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The story of Mudgala

Āranyaka Parva
Chapter 245-7

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

वैशम्पायन उवाच

Rishi Vaishampayana said,
vaiśampāyana uvāca

वने निवसतां तेषां

In the forest, for those
vane nivasatām teṣām

पाण्डवानां महात्मनाम् |

great Pandavas dwelling there,
pāṇḍavānām mahātmanām

वर्षाण्येकादशातीयुः

eleven years were spent
varṣāṅyekaśāṭīyuh

कृच्छ्रेण भरतर्षभ ||

in terrible misery, O King.

kṛcchreṇa bharata-rṣabha (245.1)

कस्यचित्त्वथ कालस्य

Then, at some time,
kasyacit tvatha kālasya

व्यासः सत्यवतीसुतः |

Vyasa, the son of Satyavati,
vyāsaḥ satyavatī-sutaḥ

आजगाम महायोगी

the great yogi, came
ājagāma mahā-yogī

पाण्डवानवलोककः ||

to see the Pandavas.

pāṇḍavān avalokakaḥ (245.8)

तानवेक्ष्य कृशान्पौत्रान्

Seeing those emaciated grandchildren
tān avekṣya kṛśān pauṭrān

वने वन्येन जीवतः ।

living on fruits and roots in the forest,
vane vanyena jīvataḥ

महर्षिरनुकम्पार्थम्

the great sage, filled with compassion
maharṣir anukampārtham

अब्रवीद्वाष्पगद्गदम् ॥

and choked with tears said,
abravīd bāṣpa-gadgadam (245.11)

युधिष्ठिर महाबाहो

O mighty Yudhishtira,
yudhiṣṭhira mahābāho

शृणु धर्मभृतां वर ।

foremost of the virtuous, listen.
śṛṇu dharma-bhṛtām vara

नातप्ततपसः पुत्र

One who undergoes no tapas
nātapta-tapasaḥ putra

प्राप्नुवन्ति महत्सुखम् ॥

does not gain great happiness.
prāpnuvanti mahat sukham (245.12)

व्यास उवाच

Rishi Vyasa said,
vyāsa uvāca

तपसो हि परं नास्ति

Nothing is better than tapas.
tapaso hi param nāsti

तपसा विन्दते महत् ।

With tapas, one obtains greatness.
tapasā vindate mahat

नासाध्यं तपसः किञ्चिद्

Nothing is unattainable through tapas.
nāsādhyam tapasaḥ kiñcid

इति बुध्यस्व भारत ॥

Understand thus, O Yudhishtira.
iti budhyasva bhārata (245.16)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

भगवन्दानधर्माणां

O Lord, concerning the practice of charity
bhagavan dāna-dharmāṇāṃ

तपसो वा महामुने ।

and tapas, O great sage,
tapaso vā mahāmune

किंस्विद्धुगुणं प्रेत्य

which is better for the next life
kiṃsvid bahu-guṇaṃ pretya

किं वा दुष्करमुच्यते ॥

and which is more difficult to perform?
kiṃ vā duṣkaram ucyate (245.26)

व्यास उवाच

Rishi Vyasa said,
vyāsa uvāca

दानान्न दुष्करतरं

More difficult than charity
dānān na duṣkarataraṃ

पृथिव्यामस्ति किञ्चन ।

is nothing in the world.
pṛthivyām asti kiñcana

तस्य दुःखार्जितस्यैवं

What is gained with great difficulty
tasya duḥkhārjitasyaivaṃ

परित्यागः सुदुष्करः ॥

is exceedingly hard to give away.
parityāgaḥ suduṣkaraḥ (245.27,30)

पात्रे दानं स्वल्पमपि

Even a little charity to a deserving person,
pātre dānaṁ svalpam api

काले दत्तं युधिष्ठिर |

O Yudhishtira, given at the right time
kāle dattaṁ yudhiṣṭhira

मनसा सुविशुद्धेन

with a pure heart,
manasā suviśuddhena

प्रेत्यानन्तफलं स्मृतम् ||

it gives limitless fruits in the next life.
pretyānanta-phalaṁ smṛtam (245.33)

शिलोञ्छवृत्तिर्धर्मात्मा

Living on gleaned corn, pious,
śiloñcha-vṛttir dharmātmā

मुद्गलः संशितव्रतः |

and firm in vows was Mudgala,
mudgalaḥ saṁśita-vrataḥ

आसीद्राजन्कुरुक्षेत्रे

living in Kurukshetra,
āsīd rājan kuru-kṣetre

सत्यवागनसूयकः ||

truthful and free of malice.
satya-vāg-anasūyakaḥ (246.3)

अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीमम्

About this, there is
atrāpy udāharantīmam

इतिहासं पुरातनम् |

an ancient story about Mudgala.
itihāsaṁ purātanam

व्रीहिद्रोणपरित्यागाद्

By giving away a single measure of corn,
vrīhi-droṇa-parityāgād

यत्फलं प्राप मुद्गलः ||

he obtained such (limitless) fruits.
yat phalaṁ prāpa mudgalaḥ (245.34)

तं तु शुश्राव धर्मिष्ठं

Hearing about that pious
taṁ tu śuśrāva dharmiṣṭhaṁ

मुद्गलं संशितव्रतम् |

Mudgala of firm vows,
mudgalaṁ saṁśita-vratam

दुर्वासा नृप दिग्वासास्

O King, the naked rishi Durvasa
durvāsā nṛpa dig-vāsās

तमथाभ्याजगाम ह ||

then went to meet him.
tam athābhyājagāma ha (246.11)

बिभ्रच्चानियतं वेषम्
Displaying his unusual dress
bibhrac cāniyataṁ veṣam

उन्मत्त इव पाण्डव |
like a crazy person, O Yudhishtira,
unmatta iva pāṇḍava

विकचः परुषा वाचो
bare-headed, uttering various insults,
vikacaḥ paruṣā vāco

व्याहरन्विविधा मुनिः ||
the sage Durvasa ...
vyāharan vividhā muniḥ (246.12)

ततस्तदन्नं रसवत्
Then, Mudgala's fresh food
tatas tad-annaṁ rasavat

स एव क्षुधयान्वितः |
that crazy Durvasa, stricken with hunger,
sa eva kṣudhayānvitaḥ

बुभुजे कृत्स्नमुन्मत्तः
enjoyed completely.
bubhuje kṛtsnam unmattaḥ

प्रादात्तस्मै च मुद्गलः ||
Mudgala gave it to him.
prādāt tasmai ca mudgalaḥ (246.16)

अभिगम्याथ तं विप्रम्
having approached Mudgala,
abhigamyātha taṁ vipram

उवाच मुनिसत्तमः |
the great sage Durvasa said,
uvāca muni-sattamaḥ

अन्नार्थिनमनुप्राप्तं
“To get some food
annārthinam anuprāptaṁ

विद्धि मां मुनिसत्तम ||
have I come, O sage.”
viddhi mām muni-sattama (246.13)

न चास्य मानसं किञ्चिद्
No mental disturbance of Mudgala
na cāsyā mānasaṁ kiñcid

विकारं ददृशे मुनिः |
did Durvasa observe.
vikāraṁ dadṛṣe muniḥ

शुद्धसत्त्वस्य शुद्धं स
Only the pure-hearted Mudgala's
śuddha-sattvasya śuddhaṁ sa

ददृशे निर्मलं मनः ||
taintless mind did he see.
dadṛṣe nirmalaṁ manaḥ (246.22)

तमुवाच ततः प्रीतः

Then being pleased,
tam uvāca tataḥ prītaḥ

स मुनिर्मुद्गलं तदा ।

the sage Durvasa said to Mudgala,
sa munir mudgalaṁ tadā

त्वत्समो नास्ति लोकेऽस्मिन्

“There is no one like you in the world
tvat-samo nāsti loka 'smin

दाता मात्सर्यवर्जितः ॥

who can give without resentment.”
dātā mātsarya-varjitaḥ (246.23)

इत्येवं वदतस्तस्य

While such was being said
ity evaṁ vadatas tasya

तदा दुर्वाससो मुनेः ।

by the rishi Durvasa,
tadā durvāsaso muneḥ

देवदूतो विमानेन

a divine messenger on a celestial vehicle
deva-dūto vimānena

मुद्गलं प्रत्युपस्थितः ॥

appeared before Mudgala.
mudgalaṁ pratyupasthitaḥ (246.30)

उवाच चैनं विप्रर्षिं

The divine messenger said to Mudgala,
uvāca cainaṁ vipra-rṣiṁ

विमानं कर्मभिर्जितम् ।

“By your actions, you have acquired this celestial vehicle.
vimānaṁ karmabhir jitam

समुपारोह संसिद्धिं

Climb aboard!
samupāroha saṁsiddhiṁ

प्राप्तोऽसि परमां मुने ॥

You have achieved supreme perfection, O sage.”
prāpto 'si paramāṁ mune (246.32)

तमेवंवादिनमृषिर्

Mudgala, being addressed thus,
tam evaṁ vādinam ṛṣir

देवदूतमुवाच ह ।

said to the divine messenger,
deva-dūtam uvāca ha

स्वर्गे स्वर्गसुखं किं च

“What happiness is in heaven
svarge svarga-sukhaṁ kiṁ ca

दोषो वा देवदूतकक ॥

and what defects, O messenger?”
doṣo vā deva-dūtaka (246.33,34)

