

## CHAPTER III

### CANTO WISE SUMMARY OF THE EPIC

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, it functions as a necessary prelude to the following chapters by providing a canto-by-canto summary of the epic poem. The summary below draws attention to several key points and poetic techniques of the epic poem.

#### SUMMARY OF 1<sup>st</sup> CANTO

The first canto is aptly titled *Jananīviyoga* (*the separation from mother*) by Dr. Hari Narayan Dikshit as there is the separation of Gaṅgā (mother of Bhīṣma-Devavrata) from her husband Śāntanu as well as from the son Devavrata. The poet begins the first canto of the epic with 05 benedictory verses of Goddess Pārvatī, Lord Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Goddess Sarasvatī. The poet indebts his entire venture merely to Lord Kṛṣṇa saying, “I am not capable to do so, this is merely the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” Hence, he expresses his reverence to Lord. Further he expects the name and fame in this world as a result of composing this epic poem. He also bows down to the great poet and sage Vyāsa for his guidance in composing this epic. In this canto, there is the description of India of that time. The poet glorifies our nation India by saying that my grand nation India is shining on the earth. He portrays India as the prosperous, ever growing and large country in the world. Further there is the mention of the names of rivers like Yamunā, Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, Godāvarī, Sarayū and Narmadā which fulfill the wishes of people. The names of the cities like *Kāśī*, *Mathurā*, *Gayā*, *Ayodhyā*, *Ujjain*, *Prayāgarāja*, *Kāñcī* and *Badarikāśrama* are also mentioned as removing the physical, divine and corporeal distress of the people. In such holy and sacred nation *viz.*, India the king Śāntanu ruled *Hastināpura* in *Dvāparayuga*. He was the son of king Pratīpa. He was a great warrior and famous for his wisdom. He was ruling the great *Kuru* kingdom with fraternal solicitude, at

the same time with iron hands. The kingdom of the *Kuru* king Śāntanu was a symbol of prosperity.

Further, there is the description of nice and tactful ruling. People lived without fear and insecurity under his ruling. They all lived happily. He loved his people as his own children, and they loved him as their own father. There was harmony in everyone's life. There was no corruption in his administration. Everyone was literate and living happy life. In his rein, Brahmins were always busy in learning the scriptures, *Kṣatriyas* were always busy in protecting the nation, *Vaiśyas* were always busy in farming, trading etc.; and *Śudras* were happily serving the people. Men were not harassing women. The teachers were honestly teaching their students. They were neither involving nor motivating students for any kind of wrong deed. The specifications of rules and regulations made by king Śāntanu were very apt. He was possessed of irrepressible valour, war-plans, quadripartite army and unbiased strategies; and thus the other kings of neighboring states have also accepted his sovereignty. He became the sovereign king of the entire India covering the places like *Kāśī*, *Kaśmīr*, *Cedi*, *Aṅga*, *Vaṅga*, *Āndhra*, *Vidarbha*, *Karṇāṭaka*, *Kerala* etc. He was well honoured everywhere. Business and commerce, peace and prosperity, art and literature were all at their peak during his rule. In his ruling people started living in pomp. People of his kingdom were happy, but he was not happy within as he has lost his beautiful and beloved wife Gaṅgā. As his beloved wife gave birth to a bright son like Vasu, she started having pain after delivering the son. She then realized that she would not be able to live long then. Thus she gave her son into the hands of king Śāntanu and asked him to take care of their son. She blessed her son to be an undefeated warrior and a great archer. The king consoled her saying that the expert doctors would remove all her pain and make her healthy. He tried a lot to convince her by saying that no one can separate them from each other. He also tempted her by saying that their child

is also constantly looking at her face. But he failed. His beloved wife breathed her last. The king fell into the deep ocean of sorrows. The sorrow of losing her was haunting the king. At last he realized the fact and thus saw the beautiful form of his dearest wife in the tender body of his son. This way he like a drowning man hoped to save his life by catching a bit of the stalk of grass in water.

### SUMMARY OF 2<sup>nd</sup> CANTO

The second canto viz. *Vidyāprāpti* (*the acquirement of learning*) begins with a deep sorrow of king Śāntanu on wife Gaṅgā's demise. On preacher's advice he completes the cremation ceremony of his wife and after that he organizes a small function to celebrate his son's birth. On this occasion the king experiences the mixed feelings of happiness for celebration of son's birth as well as sorrow of losing his beloved wife. God is having so powerful might of will that he gives pain and happiness simultaneously which is again proved in king Śāntanu's case. God separated the king from his wife Gaṅgā, seized away the mother's love from the newly born king's son and this way He harassed an innocent person. It gives great grief to the mind. It proves the fact that the humans are indeed puppets in the hands of Lord.

The king anyhow becomes steady by accepting the death of his beloved wife. Then he concentrates his mind on caring and bringing up of his young child. He arranges young cow's milk for the physical growth of his tender child. He also appoints *Brāhmin* ladies for caring the child. From the view point of politics the king was offering plenty of money sometimes individually and sometimes collectively to those ladies and keeping satisfied by honouring them as they were involved in the bringing up of the child. He appoints trained doctors to take care of the child. He shows his son to the doctors in front of his eyes only and is getting the news of the welfare of his son directly. He also keeps an eye on the activities of those with the intrinsic

desire to know about the welfare of his son. He offers good amount of money to all of them who were caring for the child. Besides this, he devotes himself to Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu day and night for the welfare of his child. In this context he also offers donations to the needed and fulfills the desires of people. On the advice of astrologers at the auspicious time of the day, king names the child Devavrata. Devavrata though deprived of mother's love (but reared carefully by the king) grows up quickly like a moon during the bright fifteen days. He never cries nor does he obstinate for anything but keeps on smiling and growing. In few days he becomes able to laugh, speak and walk. The prince is trying to catch the shadow of own as the floor is very clean, bright and reflective like a mirror, but fails in holding the shadow. This way he gives joy and happiness to the king and all present in the palace with his childish behaviour and innocent acts. He plays with domestic peacocks and swans happily. Thus he slowly grows to the age of five years. At this stage through sweet sentences he shows his wealth of speech. Understanding the time to begin with the education of a son, king appoints scholar teachers with handsome remuneration and full facility of lodging, fooding and servants for them to teach the child. Everyday all the teachers start imparting on him, who is eager to study, their specialised knowledge of the subject serially and properly. They explain him the special knowledge of sentence and its meaning, different arts of sentence-structure and different kinds of *Yoga-vidyā* resulting in the physical growth as well as the strength in body. They teach him the Vedas, Holy Scriptures, handling of arms, the science of politics, humanity, modesty, war strategy and popular equity. They also teach him system of public governance, sense of devotion without any laziness towards parents, warfare, control of sense organs etc. The prince, keeping sense of devotion towards teachers and always studying sincerely, also keeps on growing physically as well as educationally. Thus, teachers train Devavrata with their best of knowledge. At the end of their teaching, they bless the child a very bright future with fame on earth.

