

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Canto One

With the
Sārārtha-darśinī commentary

by

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Canto One – Chapter Nine

Passing of Bhīṣma

The Passing Away of Bhīṣmadeva
in the Presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Section – I

Pāṇḍavas visit Bhīṣmadeva's

Deathbed (1-4)

|| 1.9.1 ||

sūta uvāca

iti bhītaḥ prajā-drohāt
sarva-dharma-vivitsayā
tato vinaśanam prāgād
yatra deva-vrato 'patat

Sūta said: Being fearful (iti bhītaḥ) because of having committed violence against the population (prajā-drohāt), Yudhisthira, desiring to examine all dharmas (sarva-dharma-vivitsayā), went to Kurukṣetra (tato vinaśanam prāgād) where Bhīṣma had fallen (yatra deva-vrato apatat).

In the ninth chapter Bhīṣma sees Kṛṣṇa, and at his request speaks on dharma.

Being praised profusely, filled with devotion, he attains the Lord.

When all present agreed that the correct advice was to ask Bhīṣma - who knew all dharmas - whether Yudhiṣṭhira had lost his sense of judgment, Yudhiṣṭhira went to Kurukṣetra to meet Bhīṣma.

Vivitsayā means with a desire to examine.

Vinaśanam refers to Kurukṣetra.

Devavrataḥ is Bhīṣma.

|| 1.9.2 ||

tadā te bhrātarah sarve
sadaśvaiḥ svarṇa-bhūṣitaiḥ
anvagacchan rathair viprā
vyāsa-dhaumyādayas tathā

His brothers (tadā te bhrātarah sarve) and brāhmaṇas such as Vyāsa and Dhaumya (viprā vyāsa-dhaumyādayah) followed behind (tathā anu agacchat) with chariots decorated with gold (svaṇa-bhūṣitaiḥ rathaiḥ) and fine horses (sad aśvaiḥ).

|| 1.9.3 ||

~~bhagavān~~ ~~api~~ ~~viprarse~~
rathena sa-dhanañjayah
sa tair vyarocata nrpaḥ
kuvera iva guhyakaih

O Śaunaka (viprarse)! The Lord along with Arjuna (bhagavān sa-dhanañjayah) also followed behind in his chariot (api rathena). King Yudhiṣṭhira (sa nrpaḥ) shone like the god of wealth Kuvera accompanied by the Guhyakas, guardians of his treasures (vyarocata kuvera iva guhyakaih).

Kṛṣṇa also followed behind Yudhiṣṭhira.

|| 1.9.4 ||

dr̥ṣṭvā nipatitam bhūmau
divaś cyutam ivāmaram
pranemuh pāṇḍavā bhīṣmam
sānugāḥ saha cakriṇā

Seeing Bhīṣma lying on the ground (dr̥ṣṭvā bhīṣmam
nipatitam bhūmau) like a fallen devatā (divaś cyutam
iva amaram), the Pāṇḍavas offered respects to him (pranemuh
pāṇḍavā) along with their followers (sānugāḥ) and Kṛṣṇa
(saha cakriṇā).

Section – II

Assembly at Bhīṣmadeva's

Deathbed (5-8)

|| 1.9.5 ||

tatra brahmarṣayaḥ sarve
devarṣayaś ca sattama
rājarṣayaś ca tatrāsan
draṣṭum bharata-puṅgavam

O Śaunaka (sattama)! There (tatra) the brāhmaṇa sages, the sages of the heavenly planets and the kings who were sages (brahmarṣayaḥ sarve devarṣayaś ca rājarṣayaś ca) had gathered (āsan) to see the best of the Bharata lineage (draṣṭum bharata-puṅgavam).

|| 1.9.6-8 ||

parvato nārado dhaumyo bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
br̥hadaśvo bharadvājaḥ saśiṣyo reṇukā-sutaḥ

vasiṣṭha indrapramadas trito gr̥tsamado 'sitaḥ
kakṣivān gautamo 'triś ca kauśiko 'tha sudarśanaḥ

anye ca munayo brahman brahmarātādayo 'malāḥ
śiṣyair upetā ājagmuḥ kaśyapāṅgirasādayaḥ

O brāhmana (**brahman**)! Parvata, Nārada, Dhaumya, Vyāsa (parvato nārado dhaumyo bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ), Br̥hadaśva, Bharadvāja, Parāśurāma (br̥hadaśvo bharadvājaḥ reṇukā-sutaḥ), Vasiṣṭha, Indrapramada, Trita, Gr̥tsamada, Asita (vasiṣṭha indrapramadas trito gr̥tsamado asitaḥ), Kaksivān, Gautama, Atri, Kauśika, Sudarśana (kakṣivān gautamo atriḥ ca kauśiko atha sudarśanaḥ), along with their disciples (sa śiṣyo), and as well many other pure sages (anye ca amalāḥ munayo) such as Śuka, Kaśyapa and Br̥haspati (brahmarāta kaśyapa aṅgirasādayaḥ) came along with their disciples (śiṣyair upetā ājagmuḥ).

