan. Therefore I was pleased”.
- 5) When Bhima said thus, Dharmaraja understood Bhima’s intent that there must never be delay in practicing Dharma. He respected it and said “Wonderful!”. Later he ensured he was responsive in practicing Dharma.
- 6) After that Bhimasena noticed Dhritharashtra, who in spite of being tainted due to evil company, being responsible for the death of all Kings, having committed great sin, was still immersed in material pleasures. He developed compassion towards him.
- 7) “Unless he engages in extreme Tapas he will never attain his own loka. Due to excessive material indulgence he will not be able to perform Tapas” – thinking thus, Bhima started doing those things that would develop Vairagya in him.

Note: The harshness shown by Bhima towards Dhritharashtra was to sprout the seed of Vairagya in him.

- 8) Noticing his brothers and the women-folk giving excess respect to Dhritharashtra, he got others to disobey his orders. He personally did the same too. In spite of this, since the others kept serving him, he did not develop Vairagya.
- 9) Apart from Bhima, all the other Pandavas and their wives used to serve the son of Vichitravirya along with his wife with great respect and care. Wanting to ensure that they do not suffer from the grief of their sons’ deaths, Draupadi too was serving him.
- 10) Although Dhritharashtra was greatly satisfied with the others, he would not get that affectionate with Bhima in spite of knowing his great influence, recalling always that his sons were killed by him.
- 11) In order to eliminate the excessive inclination towards material comforts, and to reduce the hatred towards him, Bhimasena patted his own shoulders and spoke in front of Nakula and Sahadeva such that Dhritharashtra could hear him.
- 12) “It is between these two round, plum and sandal-paste laden shoulders that the old man’s sons were caught and killed”.

13) Out of affection and respect towards him, Nakula and Sahadeva accepted these words. But Draupadi, Kunti or Dharmaraja could not realize this.

14) Listening to his words, the elder one (Dhritharashtra) developed Vairagya. In order to increase it further, Vidura said – “O King! Your attachment towards life is excessive”.

15) “What surprise! For a living being, attachment over life is everything. That is why you are eating the morsels thrown by Bhima like a dog”.

16) “There is nothing wrong in Bhima speaking like this. All of you lit fire. You fed him poison. Insulted his wife. Snatched away their wealth and land. But, has Bhima done anything wrong to you in return?”

17) “In order to help you who is excessively interested in material luxuries, Bhima has spoken such Vairagya inducing words. Give up your hatred towards him”.

18) “Giving up attachment and hatred, worship *Tirthas* in the forest and perform Tapas of Sri Hari and worship him. You shall become pure”.

Note: Tirthas here refer to sacred places and banks of great rivers.

19) When Vidura spoke thus, Dhritharashtra gave up hatred towards Bhima and attained Vairagya. In order to obtain Dharmaraja’s consent for Tapas, he started an Upavasa.

20) Getting to know that he had kept away from food for the fourth day, Dharmaraja rushed to him and requested him repeatedly to consume food.

21) “I shall consume food only after obtaining your consent for moving to the forest. Otherwise I shall not” – saying thus, Dhritharashtra, who was tired due to fasting, fell unconscious at that moment and leaned against his wife.

22) Dharmaraja touched him softly with his comforting hands and woke him up. Later he spoke out of great sorrow.

23) “Keeping Yuyutsu in front, may you rule this land without any troubles. For your sake, all of us will perform Tapas in the forest”.

24) Dhritharashtra said to him – “Not possible. It is the tradition of our *Kula* to give up one’s life in the forest at the end. Therefore grant me permission”.

25) When the two of them were engaged in a dispute thus, Lord Sri Krishna Dwaipayana appeared there. Being omniscient and the doer of all activity, he said to Dharmaraja.

26) “Grant your consent to the King (Dhritharashtra) who desires to lose all his sins through Tapas. Do not come in the way of him accomplishing Dharma”.

27) “If he attains Vairagya in time and relieves himself of all sins through Tapas, he shall attain *Sadgati*. Definitely not otherwise”.