Having seen the good qualities being developed in the prince, all the teachers become happy. All the teachers, having understood prince Devavrata as endowed with all learning and fulfilled with all specialties, think of celebrating attractive convocation ceremony on the completion of his training. They report to the king that Devavrata deserves success with his ardent devotion and sacrifice. They propose to the king for arranging convocation ceremony of the child. The king Śāntanu, having heard this auspicious and pleasant thought of teachers, having understood own cherished desires being successful and bathing in an unparalleled sea of happiness, makes an arrangement for the function.

### SUMMARY OF 3<sup>rd</sup> CANTO

With the third canto *viz. Dikṣāntasamāroha (the convocation ceremony)* starts the convocation ceremony of the prince Devavrata in an extremely large auditorium which has been well decorated. In this ceremony delegates come from different states and reside in a decorated royal assembly. The landlords of all the states are also seated there. The smoke flowing like the azure waves of the river Yamunā in the incensory of an incense stick satisfies the noses of the people sitting in the hall. As all the members and invited guests are waiting for the beginning of the function, there enters king in the assembly hall with the teachers following him in a queue. All the members and guests sitting in the hall invite and honour them by standing up and look at them eagerly. The procession entering slowly-slowly has been very fascinating to the mind of the poet. All the teachers walking slowly and respectably reach on the stage and sit on their respective golden chairs. After the *Maṅgalācaraṇa* and the prayer to goddess Sarasvatī, the king stands up from his seat and gives a welcome speech.

He thanks all the teachers who helped the king by teaching and giving the best of the knowledge to Devavrata. He utters the importance of a teacher in the development of a society and offers his utmost respect to all the teachers. He says that the teachers are really worthy of worship on this earth. If they are not there on the earth, then the path of virtue will become extinct. He shares his idea of an ideal society that can be developed only through good teachers. At last, he requests the chief of all the teachers to deliver his speech.

The chief teacher *viz.* Sarvācārya offers his blessings to Devavrata and advises him to follow the path of truth. He urges him to perform his duty without fail as well as to practise the subjects which he has studied. He even preaches him to respect parents, teachers and all by learning good qualities from them and neglecting their drawbacks. He further says that if he betrays his father by grabbing his property, then, he will become the cause of the destruction of his family.

He even advises him to invite the guests and to welcome them well because it is the highest form of worship of God. He asks him to practise the subjects again and again which he has studied. Because the knowledge of weapons and scriptures are not recalled in times of need if not practised again and again. He further advises him to consider mother, father and teacher worthy of worship like Br̥haspati, the teacher of Gods and advises him to be obedient to them always. He also advises him to welcome the guests like Gods, to be compassionate towards miserable, to be modest while donating the needy people and to make efforts for the development of humanity. He denies him from wickedness and company of wicked people by telling him that a person fostering wickedness gets trapped in an affliction with the wicked persons. He refuses him from secularism, castism and different dogmas by telling him that a nation immediately becomes weak when it falls

in the traps of controversies. At last he concludes his speech by offering him a following dictum; “*jīva jīvaya*” “*live and let others live too*”.

Listening to this, Devavrata stands up at last and declares his sincere vow of following all the teachings. All the members become happy on hearing the sentimental speech of the prince and thus welcome his vow with great applaus. Then the king Śāntanu, getting extremely happy in his mind, thanks all with sweet and gentle words. On its completion the chief-minister of the king invites all for their love-feast (banquet). This way the ceremony gets over with royal meal.

### SUMMARY OF 4<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The fourth canto is titled *Viśiṣṭaguruprāpti* (the acquirement of a special teacher). It starts with Devavrata’s happy and joyous residing with his father Śāntanu in the palace. As he has learnt all *vidyās* just in 12 years, Śāntanu becomes relaxed. Prince Devavrata in a very short time establishes the sense of respect and decorum in the form of good conduct of a son towards his father by expressing his faith, respect, honour and affection towards his father. People see a wonderful matching of character, might and beauty in him. They observe the union of the three qualities viz., character, valour and beauty in him; and thus they understand themselves and their country secure and brighter. The king feels proud of his son’s expertise in politics, war-games and ruling of a nation. He becomes happy with his son’s popularity and noble speech on earth.

One day prince’s teacher and an expert archer sage Devala come to meet the king Śāntanu. Having stood up, the king bows him down, asks him to sit on the seat and having known all about his welfare asks the purpose of his arrival there. The sage says him a bitter truth that Devavrata is not a complete archer and he needs higher training in this field. For this he

suggests sage Paraśurāma's name as he is the only superior and mighty archer on earth. Śāntanu agrees with the sage Devala's suggestion and bows his head down to him.

Next day Śāntanu discusses the same matter with Devavrata. He becomes so happy after hearing it that he asks and prays his father to send him quickly to the sage Paraśurāma and happily agrees to depart from the palace. The king asks sage Devala for an auspicious time for his departure. At auspicious time, he departs in his chariot. He passes through the forest and reaches near the mountain Mahendra. The creepers, having the mouth like a flower, the breasts like fruits, the hair like bees, bent by the air-current and wearing *sārī* like delicate leaves, (there) bow down to the prince like the maids of the royal palace. There he observes that no tree is devoid of branches on that mountain; nor any branch is devoid of flowers; nor any flower is devoid of fruits; nor any fruit is devoid of taste. The prince's mind is pleased by looking those trees completely grown there. Then he sees a beautiful river with clean water which was flowing near by that mountain. He takes bath in it and gets relaxed. Understanding the possibility of the sage Paraśurāma's hermitage to be nearby only, he leaves the chariot and sends it back along with its charioteer. Then he walks on his feet. He passes through the mountain Mahendra. None of the trees on the mountain is branchless. He feels like they all are welcoming him there as peacocks welcome him with their dance. By walking forward he suddenly sees a beautiful and natural lake, and drinks its cold and scented water; and touches it again and again. After this looking here and there, Devavrata sees a beautiful hermitage like *Kāmadhenu* fulfilling his desire on the west cost of that beautiful lake. He walks to that direction with the delighted mind thinking that this hermitage is indeed that of sage Paraśurāma only. By reaching there he sees an ascetic, bright like Lord Śaṅkara, sitting under the tree near the hermitage and holding a bow and a spade. That intelligent prince bows him down with



devotion thinking him surely to be sage Paraśurāma by looking at his dress-code; and tells him his desire after introducing himself when being asked by him. He becomes very happy at the sight of sage Paraśurāma. Hence, he reaches to the sage Paraśurāma and declares his desire of learning the higher training of archery to him. The sage Paraśurāma too becomes happy on prince by hearing his words of devotion towards him and thus agrees to teach him the science of archery. The prince Devavrata becomes extremely happy on hearing his words. He assumes this auspicious moment as the result of his merits of previous birth. At this moment of union between obedient disciple and an appropriate teacher, the gods of the space appreciate again and again the Lord of the world for such a nice union.