Renukā-suta is Paraśurāma.

Brahma-rāta is Śukadeva.

Āṅgīrasa is Bṛhaspati.

Section – III

**Bhīṣmadeva welcomes the Lord
and other visitors (9-10)**

|| 1.9.9 ||

tān sametān mahā-bhāgān
upalabhya vasūttamaḥ
pūjayām āsa dharma-jño
deśa-kāla-vibhāgavit

The best of the Vasus (vasu uttamah), Bhīṣma, endowed with great qualities (mahā-bhāgān), knowledgeable of dharma (dharma-jño) as applicable according to place and time (deśa-kāla-vibhāgavit), seeing that they had gathered (tān sametān upalabhya), worshipped them (pūjayām āsa).

[Note: Śrīdhara Svāmī says that since he could not rise, Bhīṣma worshipped them mentally and with words.]

Vasūttama is Bhīṣma.

|| 1.9.10 ||

kr̥ṣṇam ca tat-prabhāva-jña
āsīnam jagad-īśvaram
hr̥di-stham pūjayām āsa
māyayopātta-vigraham

Bhīṣma, understanding Kṛṣṇa's powers (kr̥ṣṇam ca tat-prabhāva-jña), worshipped (pūjayām āsa) Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the universe (jagad-īśvaram), situated within the heart (hr̥di-stham), who was seated there (āsīnam) and who had come before Bhīṣma out of great mercy (māyayā upātta-vigraham).

Māyayopātta-vigraham can mean Kṛṣṇa who had a conflict (vigraha) with Yudhiṣṭhira by covering up his discrimination with his yoga-māyā.

Or it means Kṛṣṇa who brought himself before the eyes of Bhīṣma (upātta) by his mercy (māyayā).

Section – IV

**Bhīṣmadeva pacifies and
encourages the Pāṇḍavas**

(11-17)

|| 1.9.11 ||

pāṇḍu-putrān upāsīnān
praśraya-prema-saṅgatān
abhyācaṣṭānurāgāśrair
andhībhūtena cakṣusā

His eyes blinded by tears of love (anurāga aśrain
andhībhūtena cakṣusā), he spoke (abhyācaṣṭa) to the
Pāṇḍavas sitting there (pāṇḍu-putrān upāsīnān), filled with
humility and love (praśraya prema saṅgatān).

Abhyācaṣṭa means “he spoke.”

|| 1.9.12 ||

aho kaṣṭam aho 'nyāyyam
yad yūyam dharma-nandanāḥ
jīvitum nārhattha kliṣṭam
vipra-dharmācyutāśrayāḥ

O Yudhistir (dharma-nandanāḥ)! Having the shelter of brāhmaṇas, dharma and Kṛṣṇa (vipra-dharma acyuta āśrayāḥ), you should not live your life in suffering (yad yūyam na arhattha jīvitum klistam) since that is dangerous and improper (aho kaṣṭam aho anyāyyam).

The words “dangerous” (**kaṣṭam**) and “improper” (**anyāyyam**)
do not really apply to the king.

To whom do the words refer?

The improper situation has arisen because of Viṣṇu, the mover
and maintainer of the whole universe.

You should not live your life in suffering (kliṣṭam taken adverbially).

If others live like that, that is their concern.

|| 1.9.13 ||

samsthite 'tirathe paṇḍau
prthā bāla-prajā vadhūḥ
yusmat-krte bahūn kleśān
prāptā tokavatī muhuḥ

When the great warrior Pāṇḍu died (samsthite atirathe paṇḍau), his wife Kuntī with young children (prthā bāla-prajā vadhūḥ) constantly underwent many difficulties (muhuḥ bahūn kleśān prāptā tokavatī) in raising you since you were young at that time (yusmat-krte).

“What was the suffering?”

This verse describes it.

Being alone with young children causes much suffering.

Though you are now grown up, she underwent great suffering
with you as a young child.

|| 1.9.14 ||

sarvaṃ kāla-kṛtaṃ manye
bhavatām ca yad-apriyam
sapālo yad-vaśe loko
vāyor iva ghanāvaliḥ

I consider (manyē) that this, which is unwelcome (yad apriyam), has all been done to you by time (bhavatām sarvaṃ kāla-kṛtaṃ), which controls the world (yad-vaśe lokah) and its protectors (sa-pālah) just as the wind controls the clouds (vāyor iva ghanāvaliḥ).

