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Introduction

Ādi Parva
Chapters 1, 53, 54

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य

Having venerated Lord Vishnu,
nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya

नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् |

the highest person (consciousness),
naraṁ caiva narottamam

देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव

and Goddess Sarasvati,
devīm sarasvatīm caiva

ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ||

thereafter, let the Mahabharata be told.
tato jayam udīrayet

लोमहर्षणपुत्र उग्रश्रवाः

Ugrashravas, the son of Lomaharshana,
lomaharṣaṇa-putra ugraśravāḥ

सूतः पौराणिको |

a storyteller (sūta) well-versed in the Puranas,
sūtaḥ paurāṇiko

नैमिषारण्ये शौनकस्य

(came to) the Naimisha forest,
naimiṣāraṇye śaunakasya

कुलपतेर्द्वादशवार्षिके सत्रे ||

to the twelfth-year sacrifice of Shaunaka, the Kulapati.
kulapater dvādaśa-vārṣike satre (1.1)

समासीनानभ्यगच्छद्

(Sūta) approached the seated
samāsīnān abhyagacchad

ब्रह्मर्षीन्संशितव्रतान् |

sages who had been purified by austerities,
brahmarṣīn saṁśitavratān

विनयावनतो भूत्वा

bowing with humility,
vinayāvanato bhūtvā

कदाचित्सूतनन्दनः ||

at the time he came.
kadācit sūta-nandanah (1.2)

तमाश्रममनुप्राप्तं

When Sūta arrived at the ashram,
tam āśramam anuprāptaṁ

नैमिषारण्यवासिनः |

the ascetics who lived in the Naimisha forest -
naimiṣāraṇya-vāsinaḥ

चित्राः श्रोतुं कथास्तत्र

to hear his wonderful stories -
citrāḥ śrotuṁ kathās tatra

परिवव्रुस्तपस्विनः ||

they desired.
parivavrus tapasvinaḥ (1.3)

सूत उवाच

Sūta said,
sūta uvāca

अथापृच्छदृषिस्तत्र

Then, one rishi asked,
athāpṛcchad ṛṣis tatra

कश्चित्प्रस्तावयन्कथाः |

beginning the conversation,
kaścit prastāvayan kathāḥ

कुत आगम्यते सौते

"From where did you arrive, O Sūta?
kuta āgamyate saute

क्व चायं विहृतस्त्वया ||

Where have you been traveling?"
kva cāyaṁ vihr̥tas tvayā (1.6,7)

जनमेजयस्य राजर्षेः

At great King Janamejaya's
janamejayasya rājarṣeḥ

सर्पसत्रे महात्मनः |

snake sacrifice,
sarpa-satre mahātmanaḥ

समीपे पार्थिवेन्द्रस्य

in the immediate presence of
samīpe pārthivendrasya

सम्यक्पारिक्षितस्य च ||

that son of King Parikshit ...
samyak pārīkṣitasya ca (1.8)

कृष्णद्वैपायनप्रोक्ताः

... originally told by Vyasa
kr̥ṣṇa-dvaipāyana-proktāḥ

सुपुण्या विविधाः कथाः |

various holy stories
supuṇyā vividhāḥ kathāḥ

कथिताश्चापि विधिवद्वा

were properly narrated
kathitāś cāpi vidhivad yā

वैशम्पायनेन वै ||

by Vaishampayana.
vaiśampāyanena vai (1.9)

श्रुत्वाहं ता विचित्रार्था

After listening to those wonderful
śrutvāhaṁ tā vicitrārthā

महाभारतसंश्रिताः |

stories of the Mahabharata,
mahābhārata-saṁśritāḥ

दिदृक्षुरागतस्तस्मात्

wanting to see you, I came from there
didṛkṣur āgatas tasmāt

समीपं भवतामिह ||

to be in your presence here.
samīpaṁ bhavatām iha (1.10,12)

