

First Canto - Chapter Twelve

Birth of Emperor Parīkṣit

|| 1.12.1 ||

śrī-śaunaka uvāca
aśvatthāmnopasrṣṭena
brahma-śīrṣṇoru-tejasā
uttarāyā hato garbha
īśenājīvitaḥ punaḥ

Śaunaka said: The embryo (**uttarāyā garbha**) killed by the intense heat (**uru-tejasā hataḥ**) of the brahmāstra (**brahma-śīrṣṇā**) thrown by Aśvatthāmā (**aśvatthāmnā upasrṣṭena**) was revived by the Lord (**īśena ājīvitaḥ punaḥ**).

- The twelfth chapter describes how the King celebrated the birth of Parīkṣit, and heard his future life from the brāhmaṇas.
- No one had ever heard of such a devotional king, who saw Kṛṣṇa when he was in the womb and punished Kali.
- Sūta had promised to tell about Parīkṣit's birth, but was sidetracked in reciting the sweet topics of how Parīkṣit was protected in the womb, the prayers of Kuntī, the passing of Bhīṣma, the journey to and entrance into Dvārakā, and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the queens there.
- Śaunaka, desiring to hear about Parīkṣit's birth, again asks about this specifically. Upasṛṣtena means "being thrown."

|| 1.12.2-3 ||

tasya janma mahā-buddheḥ karmāṇi ca mahātmanah
nidhanam ca yathāivāsīt sa pretya gatavān yathā

tad idam śrotum icchāmo gaditum yadi manyase
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām yasya jñānam adāc chukaḥ

We desire to hear (**śrotum icchāmo**) about the birth, activities (**janma karmāṇi**), passing away (**nidhanam ca yathā eva āsīt**) and destination (**sah pretya gatavān yathā**) of this highly intelligent devotee (**mahā-buddheḥ mahātmanah**), which Śukadeva narrated to you (**yasya jñānam adāc chukaḥ**). Please tell us (**brūhi naḥ**), full of faith (**śraddadhānānām**), if you desire to tell this (**gaditum yadi manyase**).

|| 1.12.4 ||

sūta uvāca
apīpalad dharma-rājah
pitṛvad rañjayan prajāḥ
niḥspṛhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyaḥ
kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā

Sūta said: Yudhiṣṭhira (**dharma-rājah**), like his father (**pitṛvad**), freed from personal desires (**niḥspṛhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyaḥ**) by engaging in service to the Lord (**kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā**), satisfied and protected the citizens (**apīpalad rañjayan prajāḥ**).

- Three verses describe Yudhiṣṭhira in order to indicate that the cause of attaining such a grandson was his attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

sampadaḥ kratavo lokā mahiṣī bhrātaro mahī
jambūdvīpādhipatyam ca yaśaś ca tri-divam gatam

kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārhā mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ
adhijahrur mudam rājñāḥ kṣudhitasya yathetare

O brāhmaṇa (**dvijāḥ**)! He had all wealth, sacrifices, planets (**sampadaḥ kratavo lokā**), queens, brothers, the earth (**mahiṣī bhrātaro mahī**), lordship over Jambū-dvīpa (**jambūdvīpādhipatyam ca**), and fame in Svarga (**yaśaś ca tri-divam gatam**), desirable even for the devatās (**kāmāḥ sura-spārhā**). Did these things give joy (**kiṁ te kāmāḥ mudam adhijahrur**) to the King, whose mind was only fixed on Mukunda without deviation and nothing else (**mukunda-manaso**)? (**kṣudhitasya yathā itare**)

- The wealth and other items were desired by the devatās.
- Did these things create happiness for the King?
- No.
- The reason is given: he was thinking of Mukunda. “Other things” includes sandalwood and garlands offered in honor.

|| 1.12.7 ||

mātur garbha-gato vīraḥ
sa tadā bhṛgu-nandana
dadarśa puruṣam kañcid
dahyamāno 'stra-tejasā

O son of Bhṛgu (**bhṛgu-nandana**)! The courageous hero Parīkṣit (**vīraḥ**) in the womb of his mother (**mātur garbha-gatah**), burned by the heat of the weapon (**astra-tejasā dahyamānah**), saw the form of the Lord (**dadarśa puruṣam kañcid**).