### SUMMARY OF 5<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The fifth canto viz. *Divyāstraprāpti* (the acquirement of divine weapons) starts with the beginning of Paraśurāma's training of archery to Devavrata. As an auspicious mark of beginning, the sage firstly bestows on prince the training of how to target, how to drive, how to divert and how to understand magnificence of “*Gaṇeśāstra*”. Then he teaches him the ‘*Śaktibāṇa*’ to Devavrata by which Goddess Dūrgā has destroyed the frightful demons named Śumbha and Niśumbha and which cannot be stopped from the destruction of enemy troops. Then he serially teaches him “*Varuṇāstra*” by operating which raining starts heavily and terribly on opponent troops; “*Samīraṇāstra*” by operating which there raises a storm and it can destroy the elephant-troops and horse-troops of opponent army; “*Sarpāstra*” by operating which there starts the rain of serpents on enemy army; “*Mayūrāstra*” by employing which the ‘*Sarpāstra*’ is pacified; “*Niśāstra*” by operating which there becomes the night destroying the strength of birds, even during the day; “*Aindavāstra*” which removes the darkness; “*Āgneyāstra*” which was made by Lord Agni in ancient time and which is capable of burning enemies to ashes; “*Aindrāstra*” by operating which the

arrows like that of *vajra* of Indra forcibly start falling and piercing the bodies of the enemies; “*Vaiṣṇavāstra*” the use of which is known for oppressing the enemies and by operating which the arrows like that of disc start moving in all directions and cut the enemies from all sides; “*Yamāstra*” which is the destroyer of the society; “*Rudrāstra*” which gives victory and by operating which the enemies are indeed defeated in war and lastly the mightiest “*Brahmāstra*” which is the last arch to learn and to which all the gods and demons pay their homage. As clean and clear mirror reflects speedily, so Devavrata’s mind too grasps all these learning speedily. They respect each other from heart. Devavrata works very hard, practises the *mantras* well and thus becomes competent like his teacher.

Then the sage Paraśurāma gives him valuable advice. He says that there is no doubt about Devavrata’s complete learning of archery as he is satisfied by his service. He advises him to serve his father constantly because he is wifeless. Further he asks him to follow the path of justice and righteousness. He also asks him to protect those females who ask for their protection; those who are poor, miser and distressed as well as wise people. He should even never do such activities through which his teacher’s name is calumniated. Further he says that the wealth, strength and certain knowledge of noble persons is always used in good deeds. In the society those are considered to be virtuous deeds which are humane in true sense. He blesses him a great success and fame while serving people of the kingdom. Devavrata replies that he is obliged for his training in archery. He finds himself incapable of offering proper return gift to Paraśurāma and begs pardon. At that moment the sage Paraśurāma says that he is satisfied with his service and there is no need to offer a gift. He lastly advises him not to see fault in himself too. He allows him to leave the hermitage and commands him to serve his father in the palace. Devavrata falls in a great dilemma of serving father as well as serving teacher at the same time which is not possible. At last with great

sacrifice he leaves hermitage and reaches palace to serve father. With the mind tide by the wishes of seeing his father, the prince Devavrata by bowing down to his teacher sage Paraśurāma with tears in his eyes anyhow steps out of the hermitage.

### SUMMARY OF 6<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The sixth canto viz. *Dhanurvedyāprāpti* (the acquirement of the art of archery) starts with the spy's message to the king Śāntanu that of completion of Devavrata's training in archery and his departure to return to the palace during late evening. Listening to this mind-pleasing message from the spy, the king becomes so happy that he gives away his necklace to him in gift. He then starts planning to welcome him warmly.

He orders his servant to light up lamps everywhere, gives his silky shawl in a gift and goes to bow-down *Kuladevi*. While returning to bed, Śāntanu remembers his wife. In the special condition of happiness and sorrow, a person as much remembers his beloved wife, as not his son nor daughter; not his brother nor sister; and not his mother nor father. At that time the Goddess of sleep arrives there and he gets slept into her lap. Next-day, in the royal court he announces to all about the return of his son in the city after his training. Further he says that right now he is on the way with the dignity a prince deserves. But I have the information that he will surely arrive at Hastināpura in five days. Thus he asks them to decorate their houses, roads, city etc. and assures them that all the expenses for this should be born from the royal treasure. He says that even outside the city he should be greeted beautifully and auspiciously and thus orders immediately to prepare for the welcome function of the prince. His chief minister assures the king about the whole preparation and camps a tent in the outset of the city to welcome Devavrata.

The next-day all people start waiting since morning to see him. The prince Devavrata arrives and people warmly welcome him by singing his glory and shouting slogans like ‘May prince be victorious one’, ‘May prince live long’. The Chief-minister, Commander-in-chief, Brahmins and all people welcome and greet him on his successful training. The mind of prince Devavrata becomes extremely happy on seeing him so greeted. He thanks all of them and joins his own welcome banquet organised by the minister to celebrate his success. Then he walks on the main road of the city to reach the palace. People stand at both the side of the road to see him. Even women become crazy to have a look of the prince and then happily shower on him, the flowers, parched pappies and the lotuses in the form of lamp-black eyes while singing heart-ravishing welcome songs like celestial damsels. Girls become mad after him. The prince Devavrata moving ahead, bowing down to all the people and accepting their good wishes, has become the abode of the eyes of women.

The prince Devavrata reaches to an entry gate of the royal palace and the king welcomes his son by standing up from own royal seat. As soon as the prince sees the face of his father, he immediately, leaving aside the chariot and running towards him, puts his head in the feet of his father. Immediately the king raises him up and hugs him. They both enter into the royal assembly being greeted by Brahmins, royal officers and girls. The orators give their best speeches describing him as the best archer and predict the future of the nation and its people safe and secure like that in the present.

On the command of the king Śāntanu, prince gives a very gentle speech and says that he is indebted to his father for all his success because without the merits of his father he could not have succeeded. He thanks all his country people too and assures them security from his side. Then the king Śāntanu speaks few words of thanks to all. Lastly, he declares his wish of

consecrating his trained son as a prince. After that the king Śāntanu having asked to an astrologer declares an auspicious date and time also; having invited all the court members for food, and having thanked them all, he disperses that royal gathering. All present in the assembly accept this wish of the king Śāntanu with loud applaud. Then the king Śāntanu alongwith the prince and all people enters into a variously decorated canopied for a meal like Lord Indra.

### SUMMARY OF 7<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The seventh canto *viz. Vanavihāra (wandering in the forest)* starts with an auspicious day of coronation ceremony. The elegance of the royal palace becomes more and more attractive; and by looking at its beauty even the craft of gods is blushed. People decorate the city again and collect water from different pilgrims, rivers, seas etc. Indra and other gods come there to see the ceremony. The king Śāntanu coronates his son with Vedic-lore and becomes happy. At that time the slogans like ‘May prince Devavrata be victorious one’; ‘May king Śāntanu be victorious’ are repeatedly heard. Indra is pleasantly surprised to experience the sense of respect in the minds of the subjects for their king Śāntanu. All the gods too become happy on seeing themselves being worshipped; and therefore they all make the prince Devavrata prosperous by blessing on him. All the subjects have gathered happiness. Meanwhile the reminiscence of his wife appears in his mind and he becomes sad.