What is the cause of our suffering?

It cannot be said, since I do not see either recent or old karmas as the cause.

Therefore Bhīṣma speaks words of the common people.

“But time is simply the substratum of the experience of happiness and distress which are prārabdha-karmas.

Thus, when you say that time is the cause, time is acting as an assistant.

Why do you not just say clearly that our suffering is our prārabdha-karma resulting from our sins?”

Yudhiṣṭhira is well known as the direct incarnation of dharma.

If Dharma (Yudhiṣṭhira) has prārabdha-karmas, how can he have any sense of dharma?

The cause is not karma, but time, which cannot be countered and cannot be explained.

|| 1.9.15 ||

yatra dharma-suto rājā
gadā-pāṇir vrkodarah
kṛṣṇo 'strī gāṇḍivam cāpaṁ
suhṛt kṛṣṇas tato vipat

You are lamenting (vipat) where there is Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma (yatra dharma-suto rājā), Bhīma, holder of the club (gadā-pāṇir vrkodarah), Arjuna holder of the bow Gāṇḍiva (kṛṣṇo 'strī gāṇḍivam cāpaṁ), and your friend Kṛṣṇa (suhṛt kṛṣṇah).

“Kapila has said:

na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe
nañkṣyanti no me ’nimīṣo leḍhi hetih
yeṣām ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhrdo daivam iṣṭam

The devotees in the spiritual world (mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe) are never deprived of any enjoyment (na karhicid nañkṣyanti). My wheel of time (me animīṣo hetih) does not afflict those devotees (na leḍhi), for whom I am (yeṣām ahaṁ) a lover, the ātmā (priya ātmā), son, friend (sutaś ca sakhā), elder, companion (guruḥ suhrdah) or worshipable deity (daivam iṣṭam). SB 3.25.38

How then could time attack the Pāṇdavas who were filled with
dāsyā, sakhyā and vātsalyā for Kṛṣṇa?

This is most astonishing!

Without a cause, time has produced effects, whose cause we
must infer, but which looks similar to karma.”

That is the intention of this verse.

Kṛṣṇa means Arjuna, with his bow (astrī).

Though you have strength of piety, strength of body, strength of skill, strength of scriptural knowledge, strength of friends and strength of wealth, still you lament.

|| 1.9.16 ||

na hy asya karhicid rājan
pumān veda vidhitsitam
yad vijijñāsayā yuktā
muhyanti kavayo 'pi hi

O King (rājan)! No one can understand (pumān na hy karhicid veda) the plan of Kṛṣṇa (asya vidhitsitam) because (yad) even those engaged in reasoning and scripture (vijijñāsayā yuktā kavayah api) are bewildered by that inquiry (muhyanti hi).

“So what should I conclude?”

Here is the general conclusion.

Everyone agrees that no one can interfere with the plans of the Kṛṣṇa and no one can even understand what his plans are, even today.

No person, starting with Brahmā and Śiva, knows the plan of the Lord, what to speak of me!

Maybe no one knows.

But inquiry is necessary.

Does he want to give us suffering?

Does he want to give us joy?

Does he want to give us suffering and happiness?

It cannot be the first, because then his quality of being affectionate to his devotee would be cancelled.

It cannot be the second option, because we have not seen any happiness.

It cannot be the third option because that would be a contradiction to his kind nature.

It is finally decided that one cannot solve the problem by inquiry.

Thus the verse says that even those who use their intelligence to discriminate and those use knowledge of scripture are bewildered by inquiry.

|| 1.9.17 ||

tasmād idam daiva-tantram
vyavasya bharatarṣabha
tasyānuvihito 'nāthā
nātha pāhi prajāḥ prabho

O master (nātha)! O controller (prabho)! Of best of the Bharata lineage (bharata rṣabha)! Therefore (tasmād), discerning (vyavasya) that the suffering and happiness is dependent only on Kṛṣṇa (idam daiva-tantram), follow him (tasya anuvihito) and protect the helpless citizens (anāthā prajāḥ pāhi).

Discern (vyavasya) that this happiness and suffering (idam) is dependent on the lord (daiva-tantram), but understand that the purpose of giving happiness and distress to his devotee is not easily understood, since it has already been said that his plan is hard to comprehend.

Having discerned this, follow Kṛṣṇa (tasya anuvihitaḥ) and protect the citizens who are without a guide (anāthāḥ) to lead them to Kṛṣṇa.