- The topic of discussion now begins.
- Because of his natural courage (**vīraḥ**), he was not afraid of the fire of the weapon.
- His first perception of objects by his mental eyes was the form of the Lord.

|| 1.12.8 ||

aṅguṣṭha-mātram amalam
sphurat-puraṭa-maulinam
apīvyā-darśanam śyāmam
taḍid vāsasam acyutam

That pure (**amalam**), indestructible (**acyutam**), beautiful form (**apīvyā-darśanam**) was the size of a thumb (**aṅguṣṭha-mātram**), dark in complexion (**śyāmam**), wearing cloth flashing like lightning (**taḍid vāsasam**), with a shining gold crown (**sphurat-puraṭa-maulinam**).

- Though the Lord extends in all directions, he arranged to become the size of the thumb simply because he became situated in the womb.
- Actually he saw the Lord of that size in that particular place only by the inconceivable power of the Lord. There is no other reason for this. Later on it is said:

**sa eṣa loke vikhyātaḥ parīkṣid iti yat prabhuḥ |
pūrvam dṛṣṭam anudhyāyan parīkṣeta nareṣv iha ||**

Because he constantly remembered the Lord whom he had seen in the womb and searched for him among all men, he was famous Parīkṣit in this world. **SB 1.12.39**

- He would not look among men to find that form if it had actually only been the size of a thumb.
- The form he saw was most beautiful (apīvya-darśanam).
- He wore a gold crown.
- He was dark in complexion and wearing cloth shining like lightning.
- This indicates that his form, like a rain cloud ornamented with lightning, had suddenly appeared in the sky of Uttarā's womb to save the young elephant Parīkṣit who was being burned by the forest fire of the brahmāstra.

॥ 1.12.9 ॥

śrīmad-dīrgha-catur-bāhum
tapta-kāñcana-kuṇḍalam
kṣatajākṣam gadā-pāṇim
ātmanaḥ sarvato diśam
paribhramantam ulkābhām
bhrāmayantaṁ gadāṁ muhuḥ

He had four long arms (**śrīmad-dīrgha-catur-bāhum**), bright gold earrings (**tapta-kāñcana-kuṇḍalam**). His eyes were red from anger (**kṣataja akṣam**) and in his hands he was clutching a club (**gadā-pāṇim**). He wandered everywhere (**ātmanaḥ sarvato diśam paribhramantam**), swinging the club (**bhrāmayantaṁ gadāṁ muhuḥ**), which shone like a meteor (**ulka ābhām**).

- Kṣatajākṣam (blood eyes) means that his eyes became very red because of anger at the brahmastra.

॥ 1.12.10 ॥

astra-tejaḥ sva-gadayā
nīhāram iva gopatiḥ
vidhamantaṁ sannikarṣe
paryaikṣata ka ity asau

Seeing that form nearby (**sannikarṣe paryaikṣata**) annihilate the brahmāstra (**astra-tejaḥ vidhamantaṁ**) with his club (**sva-gadayā**), just as the sun dissipates frost (**nīhāram iva gopatiḥ**), Parīkṣit considered in his mind, “Who is that (**ka ity asau**)?”

- Like the sun (gopatiḥ) destroys frost (nīhāram) he destroyed the brahmāstra.
- He considered (paryaikṣata) “Who has saved me by those martial stances, even though he is not related to me?”

|| 1.12.11 ||

vidhūya tad ameyātmā
bhagavān dharma-gub vibhuḥ
miṣato daśamāsasya
tatraivāntardadhe hariḥ

The Lord (**bhagavān vibhuḥ**), maintaining his reputation of being affectionate to his devotees (**dharma-gub**), inconceivable in form (**ameyātmā**), and also a thief (**hariḥ**), having destroyed the brahmāstra (**tad vidhūya**), disappeared at that spot (**tatra eva antardadhe**) from the sight (**miṣatah**) of the child ten months in the womb (**daśamāsasya**).