The king Śāntanu, experiencing solitude in the palace due to his mind fixed in the recollection of his beloved and being allured by the fragrance of a spring season, thinks of wandering in the forest to entertain his mind. The forest is said to be a pleasant abode of absent-minded persons. The king does not take his army or any bodyguard or any servant. The king informs his lonely departure into the forest to the prince and chief-minister only. In the

forest he wanders unhappily. He becomes angry on seeing the bees humming on the flowers of the creepers and he thought of punishing them like that of scoundrels teasing noble girls. Even the cooing of cuckoos, humming of honey-bees and fragrance of lotuses cannot make him happy. He accidentally reaches to the bank of the river of Yamuna of unsullied water. That auspicious Yamuna river, with her waves arisen like hands and with the sound of birds, welcomes the king Śāntanu. There he smells some peculiar, uncommon still mind-pleasing fragrance and thus starts walking on the bank of the river Yamuna in search of a source of that fragrance thinking ‘From where does this fragrance emanate?’ There he finds an extremely beautiful lady Satyavatī sitting in her boat. They look at each other and fall in love at first sight. The extremely charming fragrance of that lady has doubled the beauty present in the mind of that king. Thus, he proposes Satyavatī. Satyavatī accepts his love but shows her limitation. She suggests him to ask her father. The king Śāntanu approaches Dāśarāja, the father of Satyavatī and asks for Satyavatī’s hand. He agrees to do so on one condition that the son of his daughter Satyavatī will become the prince and not Devavrata. He says that if he does not accept this condition, then he cannot have his daughter Satyavatī. This hurts the king. He cannot accept his love and cannot leave his son too. The king replies him that he will not assassinate the human-values to provide happiness to this momentary body. Satyavatī also tries to convince her father but she fails. Hence without accepting the condition, the king departs from that place and returns to the palace. Though the king Śāntanu has gone to the forest with a wish to have peace of mind but being more agitated, he returns to the royal palace with unhappy and sad face.

### **SUMMARY OF 8<sup>th</sup> CANTO**

The eighth canto *viz. Viyogavarṇana* (the description of separation) starts with the king Śāntanu’s grief in the absence of Satyavatī. The love which

ends due to wife Gaṅgā's death again arises on his meeting with Satyavatī. He becomes unhappy seeing his bed without wife. He becomes more distressed and perplexed due to separation from his love, when the cloud is thundering slowly during the night as it is lightening in the sky. The sweet sound of the peacock also does not delight his mind nor the sky nor the earth nor the fragrance of flowers. All the means of happiness become the means of sorrow in separation from the beloved one.

The king Śāntanu's hands and legs become motionless, his speech becomes meaningless, the time of urine and excretion too gets disturbed and thus his whole body becomes weak. He, seeing the charming moon playing in the sky during the bright night of a month (*Purnimā*) and surrounded by the group of wives like stars, acquiring the love of Rohiṇī and roaming in the sky joyfully, starts feeling jealous for the moon. His eyes start being filled up by tears. He feels himself alone by looking at the pair of gods in the temple like Rāma-Sītā and so. He becomes more worried by the thought that a person without wife cannot perform any ritual also. The grasp of love due to Satyavatī becomes more powerful. His mind becomes sad and starts affecting his body. Ministers, servants and even Devavrata try to find its main cause and its solution, but in vain. Nobody truly understands the concept of king's fate. At this juncture, Devavrata tries to know more through secret means. Hence he appoints a spy and sends him in the direction where King Śāntanu has approached. An intelligent, steady and trustworthy spy reaches on the bank of the river Yamuna within a week. There he approaches a person looking very sad and indirectly asks him about the King. Luckily that person is the chieftain Dāśarāja, the father of Satyavatī. He gathers all the secret and relevant information from him and returns to Devavrata. Having heard father's unsuccessful love story, Devavrata keeps his head on job. He thinks for a long time and concludes that if he cannot satisfy his father's wishes, then his life is worthless. He

thinks that such a son like him is censured, whose father remains sad and unhappy day and night being devoid of pleasure of wife because of him. If he does not serve his father renouncing the greed for the kingdom, then the history (of the nation) will surely point him out as cruel and crooked one. Lastly, he, thinking and determining patiently, decides to abandon his princehood to get his father married with Satyavatī.

He immediately goes off to the forest with his spy and some ministers to ask for the hand of his father's beloved lady Satyavatī, the daughter of fisherman, for his father as his wife. For the sake of his father, that devoted son Devavrata, with a wish of making him happy, moves towards this path happily and with satisfaction. Nobody knows how fate works, as it happens with Devavrata.

### SUMMARY OF 9<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The ninth canto viz. *Bhīṣmapratijñāvarṇana* (the description of a terrible oath) starts with Satyavatī's misery. Satyavatī has never been happy since her separation from the king Śāntanu and blames her father for this act. Hence she stays at her father's place unhappily and starts being daunted. She keeps on recalling the king Śāntanu. She does not like worldly pleasures. She keeps on looking at the lake full of lotuses, the sky full of stars, the flowers with the bees and the creepers hanging on the trees, being emotional for a long; and this way she keeps on remembering her lover king Śāntanu. Being away from the lover she considers she-deer, she-swan, she-parrot and she-crane luckier than she as they are staying together. She becomes sad by looking at the moon and cloud. She becomes unaware about the cycle of day and night. She starts remaining tensed by thinking of the pain due to sensual pleasure of her lover again and again. Lady in love becomes sadder due to the pain of her lover than her own. She is not willingly getting engaged to remove his thirst and hunger. She is not remaining aware of the time of day



and night for thinking of her lover. Seeing such grieving condition of his daughter, even her father too becomes tensed and explains her to give up her belongingness for the king. Further he says that people like kings do not bother about their wives after marriage. Hence he suggests her to marry in own caste.

Satyavatī replies that his answer is not justifying. She thinks that in marriage social status is not important but important is their mutual understanding. She knows her disregard with her father's answer. Further she says that her mind in the form of a horse, which is thoughtful and always walking on a virtuous path, always runs after king Śāntanu; and in search of best amongst all people, her mind never stays with her for a moment. Listening to the firm determination of his daughter, the wrinkles of the forehead of fisherman are contracted. Meanwhile, Devavrata arrives there. Satyavatī and Dāśarāja welcome him. At that time, Satyavatī sees him like a son and a fisherman like an enemy; and therefore Satyavatī joyfully welcomes the prince with her blessings, but the fisherman only bends his head. Dāśarāja appropriately speaks few words of appreciation to Devavrata with his joined hands and says that his mind is not able to make any decision being agitated by the resolution and uncertainty of his arrival. Thus he asks Devavrata the reason of his arrival there. He replies that he wishes to make his father happy and that is the reason why he has come there. He asks for the hand of Satyavatī for his father and agrees to renounce his princehood as per the condition put by Dāśarāja.