28-32) When Sri Vyasa said thus, Dharmaraja gave him his consent. He had his food then. Later he instructed Dharmaraja in matters of noble Dharmas and political strategy, out of affection. The King listened to it as a matter of courtesy. Having given his consent, the son of Dharma returned to his

palace. Dhritrashtra then sent Vidura to Dharmaraja asking for money to perform his sons' *Shraddha*. Listening to his (Vidura's) words, Dharmaraja said to Bhima – "It is appropriate for us to give him money since he wishes to perform Shraddha for his sons, grandsons, close ones and relatives". Bhima thought – "Those who have turned against Sri Madhusudana should not be rendered any help that could aid their sadhana in the other world. Even if money is given keeping the others in mind, he will use it to perform Shraddha for his sons. Giving him money in spite of knowing this will lead to defect (sin)". Thinking thus, Bhima said.

33) "May Duryodhana and the others attain a state that is tougher than the toughest. On the other hand, we are performing Shraddha for Bhishma and the others. Therefore, why should we give (money) to Dhritrashtra?"

34) "Since Karna is a *Kaneena*, Kunti, along with us, possesses the right to perform Shraddha for him. Why then should we give money to Dhritrashtra?" – when he said thus, the King and Arjuna requested again.

Note: Kaneena is the son of a Kanya.

35-37) "Dhritrashtra wishes to go to the forest. He has requested us for money. Give him his own money that he earned through his prowess. Will he ask you again like this in future?" – when they said thus, Bhimasena, the follower of Shuddha Dharma, refused again. Dharmaraja, being disappointed, said – "You remain quiet. I shall give him my money, that does not belong to the treasury, and money that will lead to Daana and other material pleasures".

38) Arjuna too said the same thing. Dharmaraja and Arjuna then requested Vidura – "Father should not get upset with Bhima who is engaged in *Mukhya-Dharma*".

39-40) When they said thus, Vidura took the money (from them) and went to Dhritrashtra and said – "Yudhishtira and Arjuna have shown great respect towards you. However, Bhima does not like your instruction very much. He has engaged himself in pure Kshatriya Dharma. Therefore, do not get angry at him".

41) Dharmaraja and Arjuna too were followers of Dharma. They, however, had compassion over the world. When Vidura said thus, Dhritrashtra did not feel anger. He remained pleasant minded.

Note: Although Dharmaraja and Arjuna too were *Dharmishtas* they kept the niceties of the world in mind. Bhimasena, being the follower of Shuddha Bhagavata Dharma, did not let emotion come in the way of doing what is right.

42) In order to rid himself of the debt of his sons, Dhritrashtra performed their Shraddhas and with a pure heart gave great Daanas continuously for ten days.

43) The King, possessed of great intellect, offered all his Karma to Sri Krishna. Having obtained the consent of the Pandavas and other relatives he stood ready to go to the forest. He requested the citizens and villagers with tears in his eyes.

44) "All of you great souls had been ruled with Dharma by my ancestors. However, I did not take care of you in the same way. Since all of you are compassionate and noble, you never called me out for not having taken care of you, due to your great affection for me".

45-46) "With your help I conducted Yajnas. Many ponds and wells were dug by me. My son, however, was a sinner and fool. He became the reason for the destruction of the Kshatriyas. He doubted everyone. He violated the orders of elders. He forsake brotherly feeling over the noble Pandavas and greatly deceived them, unlike anything anyone had done earlier".

47-48) "Being evil-minded, he did many unpleasant things against Sri Krishna. He foolishly did many bad things to you too. All of his brothers emulated his behavior. Due to their sins, they destroyed themselves along with their children, friends and relatives".

49) "I am old now. I have been pained greatly by my sons. Having misbehaved very badly with Sri Krishna and the Pandavas due to their association, I am now eager to relieve myself (from those sins) by performing Tapas".

50) "Being affectionate towards friends, all of you should permit me to go to the forest. All of you should continue to respect the noble Pandavas just like now. You should continue to treat them well at all times and do so even more for my sake".

51-52) "They are my true sons. They will ensure happiness for me in this world and the other world" – when Dhritrashtra spoke thus, all of them praised his noble qualities loudly and felt great sorrow. The citizens and villagers permitted him to go to the forest after a long time, with great difficulty and tearful eyes. Walking with him, the Pandavas followed him a very long distance".

53) Sanjaya and Vidura, along with Gandhari, followed Dhritrashtra. Kunti, having decided upon *Vanavasa*, followed him too.