- Dharmagup means “the Lord who maintains his quality of being affectionate to his devotee.”
- He was seen by Parīkṣit who was just about to be born, being ten months in the womb (daśamāsasya).
- The Lord disappeared there, where he was situated, without going elsewhere, because he is all powerful (vibhuḥ).
- He entered the womb and, attracting Parīkṣit’s mind (hariḥ, attractor), he then disappeared.
- This is the quality of the thief: he enters in and then disappears.
- Like a deceitful night prowler, he had entered into the womb to steal Parīkṣit’s mind. This metaphor is implied.

॥ 1.12.12 ॥

tataḥ sarva-guṇodarke
sānukūla-grahodaye
jajñe vaṁśa-dharaḥ pāṇḍor
bhūyaḥ pāṇḍur ivaujasā

Then (**tataḥ**), with the ascendant filled with favorable planets (**sa
anukūla-grahodaye**), which would later manifest all good
qualities (**sarva-guṇa udarke**), the maintainer of Pāṇḍu's lineage
(**pāṇḍoh vaṁśa-dharaḥ**), similar to Pāṇḍu in strength (**pāṇḍur
iva ojasā**), was born (**bhūyaḥ jajñe**).

|| 1.12.13 ||

tasya prīta-manā rājā
viprair dhaumya-kṛpādibhiḥ
jātakam kārāyām āsa
vācayitvā ca maṅgalam

Yudhiṣṭhira (**prīta-manā rājā**) had the brāhmaṇas such as Dhaumya and Kṛpācārya (**dhaumya-kṛpādibhiḥ viprair**) chant auspicious verses such as puṇyāham (**vācayitvā ca maṅgalam**) and perform the birth rites (**tasya jātakam kārāyām āsa**).

|| 1.12.14 ||

hiraṇyam gāṁ mahīm grāmān
hasty-aśvān nṛpatir varān
prādāt svannaṁ ca viprebhyaḥ
prajā-tīrthe sa tīrthavit

On the auspicious occasion of the birth (**prajā-tīrthe**), the best of kings (**sah nṛpatir varān**), knowing the proper time to give charity (**tīrthavit**), gave the brāhmaṇas (**viprebhyaḥ prādāt**) gold, cows, land, villages (**hiraṇyam gāṁ mahīm grāmān**), elephants, horses (**hasty-aśvān**), and the best food (**svannaṁ ca**).

- Prajā-tīrthe means “at the auspicious time of a son’s birth.”
- Putre jāte vyatīpāte dattaṁ bhavati cākṣayam: what is given at the birth of a son or during calamity has indestructible results.

|| 1.12.15-17 ||

tam ūcur brāhmaṇās tuṣṭā rājānaṃ praśrayānvitam
eṣa hy asmin prajā-tantau purūṇāṃ pauravaṛṣabha

daivenāpratighātena śukle saṁsthāṃ upeyūṣi
rāto vo 'nugrahārthāya viṣṇunā prabhaviṣṇunā

tasmān nāmnā viṣṇu-rāta iti loke bhaviṣyati
na sandeho mahā-bhāga mahā-bhāgavato mahān

The satisfied brāhmaṇas (**tuṣṭā brāhmaṇāḥ**) said to the humble king (**tam praśrayānvitam rājānaṃ ūcur**): O best of men (**pauravaṛṣabha**)! Though the pure dynasty of Puru was destroyed (**purūṇāṃ śukle saṁsthāṃ upeyūṣi**) by unavoidable destiny (**daivena apratighātena**), this son (**eṣa hy asmin prajā-tantau**) has been given as mercy to you (**rātaḥ vah anugraha arthāya**) by the powerful Viṣṇu (**viṣṇunā prabhaviṣṇunā**). Therefore he will be known as Viṣṇu-rāta, “Gift of Viṣṇu, (**tasmān nāmnā viṣṇu-rāta iti loke bhaviṣyati**)” and without doubt (**na sandehah**), in this world will be the best, the greatest devotee (**mahā-bhāgavato mahān**), O fortunate King (**mahā-bhāga**)!