At that time, the father of Satyavatī becomes happy on hearing the statement of Devavrata, the son of Gaṅgā. But he immediately becomes tensed. The mind of a greedy man is never steady. He doubts and clarifies that he may not have any kind of quarrel with his cousins as per the condition but his sons may have war with his daughter's sons. At that time you will be with

your sons and hence your sons will defeat my daughter's sons. Devavrata becomes angry, resolves that he will not marry being celibate and this way sacrifices his own marriage life for the sake of the future of his step-mother's generation. The earth starts trembling; the sky starts sparkling; and there spreads quietude in all the directions by listening to the horripilating and mind-pleasing pledge of Devavrata, the son of Gaṅgā. At that time, the mouths of Gods remain wide-open. The celestial women are too surprised; and they, showering the rain of flowers on Devavrata, speak, 'This prince is marvellous.' He takes such an ardent and difficult oath i.e. *Bhīṣma-pratijñā* since then he becomes famous as Bhīṣma.

All the gods present there bestow on him blessings. Even Dāśarāja bows down to him and offers his daughter to his father. After this, Satyawatī, who has devoted herself as the wife of king Śāntanu and therefore, becoming eager to serve him, bows down to the river Yamuna which is flowing there; and then she looks at her father despicably for a moment. Satyawatī scolds her father for the conditions made to Devavrata and hence projects her regret for father by offering ornaments and clothes to Dāśarāja. Devavrata takes Satyawatī to the palace.

### SUMMARY OF 10<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The tenth canto viz. *Vimātrulābhavarṇana* (description of obtainment of step-mother) starts with the king Śāntanu's satisfaction due to his son's sacrifice. Firstly he disagrees with his son's sacrifice as it gives pain to him. Devavrata says that he will get condemned if he becomes hindrance in his happiness; and there will be an end of son's duty towards his father in this world. Further he says that a son should also work for the sake of happiness of his father, as his father does it for son. It is his strong opinion that as clapping is not possible through one hand, similarly one-sided observance of duty does not give splendour in this world. Hearing these words of his son's

firm decision, the king Śāntanu later agrees with it and gives a boon of longevity at his will to his son Devavrata. People could not justify who is higher, whether Devavrata who sacrificed his married life or the king Śāntanu who has given out his entire “*Punyaphala*” to Devavrata.

The king Śāntanu accepts Satyavatī and they both start living married life. Therefore, they start taking bath in the sea of sexual enjoyment in different ways. They both get engaged in enjoying honeymoon. In these days, even God Indra and Goddess Indrāṇī get surprised after seeing their armorous sports. Kāmadeva and his wife Rati, residing in them, get very happy on them for their armorous sports; and they bestow on them their blessings while they have pleasure in a special way. As far as they experience the pleasure of armorous sport, in the same manner their sexual craving increases. By the provocation of sexual craving, the mind desires to have sex, and thus does not get away from sexual urges. As a result, this wheel of sexual craving and sexual enjoyment always keeps on moving in beings; and because of these two desires only this world is surviving. Both of them pass much time in experiencing sensual pleasure and they cannot understand it also. They forget their worldly existence and duties; and indulge themselves in heavenly pleasures. They experiment in this art of enjoyment.

### SUMMARY OF 11<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The eleventh canto is titled *Anujadvayalābhavarṇana* (*description of obtainment of two brothers*). It starts with Satyavatī's report of pregnancy. As a result, the beauty of her face gradually becomes like that of the lustre of soft saffron. All the parts of her body become indolent. She becomes disinclined towards the activity of armorous sport; and her interest increases in eating sour items. She starts growing well and her body parts start getting stretched. She gives up wearing ornaments as she carries valuable gem in her stomach. She becomes pink and attractive with happiness. Her buttocks

become heavy, her waist becomes plump; and the three wrinkles seen on her belly also disappear gradually. She becomes weighty.

Royal doctors also start supervising her; so that there does not occur any problem. They start visiting and checking her everyday. As womb gets on growing, Satyavatī's beauty also keeps on increasing. The king Śāntanu himself regularly takes the news of her health. As a result, she easily enters into the tenth month. Thus, she gives birth to a brilliant and charming boy at the time of an auspicious constellation (*Nakṣatra*) in the royal palace. Devavrata becomes happy at the news of his younger brother's birth. The king Śāntanu becomes so happy that he names him Citrāṅgada. People of Hastināpura too become happy with the news.

At the proper time the king sends him to teachers for his training and learning. Within a short span of 12 years he learns all “*Vidyās*”. He becomes expert in all Śāstras, in all arts, moral duties and humanity. With his all round training all become happy. Teachers organize his convention ceremony and send him back to the palace. After his arrival, Devavrata talks to his father Śāntanu about his giving princehood to Citrāṅgada. On an auspicious day, Devavrata happily gives away his prince hood to his younger brother Citrāṅgada. Citrāṅgada experiences great respect and honor. All become happy and joyous.

After sometime Satyavatī meets king Śāntanu during night, and becomes pregnant second time. She informs the king about her second pregnancy and the king becomes happy. Then she gives birth to a second lustrous son. The king is overjoyed with the news and having worshipped Lord Gaṇeśa and Goddess Gaurī, traditionally names him “*Vicitravīrya*”. Devavrata becomes very happy on getting Citrāṅgada and Vicitravīrya as his younger brothers. He starts believing both of them as his extra left and right hands. The king

sends the second son for his learning. In this way, the king Śāntanu of Kuru race acquires boundless happiness by experiencing good will amongst three sons. As a result, he becomes carefree from his sons. Thereafter, he, being motivated by queen Satyavatī, engages his mind in the service of Lord.

### SUMMARY OF 12<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The twelfth canto is named as *Vicitravīryavivāhavarṇana* (the description of marriage of Vicitravīrya). It starts with the king Śāntanu's detachment from worldly pleasures. The mental inclinations of the king Śāntanu gradually leaves running after their subjects. Now he is not experiencing happiness in any other activities other than serving the feet of Lord.

He calls Devavrata and gives his entire responsibility to him considering him the right person. He knows that Bhīṣma is only more prudent and considerable. He knows that Bhīṣma will execute his two younger brothers, his mother Satyavatī, race, people, state and country India according to the codes and conducts of their race. He assures his father by telling him that as long as he holds his life-breath, so long as he will always try for the growth of popularity of their race. Later on, one day Śāntanu passes away from this world.

Devavrata performs necessary rituals. Mother Satyavatī comes to him and asks him to be the king by taking prince hood from Citrāṅgada. Devavrata does not agree and says that Citrāṅgada will be the king. Citrāṅgada continues his princehood and defeats many kings in battle. He starts considering others of lower rank and becomes arrogant. One celestial king (Gandharvarāja) named Citrāṅgada comes and declares war with him. In this combat, Citrāṅgada, the son of king Śāntanu is defeated and is killed by celestial Citrāṅgada. Devavrata Bhīṣma, seeing this and having got angry, challenges that Gandharvarāja to fight a war with him. But he does not get ready to fight with him; and he immediately runs away to his *Yakṣaloka*.

Bhīṣma becomes very much sad on an accidental death of his younger brother; and makes the cremation of his dead body by understanding the will of an almighty God to be unavoidable. Thereafter, he, discussing with his mother Satyawatī, makes his second younger brother Vicitravīrya to be the king. Under the able guidance of Devavrata, Vicitravīrya again starts ruling the state.