शौनक उवाच

Rishi Shaunaka said,
śaunaka uvāca

महाभारतमाख्यानं

About the story, Mahabharata,
mahābhāratam ākhyānaṁ

पाण्डवानां यशस्करम् |

that glorifies the Pandavas,
pāṇḍavānāṁ yaśaskaram

जनमेजयेन यत्पृष्टः

King Janamejaya once asked
janamejayena yat pṛṣṭaḥ

कृष्णद्वैपायनस्तदा ||

Rishi Vyasa.
kr̥ṣṇa-dvaipāyanas tadā (53.32)

श्रावयामास विधिवत्

Vyasa directed its proper narration
śrāvayāmāsa vidhivat

तदा कर्मान्तरेषु सः ।

during breaks between the rituals.
tadā karmāntareṣu saḥ

तामहं विधिवत्पुण्यां

That holy story, I duly
tām ahaṁ vidhivat puṇyāṁ

श्रोतुमिच्छामि वै कथाम् ॥

want to hear.
śrotum icchāmi vai kathām (53.33)

सूत उवाच

Suta said,
sūta uvāca

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि

Unto you I shall narrate
hanta te kathayiṣyāmi

महदारख्यानमुत्तमम् ।

that great, exalted story
mahad-ākhyānam uttamam

कृष्णद्वैपायनमतं

composed by Vyasa -
kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana-mataṁ

महाभारतमादितः ॥

- the Mahabharata - from its beginning.
mahābhāratam āditaḥ (53.35)

श्रुत्वा तु सर्पसत्राय

Having heard that the snake sacrifice
śrutvā tu sarpasatrāya

दीक्षितं जनमेजयम् ।

was being performed by King Janamejaya,
dīkṣitaṁ janamejayam

अभ्यागच्छदृषिर्विद्वान्

the great, wise rishi -
abhyāgacchad ṛṣir vidvān

कृष्णद्वैपायनस्तदा ॥

Vyasa - went there.
kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanas tadā (54.1)

जनयामास यं काली

Vyasa was born of Kali (Satyavati)
janayāmāsa yaṁ kālī

शक्तेः पुत्रात्पराशरात् |

and the son of Shakti, Parashara
śakteḥ putrāt parāśarāt

कन्यैव यमुनाद्वीपे

on an island in the Yamuna river.
kanyaiva yamunā-dvīpe

पाण्डवानां पितामहम् ||

He is the grandfather of the Pandavas.
pāṇḍavānāṁ pitāmaham (54.2)

यः पाण्डुं धृतराष्ट्रं च

To Pandu, Dhritarashtra,
yaḥ pāṇḍuṁ dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ ca

विदुरं चाप्यजीजनत् |

and Vidura he gave birth
viduraṁ cāpy ajījanat

शन्तनोः सन्ततिं तन्वन्

to maintain the lineage of King Shantanu.
śantanoḥ santatiṁ tanvan

पुण्यकीर्तिर्महायशाः ||

His fame was great.
puṇya-kīrtir mahā-yaśāḥ (54.6)

विव्यासैकं चतुर्धा यो

He arranged into four parts
vivyāsaikaṁ caturdhā yo

वेदं वेदविदां वरः |

the Vedas, being the wisest knower of the Vedas.
vedaṁ veda-vidāṁ varaḥ

परावरज्ञो ब्रह्मर्षिः

That great rishi knew both the spiritual and worldly.
parāvarajño brahmarṣiḥ

कविः सत्यव्रतः शुचिः ||

He was a poet, committed to truth, and pure.
kaviḥ satya-vrataḥ śuciḥ (54.5)

जनमेजयस्य राजर्षेः

To King Janamejaya's
janamejayasya rājarṣeḥ

स तद्यज्ञसदस्तदा |

sacrificial grounds
sa tad yajña-sadas tadā

विवेश शिष्यैः सहितो

he entered, along with his students
viveśa śiṣyaiḥ sahito

वेदवेदाङ्गपारगैः ||

who were learned in the Vedas and their auxiliaries.
veda-vedāṅga-pāragaiḥ (54.7)