|| 1.12.18 ||

śrī-rājovāca

apy eṣa vaṁśyān rājarṣin
puṇya-ślokān mahātmanah
anuvartitā svid yaśasā
sādhu-vādena sattamāḥ

The King said: O great souls (**sattamāḥ**)! Will this son (**apy svid eṣah**) follow (**anuvartitā**) our lineage (**vaṁśyān**) of reputed saintly kings (**puṇya-ślokān mahātmanah rājarṣin**) with fame (**yaśasā**) and good praise (**sādhu-vādena**)?

- Having heard that Parīkṣit would be a great devotee, the astonished king inquired with reverence.

|| 1.12.19 ||

brāhmaṇā ūcuḥ
pārtha prajāvitā sāksād
ikṣvākur iva mānavah
brahmaṇyaḥ satya-sandhaś ca
rāmo dāśarathir yathā

The brāhmaṇas said: O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**)! He is the protector of the citizens (**prajā avitā**). He is exactly like Ikṣvāku, the son of Manu (**sāksād mānavah ikṣvākur iva**) and Rāma, the son of Daśaratha (**rāmo dāśarathir yathā**). He is charitable to the brāhmaṇas and true to his promise (**brahmaṇyaḥ satya-sandhaś ca**).

- You asked if he would have fame like the previous great kings.
- All their qualities by which they became famous exist in this boy now, and as the occasion arises, they will manifest.
- Therefore they were not equal to him (since he has the qualities of all of them.) This is what we have observed.
- With this intention they speak.
- Prajā avitā means protector of the people.
- Satya-sandhaḥ means “true to one’s promise.”

|| 1.12.20 ||

eṣa dātā śaraṇyaś ca
yathā hy auśīnaraḥ śibiḥ
yaśo vitanitā svānām
daśyantir iva yajvanām

He is a donor and protector of those who surrender to him (**eṣa dātā śaraṇyaś ca**) like Śibi, from Uśīnara (**yathā hy auśīnaraḥ śibiḥ**), and will spread the fame (**yaśo vitanitā**) of sacrificers and family members (**yajvanām svānām**) like Bharata, the son of Duśyanta (**daśyantir iva**).

- Śibi was the ruler of the province of Uśīnara. He protected a pigeon who had surrendered to him by offering his own flesh to a hawk.

॥ 1.12.21 ॥

dhanvinām agrāṇī eṣa
tulyaś cārjunayor dvayoḥ
hutāśa iva durdharaḥ
samudra iva dustaraḥ

He is the best of archers (**eṣah dhanvinām agrāṇī**) like Arjuna and Kārtavīrya (**arjunayor dvayoḥ tulyah**), is intolerable as fire (**hutāśa iva durdharaḥ**) and is insurmountable as the ocean (**samudra iva dustaraḥ**).

- The two Arjunas are the son of Pṛthā and Kārtavīrya-arjuna.

॥ 1.12.22 ॥

mṛgendra iva vikrānto
niṣevyo himavān iva
titikṣur vasudhevāsau
sahiṣṇuḥ pitarāv iva

He is as courageous as a lion (**mṛgendra iva vikrāntah**), honored like the Himālayas (**niṣevyo himavān iva**), tolerant like the earth (**asau titikṣuh vasudhā iva**) and patient like a mother and father (**sahiṣṇuḥ pitarāv iva**).

- The earth, though all-enduring, does not experience the pain of others' sharp words.
- But he, even though sometimes experiencing that pain, will still not react. The example for that is the patience or tolerance of the parents.

॥ 1.12.23 ॥

pitāmaha-samaḥ sāmye
prasāde giriśopamaḥ
āśrayaḥ sarva-bhūtānām
yathā devo ramāśrayaḥ

He is impartial to all beings like Yudhiṣṭhira (**pitāmaha-samaḥ sāmye**), easily satisfied like Śiva (**prasāde giriśopamaḥ**), and the shelter of all living beings (**āśrayaḥ sarva-bhūtānām**) like Nārāyaṇa (**yathā devo ramāśrayaḥ**).