54) In spite of being stopped by the grieving Pandavas and their wives, Kunti did not listen. With great difficulty she convinced them and followed the King.

55) With Kunti, Vidura and Sanjaya showing him the way, Dhritrashtra, along with Gandhari, reached Kurukshetra. Eventually he reached the divine-worshipped Ashrama of Sri Vyasa, the lord of the world.

56) Sage Narada, who arrived there, informed him that he would attain his loka with his wife after three years. Having gained a lot of confidence with that (assurance from Sage Narada), he undertook an excellent Tapas as instructed by Sri Vyasa.

57) When the son of Vichitravirya, in the company of Vidura, Gandhari, Kunti and Sanjaya, was worshipping Lord Sri Hari through his Tapas, the Pandavas, with their wives, relatives and servants, came there to see them.

58) Then, Vidura merged into Yudhistira. After that the Pandavas served Dhritrashtra, who was with Gandhari and Sanjaya, and Kunti.

Note: Yudhisthira and Vidura were both Avataras of Yama. Vidura therefore merged into Dharmaraja and ended his Avatara.

59) Sri Hari, in the form of Vyasa, the very essence of unlimited strength, tejas, knowledge, excellent wealth, joy and other attributes, appeared there. As soon as he became visible, all of them worshipped him very well with great devotion.

60) Having been worshipped by all of them, Sri Vyasa said – “Whosoever wants whatever they desire, they may inform me. I shall fulfill them now”. When he said thus, the Pandavas, along with their wives, requested him that their devotion may grow further. Kunti requested that the sin she accumulated due to the birth and death of the son of Surya (Karna) be removed.

61) When he fulfilled all their wishes, Dhritharashtra consulted his wife and requested the omnipotent one (Sri Vyasa) that he should be able to see all those who were killed in the war.

62) Then, as per the orders of Lord Sri Vyasa, all of them came there instantly from Swarga loka. Sri Vyasa gave divine vision to Dhritharashtra. As per the orders of the Supreme One, all of them spent that night in the company of their wives.

63) Dhritharashtra, along with his wife and the others, saw that amazing miracle and felt great satisfaction. After that, as per Sri Vyasa’s orders, all the women-folk got together with their husbands and proceeded to Swarga.

64) Apart from Uttaraa, all of them went (to Swarga). When the son of Parikshita (Janamejaya) heard this story, he requested to see his father. Sri Vyasa, the one with unfathomable capabilities, immediately brought him from Vaikunta loka.

Note: Sri Vaishampayana Muni was narrating the story to Janamejaya when this incident occurred. Sri Vyasa was present in that assembly.

65) Janamejaya saw his father Parikshita, who had been brought there by Sri Vyasa, and became greatly joyed. He worshipped Sri Vyasa, the one to whom even Brahma and the other Devatas bow, in many ways and sought forgiveness. Along with the other people there, he developed even more faith in the Mahabharata.

66) The Pandavas reached their city and ruled the Earth with Dharma. Enjoying comforts that were appropriate, without getting attached to it, they worshipped Sri Krishna, the bearer of the Universe, with devotion.

67) At the end of three years, when Dhritharashtra lit his burning pyre with the Oupasana Agni that he had preserved, the Pandavas heard the news that he, along with his wife Gandhari and Kunti, had been burnt in that fire.

68) Hearing the news that their elder father had left for Swarga with a modesty-filled face and having stayed in meditation, and that Kunti was united with her husband Pandu and staying happily, the grieving Pandavas performed their post-death rites.

69) All of them had performed many extremely pious acts of punya with devotion to Sri Vishnu. They had meditated upon him even during their last moments. They had received all the post-death ceremonies and offerings from the Pandavas, their noble sons. Therefore, they attained permanent, special and abundant bliss.

70) Sanjaya approached Sri Vyasa and, through service to him, attained his original form again. The Pandavas, awaiting Sri Krishna's departure to Parandhama, ruled the Earth.

71) Ruling the entire Earth in this way, the noble Pandavas spent eighteen years. They used to enjoy pleasures without giving up on Dharma or Artha. They never gave up remembering the feet of Sri Hari, the one who is without an end temporally, spatially or in terms of auspicious attributes.

|| End of chapter 31, known as 'Dhritharashtra Swargaprapti', from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||