देवदूत उवाच

The divine messenger said,
deva-dūta uvāca

न क्षुत्पिपासे न ग्लानिर्

In heaven, there is no hunger or thirst, nor decay,
na kṣut-pipāse na glānir

न शीतोष्णभयं तथा ।

nor fear of cold or heat,
na śītoṣṇa-bhayaṁ tathā

बीभत्समशुभं वापि

nor anything disgusting or unclean,
bībhatsam aśubhaṁ vāpi

रोगा वा तत्र केचन ॥

nor any kind of illness.
rogā vā tatra kecana (247.9,10)

ईदृशः स मुने लोकः

O Mudgala, such worlds
īdrśaḥ sa mune lokaḥ

स्वकर्मफलहेतुकः ।

are acquired as a result of one's actions.
svakarma-phala-hetukaḥ

दुष्प्रापा परमा सिद्धिर्

This supreme attainment is gained with difficulty,
duṣprāpā paramā siddhir

अगम्या कामगोचरैः ॥

unobtainable to those driven by desire.
agamyā kāma-gocaraiḥ (247.12, 24)

एतत्स्वर्गसुखं विप्र

O Mudgala, the happiness of heaven
etat svarga-sukhaṁ vipra

लोका नानाविधास्तथा ।

is found in many celestial realms.
lokā nānā-vidhās tathā

गुणाः स्वर्गस्य प्रोक्तास्ते

I have told you the qualities of heaven,
guṇāḥ svargasya proktās te

दोषानपि निबोध मे ॥

now learn the defects from me.
doṣān api nibodha me (247.27)

कृतस्य कर्मणस्तत्र

The results of past actions
kṛtasya karmaṇas tatra

भुज्यते यत्फलं दिवि |

are enjoyed in heaven.
bhujyate yat phalaṁ divi

न चान्यत्क्रियते कर्म

Further actions cannot be done
na cānyat kriyate karma

मूलच्छेदेन भुज्यते ||

while the past results are being enjoyed.
mūla-cchedena bhujyate (247.28)

मुद्गल उवाच

Mudgala said,
mudgala uvāca

सुखव्याप्तमनस्कानां

For those with minds filled with heavenly happiness,
sukha-vyāpta-manaskānām

पतनं यच्च मुद्गल |

getting reborn elsewhere, O Mudgala,
patanaṁ yac ca mudgala

असन्तोषः परीतापो

brings discontent and regret
asantoṣaḥ parītāpo

दृष्ट्वा दीप्ततराः श्रियः ||

after having seen the glories of heaven.
dr̥ṣṭvā dīptatarāḥ śriyaḥ (247.29,30)

पतनं तन्महदुःखं

Falling from heaven brings great suffering,
patanaṁ tan mahad duḥkhaṁ

परितापः सुदारुणः |

and severe regret.
paritāpaḥ sudāruṇaḥ

स्वर्गभाजश्च्यवन्तीह

Those who enjoy heaven will fall, returning here.
svarga-bhājaś cyavantīha

तस्मात्स्वर्गं न कामये ||

Therefore I do not desire heaven.
tasmāt svargaṁ na kāmaye (247.39)

यत्र गत्वा न शोचन्ति

Where they do not suffer,
yatra gatvā na śocanti

न व्यथन्ति चलन्ति वा ।

feel distress, or travel further,
na vyathanti calanti vā

तदहं स्थानमत्यन्तं

that ultimate place ।
tad ahaṁ sthānam atyantam

मार्गयिष्यामि केवलम् ॥

will seek, and no other.
mārgayiṣyāmi kevalam (247.40)

इत्युक्त्वा स मुनिर्वाक्यं

Having spoken thus, Mudgala
ity uktvā sa munir vākyaṁ

देवदूतं विसृज्य तम् ।

took leave of the divine messenger.
deva-dūtaṁ visṛjya tam

शिलोञ्छवृत्तिमुत्सृज्य

Giving up his life of gleanings,
śiloñcha-vṛttim utsṛjya

शममातिष्ठदुत्तमम् ॥

he remained in perfect peace.
śamam ātiṣṭhad uttamam (247.41)

ज्ञानयोगेन शुद्धेन

By means of jnana yoga alone,
jñāna-yogena śuddhena

ध्याननित्यो बभूव ह ।

he became established in meditation
dhyāna-nityo babhūva ha

जगाम शाश्वतीं सिद्धिं

and reached the eternal abode
jagāma śāśvatīm siddhiṁ

परां निर्वाणलक्षणाम् ॥

known as supreme nirvana.
parāṁ nirvāṇa-lakṣaṇām (247.42,43)