After sometime, Bhīṣma, having seen the attractive state of youth of his younger brother king Vicitravīrya, thinks of his marriage. The king of Kāśī invites him for attending *Svayamvara* of his three daughters and he attends the royal assembly of the king of Kāśī to bring his three daughters viz. Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā for Vicitravīrya. Other princes and kings present there do not agree with Devavrata Bhīṣma's kidnapping of three princesses and hence declare war with him. He one by one defeats all the kings and finally takes three princesses to his palace for marriage with Vicitravīrya. The eldest princess Ambā disagrees for her marriage with Vicitravīrya as she is in love with king Śālva and hence tells the truth to Devavrata. He immediately arranges to send her back to king Śālva.

Then he organizes marriage ceremony of rest of the two princesses with Vicitravīrya. The prince Vicitravīrya becomes overjoyed by his marriage with two extremely beautiful princesses. He goes mad after them, gives up his duty and starts remaining absorbed always in sexual pleasure. Both the princess also become extremely happy on acquiring king Vicitravīrya as their husband. Thus, king Vicitravīrya of Bharata clan constantly starts wandering in an aphrodisiac boat.

### SUMMARY OF 13<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The thirteenth canto is named as *Pāṇḍava-Kauravakalahavarṇana* (the description of the cause of broil between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas). It starts

with Vicitravīrya's death due to tuberculosis. Satyawatī gets upset thinking herself to be the cause of all such calamities. She calls Devavrata Bhīṣma and forces to marry. He refuses to marry. Hence, she recalls her son Vedavyāsa and he appears there in front of her. She tells her own grief. Vyāsa solves her grief by calling Ambikā and Ambālikā to give them *Mantra-putras*. Ambikā gives birth to blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Ambālikā gives birth to Pāṇḍu and Ambikā's maid gives birth to Vidura.

Pāṇḍu becomes prince as Dhṛtarāṣṭra is blind. Dhṛtarāṣṭra gets married with Gāndhārī, Pāṇḍu gets married with Kuntī and Mādrī. Gāndhārī gives birth to 100 sons and one daughter. Kuntī gives birth to three sons *viz.* Yudhiṣṭira, Bhīma and Arjuna. Mādrī gives birth to two sons *viz.* Nakula and Sahadeva. While Vidura's wife also gives birth to many sons. Pāṇḍu passes away one day due to sage Kindama's curse. Mādrī also passes away after him. Then blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra becomes the king and Pāṇḍu's eldest son Yudhiṣṭira becomes prince. All Kauravas feel jealous for him. Hence, they plan to burn them alive in the fort of Vāraṇāvata. Vidura saves them and sends them to the forest.

Pāṇḍavas reach the Pāñcāla country. Arjuna wins Draupadī, the daughter of king Drupada, in her *Svayamvara*. At this venture, Arjuna fights with other kings including Kauravas. Draupadī becomes the common wife of all the five Pāṇḍava brothers. Knowing this fact, king Dhṛtarāṣṭra calls the Pāṇḍavas back to Hastināpura and gives *khāṇḍavaprastha* forest as their right in the parental property. Pāṇḍavas establish a beautiful and rich town in it and organize *Rājasūya-yajña*. By all this, Kauravas feel more jealous and wish to snatch that even. On Śakuni's advice, Duryodhana calls Pāṇḍavas to play the game of dice and defeats them by means of cheating. Pāṇḍavas play further and loose Draupadī too at last. Duḥśāsana insults her by bringing her in the royal court by snatching her hair and tries to open her clothes.

Duryodhana asks her to sit on his thighs. Lord Kṛṣṇa saves her and at this time Bhīma takes an oath to kill Duḥśāsana by breaking his chest and drinking his blood and to break Duryodhana's thighs. The atmosphere becomes terrible and hence Dhṛtarāṣṭra interferes in between and frees Draupadī by offering her a boon to ask for anything. In a boon, she frees her husbands. Dhṛtarāṣṭra returns them their property.

Duryodhana again plans to defeat them by going against parents opinion of not to play; and invites Pāṇḍavas to play the game of dice. He defeats them and sends them to the forest for thirteen years as per the new condition made by him. Till then he declares his right on their state. They complete twelve years in the forest and one year incognito. Still Duryodhana alleges them of finding in the last year at King Virāṭa's palace while abducting king's cows though their time of incognito was over. Recognising Pāṇḍavas, the king Virāṭa honours them by giving away his daughter Uttarā in marriage to Abhimannyu, the son of Arjuna. At this stage everyone tries to convince Duryodhana to return them their property. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa goes to him, but it goes in vain. Hence, Pāṇḍavas prepare for battle against Kauravas.

### SUMMARY OF 14<sup>th</sup> CANTO

The fourteenth canto is titled as *Bhīṣmaśaraśayyāvarṇana* (the description of Bhīṣma's bed of arrows). It starts with the battle between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. Duryodhana appoints the grandfather Bhīṣma as the commander-in-chief. He starts defeating Pāṇḍava-army soon. Even though old in age, he annihilates the troops of the Pāṇḍava army like a valiant youth. In such situation, steady and valiant Lord Kṛṣṇa who has become the charioteer of Arjuna thinks of crossing the boat of fate which is staggering in the sea of enemy troops (i.e. Kaurava troops). Even king Yudhiṣṭhira gets very worried by seeing the valour of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha; and he has believed that in the presence of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha in the battle-field, their victory is not possible.



Yudhistira approaches Bhīṣma at night during the time of rest on the ninth day of the war. And having bowed down respectfully, they ask Bhīṣma for the means of winning in the battle. Bhīṣma discloses his weakness of Śikhaṇḍī to him. He clarifies that Śikhaṇḍī, the son of king Drupada, was a daughter first. And before this, he was born in the form of daughter of Kāśīnareśa in his previous birth. Therefore, in his opinion Śikhaṇḍī is like a woman. Thus he says that he does not feel it appropriate to attack on Śikhaṇḍī even though he attacks on him. That Ambā, the daughter of Kāśīnareśa, is indeed born as Śikhaṇḍī in this birth with a wish of taking revenge from him assuming him as a culprit; he knows this secret. This is the reason why he keeps his bow down, whenever Śikhaṇḍī comes in front of him for fighting a war; and as long as he is in front of him in the battle-field, till then he stops fighting in the battle-field. At that time, if Arjuna attacks with the sharp arrows who has become slow and the valorous, then I shall surely fall from my chariot with a wish to have journey of the highest abode. At last he shows his desire to die in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa by telling Him that the death is waiting for him since last so many days. Śrīkṛṣṇa smiles by hearing the preachings of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha; Arjuna gets worried. Yudhiṣṭhira gets satisfied; and Bhīmasena becomes sad. Tranquil minded Yudhiṣṭhira, taking the grace of his delighted Grandsire and his permission, returns to their tent along with his brothers silently.