जनमेजयस्तु राजर्षिर्

The great royal sage King Janamejaya,
janamejayas tu rājarṣir

दृष्ट्वा तमृषिमागतम् |

seeing Rishi Vyasa arrive,
dr̥ṣṭvā tam ṛṣim āgatam

सगणोऽब्युद्ययौ तूर्णं

came quickly, along with the others,
sagaṇo 'byudyayau tūrṇam

प्रीत्या भरतसत्तमः ||

to lovingly greet him.
prītyā bharata-sattamaḥ (54.10)

तत्रोपविष्टं वरदं

Vyasa was seated there, the giver of boons,
tatro-paviṣṭam varadam

देवर्षिगणपूजितम् |

worshiped by celestial sages.
devarṣi-gaṇa-pūjitam

पूजयामास राजेन्द्रः

King Janamejaya worshiped him
pūjayāmāsa rājendraḥ

शास्त्रदृष्टेन कर्मणा ||

according to the rituals taught in the scriptures.
śāstra-dr̥ṣṭena karmaṇā (54.12)

ततस्तं सत्कृतं सर्वैः

Then, after Vyasa was worshiped by all
tatas taṁ sat-kṛtaṁ sarvaiḥ

सदस्यैर्जनमेजयः |

assembled, King Janamejaya
sadasyair janamejayaḥ

इदं पश्चाद्विजश्रेष्ठं

to the greatest of brahmanas
idaṁ paścād dvija-śreṣṭham

पर्यपृच्छत्कृताञ्जलिः ||

asked this with folded hands.
paryapṛcchat kṛtāñjaliḥ (54.17)

जनमेजय उवाच

King Janamejaya said,
janamejaya uvāca

कुरूणां पाण्डवानां च

About the Kurus and Pandavas
kurūṇāṃ pāṇḍavānāṃ ca

भवान्प्रत्यक्षदर्शिवान् |

you have seen with your own eyes.
bhavān pratyakṣa-darśivān

तेषां चरितमिच्छामि

About their lives I want to hear,
teṣāṃ caritam icchāmi

कथ्यमानं त्वया द्विज ||

narrated by you, O brahmana.
kathyamānaṃ tvayā dvija (54.18)

सूत उवाच

Suta said,
sūta uvāca

कथं समभवद्भेदस्

How did conflict arise
kathaṃ samabhadra bhedas

तेषामक्लिष्टकर्मणाम् |

amongst them who possessed good karma?
teṣāṃ akliṣṭa-karmaṇām

तच्च युद्धं कथं वृत्तं

And how did the terrible war arise
tac ca yuddhaṃ kathaṃ vṛttaṃ

भूतान्तकरणं महत् ||

that caused the death of so many people?
bhūtānta-karaṇaṃ mahat (54.19)

तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा

Having heard the questions of King Janamejaya,
tasya tad-vacanaṃ śrutvā

कृष्णद्वैपायनस्तदा |

Rishi Vyasa then
kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanas tadā

शशास शिष्यमासीनं

instructed his student seated nearby
śaśāsa śiṣyam āsīnaṃ

वैशम्पायनमन्तिके ||

whose name was Vaishampayana.
vaiśampāyanam antike (54.21)

व्यास उवाच
Rishi Vyasa said,
Vyasa uvāca

कुरूणां पाण्डवानां च
Between the Kurus and Pandavas,
kurūṇāṃ pāṇḍavānāṃ ca

यथा भेदोऽभवत्पुरा |
about the conflict that took place long ago,
yathā bhedo 'bhavat purā

तदस्मै सर्वमाचक्ष्व
tell that to him (King Janamejaya)
tad asmai sarvam ācakṣva

यन्मत्तः श्रुतवानसि ||
as you have heard from me.
yan mattaḥ śrutavān asi (54.22)

सूत उवाच
Suta said,
sūta uvāca

गुरोर्वचनमाज्ञाय
Instructed by the words of his guru,
guror vacanam ājñāya

स तु विप्रर्षभस्तदा |
He (Vaishampayana) the greatest of brahmins
sa tu viprarṣabhas tadā

आचक्षे ततः सर्वम्
then narrated the entire
ācacakṣe tataḥ sarvam

इतिहासं पुरातनम् ||
old story (to Janamejaya).
itihāsaṃ purātanam (54.23)