- Pitāmaha is Yudhiṣṭhira. Sāmye means that he has hatred for no one. Ramāśrayaḥ (shelter of Lakṣmī) means Nārāyaṇa.

|| 1.12.24 ||

sarva-sad-guṇa-māhātmye
eṣa kṛṣṇam anuvrataḥ
rantideva ivodāro
yayātir iva dhārmikaḥ

He is famous for all good qualities like Kṛṣṇa (**sarva-sad-guṇa-māhātmye eṣa kṛṣṇam anuvrataḥ**), generous like Rantideva (**rantidevah iva udārah**), and a follower of dharma like Yayāti (**yayātir iva dhārmikaḥ**).

- In this verse they make one object of comparison with all the qualities.
- He is equal to Kṛṣṇa in being glorious with all good qualities

|| 1.12.25-26 ||

**dhṛtyā bali-samaḥ kṛṣṇe prahrāda iva sad-grahaḥ
āhartaiṣo 'śvamedhānām vṛddhānām paryupāsakaḥ**

**rājarṣiṇām janayitā śāstā cotpatha-gāminām
nigrahītā kaler eṣa bhuvo dharmasya kāraṇāt**

He is as determined as Bali (**dhṛtyā bali-samaḥ**), is absorbed in the most excellent Kṛṣṇa (**sad-grahaḥ kṛṣṇe**), like Prahlāda (**prahrāda iva**). He will perform horse sacrifices (**eṣa aśvamedhānām āharta**) and respect elders (**vṛddhānām paryupāsakaḥ**). He will have wise kings for descendents (**rājarṣiṇām janayitā**), will punish those who deviate from the law (**śāstā ca utpatha-gāminām**), and will punish Kali (**nigrahītā kaler eṣa**) in order to produce dharma on the earth (**bhuvo dharmasya kāraṇāt**).

- Sad-grahaḥ means “he accepts most excellent.” Having spoken of Parīkṣit’s qualities, they then describe his activities.

|| 1.12.27 ||

takṣakād ātmano mṛtyum
dvija-putropasarjitāt
prapatsyata upaśrutya
mukta-saṅgaḥ padam hareḥ

Hearing (**upaśrutya**) that he will be killed by Takṣaka (**takṣakād ātmano mṛtyum**) who was dispatched by a brāhmaṇa's son (**dvija-putra upasarjitāt**), detached from all things (**mukta-saṅgaḥ**), he will worship the feet of the Lord (**hareḥ padam prapatsyata**).

|| 1.12.28 ||

jijñāsītātma-yāthārthyo
muner vyāsa-sutād asau
hitvedam nṛpa gaṅgāyām
yāsyaty addhākutobhayam

O King (**nṛpa**)! Having discerned the truth about the Lord (**jijñāsita ātma-yāthārthyo**) from the son of Vyāsa (**muner vyāsa-sutād**), giving up his body on the bank of the Gaṅgā (**hitvā idam gaṅgāyām**), he will certainly attain the Lord (**yāsyaty addhā akutobhayam**).

|| 1.12.29 ||

iti rājña upādiśya
viprā jātaka-kovidāḥ
labdhāpacitayaḥ sarve
pratijagmuḥ svakān gṛhān

Informing the king in this manner (**iti rājña upādiśya**), all the brāhmaṇas, expert in astrology (**viprā jātaka-kovidāḥ**), after being worshipped (**labdhā apacitayaḥ**), returned to their houses (**pratijagmuḥ sarve svakān gṛhān**).

॥ 1.12.30 ॥

sa eṣa loke vikhyātaḥ
parīkṣid iti yat prabhuḥ
pūrvam dr̥ṣṭam anudhyāyan
parīkṣeta nareṣv iha

Because (**yat**) he constantly remembered the Lord whom he had seen in the womb (**prabhuḥ pūrvam dr̥ṣṭam anudhyāyan**) and searched for him (**parīkṣeta**) among all men (**nareṣv iha**), he was famous as Parīkṣit in this world (**parīkṣid iti loke vikhyātaḥ**).