On the tenth day of the battle, in the morning time, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, having worshipped the almighty God and meditating upon his parents, starts thinking minutely. He condemns himself being under the food of Duryodhana that he is protecting him; and committing sinful deeds by punishing those Pāṇḍavas who are not deserving punishment. Thereafter, resolute and the chief amongst valiant Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, being strongly determined and by bringing his army for fighting his last battle, stands firm in the battle-field on its proper time. Meanwhile, Bhīṣma starts showering his arrows; as he is wishing to provoke Arjuna. Being scorched by the

shower of his arrows, the condition of the groups of soldiers of Pāṇḍavas gets like those of goats being perturbed by the heavy rain-fall. Archer Arjuna, seeing his own army being vanished by the shower of arrows of Bhīṣma, being motivated again and again by Lord Kṛṣṇa and understanding own duty as a warrior, comes by keeping Śikhaṇḍī in front of him. By looking at Śikhaṇḍī, Bhīṣma puts down his weapons and gets wounded by the arrows of Śikhaṇḍī and Arjuna on entire body. The warriors like Duḥśāsana etc. of Kaurava army try to save him as well as to kill Śikhaṇḍī and Arjuna alive by coming in front of them. Looking at this sight, the warriors of Pāṇḍava army like Bhīmasena etc. also come there to protect Arjuna. Then there starts a fierce battle amongst them for a long.

At that time, Bhīṣma injures the entire Pāṇḍava army through his arrows except Śikhaṇḍī. He pains archer Arjuna also very much who is protecting Śikhaṇḍī by an assault of his arrows together. Bhīṣma with the desire of passing away by seeing Arjuna who has got angry on him continues fighting in the war happily. Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding the mental emotion of Bhīṣma, asks Arjuna of displaying his valiance. By listening to the advice of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna diverting all his energy starts showering his sharp arrows fluently on every part of the body of Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma, tormenting all the warriors of Pāṇḍava army through his valiance the whole day, it is a matter of grief that, being pierced by the arrows of Arjuna in the evening, as a result being besmeared with the blood, falls on the battle-field. He could not touch the earth, since the arrows are noosed to each and every part of his body. As a result, he lays down on the bed of arrows only. Hearing the fall of Bhīṣma, everyone drops war and stands around him. He advises them to return to their tents and to take rest. He asks for his security in open field itself and starts worshipping Lord Sun for liberation.

## **SUMMARY OF 15<sup>TH</sup> CANTO**

The fifteenth canto is named as *Mahābhāratayuddhavarṇana* (*the description of Mahābhārata war*). Duryodhana appoints Droṇācārya as the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army on Karṇa's advice. Duryodhana does not accept the benevolent advice of not fighting a war and of returning to the Pāṇḍavas their right in share given by even his Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. Thus Duryodhana, submerged in unrighteousness, being protected by the commander-in-chief Droṇācārya, being enthusiastic with a wish of acquiring victory, comes in the battle-field for fighting a war by putting his life on stake.

The battle begins between both the Kaurava army and Pāṇḍava army; and there immediately starts a terrible fight of those both the armies, wishing victory of their respective party. The most surprising fact of this great battle is that a teacher attacks on his disciples, and disciples on their teacher, nephews attack on their maternal-uncles and maternal-uncles on their nephews, brothers attack on brothers and relatives on relatives fiercely. On the fifth day of the war, Droṇācārya is also killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of king Drupada of Pāñcāla country, and thus gives up his last breathe. Then Karṇa becomes the chief of the Kaurava army. In front of him only, Bhīmasena kills Duḥśāsana by breaking his chest and drinks blood to fulfil his previous oath.

The next day, Karṇa is also killed by the arrows of Arjuna. Hence, Duryodhana becomes more stressed. Kṛpācārya, seeing Duryodhana taking a long sigh again and again, trapped by difficulties and being grieved for all these warriors during night, consoles him and advises him not to fight more with Pāṇḍavas; and to compromise with them by returning their kingdom and property. Duryodhana does not listen to him and rejects his proposal. On the advice of Aśvatthāmā he appoints king Śalya, the king of Madra country as the commander-in-chief. In the battle field Yudhiṣṭhira kills him

immediately. Bhīma kills all the younger brothers of Duryodhana forcefully. Sahadeva kills Śakuni, the king of Gāndhāra country, with his arrows. Seeing all this, Duryodhana runs away and hides himself into the water of lake. Bhīma calls him out and fights with him. Then he breaks his both thighs.

At last moment also he does not leave his wickedness and shrewdness. He asks Aśvatthāmā to kill Pāṇḍavas. He goes and cuts down the heads of five sons of Pāṇḍavas while sleeping. Duryodhana becomes happy with this news and dies at last.

The next day morning resolute and valiant Pāṇḍavas, punishing even sinful Aśvatthāmā who has killed their sleeping sons, being completely victorious, by taking Lord Kṛṣṇa together, get present politely in front of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. By the preaching like water of Vedavyāsa and Śrīkṛṣṇa, the anger of Dhṛtarāṣṭra towards Pāṇḍavas is quenched; and ascetic mother Gāndhārī too becomes patient gradually. Thereafter, the funeral pyres of the warriors of both the armies who have got heroic end in the battle are set to the fire. The atmosphere of that place at that time becomes extremely full of pathos by the lamentation of their respective ladies. Thereupon, Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the chief of Pāṇḍavas, becomes patient by the advice of sages like Vedavyāsa etc. and Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa etc. As a result, after the war, he wishes for the prosperity and happiness of all the subjects by delivering the respective duties to his younger brothers for the better governance of that entire kingdom.

### SUMMARY OF 16<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The sixteenth canto is named as *Khedanirāsavarṇana* (the description of regret and despair). It starts with the victory of Pāṇḍavas over all the kings. Then they approach Grandfather Bhīṣma along with Lord Kṛṣṇa and bow

him down. Lord Kṛṣṇa removes the entire pain of his body by His *Yoga-vidyā*. Bhīṣma asks Lord Kṛṣṇa to pardon him as he has, being illusionised, attacked on his body who has ably drove the chariot of Arjuna, and fought the battle from the side of Duryodhana. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha further says that Pāṇḍavas have not committed any offence even by attacking on him in the Great War. Rather he has become an offender by disregarding their virtuous wife in the royal court. He says that he has surely made a great sin by neglecting that righteous lady who was being badly insulted by mean sinners like Duryodhana etc. in front of his eyes, trapped in the difficulty, and asking for his help to protect her from that difficulty. And again, he has protected those mean sinners only, insulting the female, in the battle. He expresses his feelings by telling that he is being scorched these days by remembering the fact that he has served that blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the giver of birth to the wicked sons like Duryodhana etc., and who has vanished his own intelligence in his bewilderment only. Further he says that he has committed even a greater offence than this once in his life. One girl Ambā by name, the daughter of Kāśinareśa, being insulted because of not accepted as a wife by his former enemy king Śālva, being motivated with revenge against him, and because of his ill-luck, goes to his revered teacher Paraśurāma with his complaints. Paraśurāma, with an intension of doing good of that girl, orders him to give up the vow of not marrying; puts a proposal of fighting in a war. He reveals his great sin of fighting with guru Paraśurāma who has given him the divine weapons. Lord Kṛṣṇa replies him that he is happy with his expiation. Lord further says that all his sins are expiated in this case as he has bowed down to his teacher before every fight with him.