- The name Parīkṣit is explained. Remembering the person he had seen in the womb, he pondered “Is this the person or not?” in all the people he saw (nareṣu iha).
- Pūrvā-dr̥ṣṭam instead of pūrvam dr̥ṣṭam is also seen.

|| 1.12.31 ||

sa rāja-putro vavṛdhe
āśu śukla ivodupah
āpūryamāṇah pitṛbhiḥ
kāṣṭhābhir iva so 'nvaham

Just as the waxing moon grows daily (śukla uḍupah iva anvaham) in phases to become the full moon (kāṣṭhābhir), the prince (sah rāja-putrah) quickly grew (āśu vavṛdhe), nourished by his parents (āpūryamāṇah pitṛbhiḥ).

- Just as the moon increases during the waxing phase and becomes full by the succeeding digits, being surrounded by the directions (kāṣṭhābhiḥ), Parīkṣit grew by the care and affection, being surrounded by his parents.

|| 1.12.32 ||

yakṣyamāṇo 'śvamedhena
jñāti-droha-jihāsayā
rājā labdha-dhano dadhyau
nānyatra kara-daṇḍayoḥ

Yudhiṣṭhira, desiring to rid himself of sin incurred by killing relatives (**jñāti-droha-jihāsayā**) by performing a horse sacrifice (**yakṣyamāṇo 'śvamedhena**), began to consider (**dadhyau**) whether there was an alternative to force or tax (**na anyatra kara-daṇḍayoḥ**) to attain wealth for the sacrifice (**rājā labdha-dhano**).

- He considered that there was no alternative to taxes or force, because it was necessary to have abundant wealth for the sacrifice.

॥ 1.12.33 ॥

tad abhipretam ālakṣya
bhrātaro 'cyuta-coditāḥ
dhanam prahīṇam ājhrur
udīcyām diśi bhūriśaḥ

Understanding his intention (**tad abhipretam ālakṣya**), his brothers, inspired by Kṛṣṇa (**bhrātaro acyuta-coditāḥ**), brought abundant wealth (**bhūriśaḥ dhanam ājhrur**) cast off from the sacrifice of King Marutta (**prahīṇam**) in the northern direction (**udīcyām diśi**).

- They brought gold vessels cast off (prahīṇam) from Marutta's performance of sacrifice.

॥ 1.12.34 ॥

tena sambhṛta-sambhāro
dharma-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
vājimedhais tribhir bhīto
yajñaiḥ samyajad dharim

Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma (**dharma-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ**), collecting the ingredients for sacrifice by that wealth (**tena sambhṛta-sambhāro**), worshipped the Lord (**samyajad dharim**) by three horse sacrifices (**tribhir vājimedhaiḥ yajñaiḥ**) since he feared the sin of killing relatives (**bhītaḥ**).

|| 1.12.35-36 ||

āhūto bhagavān rājñā yājayitvā dvijair nṛpam
uvāsa katicin māsān suhṛdām priya-kāmyayā

tato rājñābhyanujñātaḥ kṛṣṇayā saha-bandhubhiḥ
yayau dvāravatīm brahman sārjuno yadubhir vṛtaḥ

Kṛṣṇa (**bhagavān**), called there by Yudhiṣṭhira (**rājñā āhūtaḥ**), had the King perform the sacrifice (**yājayitvā nṛpam**) with brāhmaṇas (**dvijair**), and stayed there for some months (**uvāsa katicin māsān**) to satisfy his friends (**suhṛdām priya-kāmyayā**).

Taking the permission of the king (**tato rājñā abhyanujñātaḥ**), Draupadī and other friends (**kṛṣṇayā saha-bandhubhiḥ**), he then departed for Dvārakā (**yayau dvāravatīm**) with Arjuna, surrounded by the Yadus (**sārjuno yadubhir vṛtaḥ**).