At this moment Lord Kṛṣṇa consoles him saying that his grandsons Pāṇḍavas have come to see him and to beg pardon for their attack on him. Elder Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira asks him to forgive and to train him in his duty

as a noble king. Bhīṣma forgives him and asks him to rule the kingdom according to the code of conduct, rules and regulations. Then he asks him to ask questions arising in his mind.

### SUMMARY OF 17<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The seventeenth canto is named as *Rājadharmavarṇana* (*the description of general kingly duties*). Firstly Yudhiṣṭhira asks Bhīṣma about his duty as a king. Bhīṣma replies that his first duty as a king is to protect and nurture his people. A king should care for those who are to be protected, who are helpless, who are begging his forgiveness and who expect help from him. Further he suggests him to worship family deity and to spread spirituality in the kingdom. He asks to decide one kingdom language and to work scientifically. It is also the duty of a king that he always keeps ascetics, philosophers, scholars and wise people happy. A king should be truthful and propagate the truth amongst his subjects. He should wear proper clothes, and should always respect the culture of his kingdom. A king should always be very pure in his own conduct and should have transparency in his behaviour towards others. He should wear proper clothes, and should always respect the culture of own kingdom. And while making the justice, he should neither be soft nor very strict towards his subjects. He should be mild or fierce while giving justice following the rules of the science of punishment which are free from disputes. A king should quickly punish them who are culprits according to their crimes following the rules of royal values.

He suggests him to be neither too strict nor too liberal. Further he asks him to be hard working and noble by never depending on fate and becoming truth lover. He says that a king becomes popular when he puts his endeavour in the right direction and becomes successful in his efforts. He suggests appointing trustworthy and duty oriented ministers and servants in his kingdom. A king should not appoint those servants who are not devoted; and

he should never appoint fools as his servants. He should always appoint such servants who are having the combination of both devotion and intelligence. He should never disclose his political strategies, strengths and weakness to any person. A king should not collaborate with those people who pollute the ethics and workmanship. Apart from this, he should not have enmity with those who nurture ethics and workmanship. He should cultivate the positive thinking for the growth and development of the positive thoughts in his subjects. He should always think for the earning and welfare of people. He should never have any kind of addiction. He should appoint expert spies and have watch on every movement of the neighbouring states to protect the state. With the help of *Arthaśāstra*, he should generate flow of money so that he can help out business people well. He should build roads, bridges and provide better transportation facility to people. He should build temples, lakes, wells, gardens, etc. and should promote education for girls and all. He should never underestimate his enemy, disease, fire and wicked persons. A king should always think and work for *Yoga* and *Kṣema* of his nation and of the people of the nation. Thus, he commands Yudhiṣṭhira to rule the state with righteousness.

### SUMMARY OF 18<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The eighteenth canto is named as *Prajādharmavarṇana* (the description of duties of people-Prajādharmā). It starts with Bhīṣma's description of *Prajādharmā* on being asked by Yudhiṣṭhira. He says that king's first duty is to give safety, earning and happiness to the people. Without a king a nation looks like a widow and people cannot attain their four *Puruṣārthas*. Without a king any one's daughters, mothers, sisters and females cannot live with respect and happiness in their own houses. Without king the sense of peace and prosperity, humanity, nobility and venerability are indeed devoid of grace like a widow. And in the king's ruling all people directed to their duties properly as per four classes of caste-system and four hermitage

system, surely work with happiness and pride. Therefore all the subjects should be faithful to their king who provides them with all kinds of happiness. In the ancient time the sages have developed and laid down the codes of conduct. They should also co-operate the king by paying taxes, following the rules and by not giving bribe to anybody. All subjects are expected to have education and initiation on time. They should not be lazy in these tasks. All the children should study and train themselves with hard work. One should not marry till one completes own study, crosses the pre youth and starts earning. People should educate their daughters also. People should happily work hard for their livelihood. They should not get rid off from hard work. The saints have considered hard-work to be the main cause of prosperity. They should not ask for dowry nor disrespect any woman. Business people should not hike prices of daily goods and provisions to earn more, nor cheat people. All the farmers of the state leaving inferiority complex should always get engaged in farming with hard work, so that the common people do not have to suffer for grain. Teachers should teach right moral lessons. Officers should be smart and honest. All people should make their bodies sturdy and sound along with their spiritual development. Not only the study of scriptures protects the person, but sometimes the knowledge and practice of weapons also protect the person. All people including children to elders of all the castes and of all the hermitages together should expect the welfare of their king in return to their meritorious deeds.

Further they should physically, mentally and spiritually be strong. They should sacrifice their merit with regular Vedic rituals to uplift their king. A king, who protects Vedas and other scriptures, arranges education for all his subjects and nurtures teachers and students, acquires the merits of *brahmacarya-āśrama*. A king, who protects temples, pilgrims, ceremonies and refuge people; and who develops different sources of earning for his



subjects; who protects their families; and who motivates them to follow their duties; acquires the merits of *gr̥hastha-āśrama*. A king who always respects guests, daily actions, own hereditary, friends and noble people as well as protects mountains rivers, forests and people performing penance, acquires the merits of *vānaprastha-āśrama*. A king, having inclination towards knowledge, who protects the scholars of the Vedas and the ascetics wishing welfare of the society, acquires the merits of *sanyāsa-āśrama*.

These teachings of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, which were throwing light on the duties of a king and his subjects, were able to influence the mind of listeners; and which were very tranquil. This way he depicts *Prajādharmā* to be good amongst all *dharma*s and asks him to return the kingdom with the people to rule the country well.

### SUMMARY OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The nineteenth canto is named as *Mokṣadharmā-varṇana* (the description of *Mokṣadharmā*). When Yudhiṣṭhira approaches Bhīṣma Pitāmaha with the people and asks to show the path of salvation. Bhīṣma replies that there are many, but all do not get salvation. Not only theists, but atheists also reside on the earth that believe in worldly pleasures like liquor etc. and do not believe in salvation. Further there are some theists who believe in *dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* and but not in the *Mokṣa*. Some of theists are not eligible for salvation. Hence, few theists dare to walk on the path of salvation. Even well determined theists are rare to achieve salvation successfully. Those are really lucky who constantly walk on it and achieve it. In that salvation neither there is anxiety nor enmity nor jealousy nor partiality nor disrespect. Further there is neither pain due to birth nor sorrow of death nor fear of death nor doubt of back biting nor treachery nor difficulty in earning. There is neither self interest nor indent nor envy nor arrogance nor inclination nor lamentation nor demon of wrath. There is neither language controversy nor

any partiality nor castism nor groupism nor accumulation of goods. There is neither physical disease nor mental disorder nor fear of wicked person nor terror of natural calamity nor world war.

Bhīṣma Pitāmaha further says that with the knowledge of Sāṅkhya and by the practice of Yoga, the human body becomes pure and as a result that Soul starts enlightening and this way one becomes eligible for salvation. Having experienced enlightenment within, one should take initiation by giving up all types of attachments. He should win over six internal enemies' viz. *Kāma* (inclination), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (attachment), *Mada* (arrogance) and *Matsarya* (jealousy). The destruction of thirst, sense of detachment, the activities of renunciation, impartiality, unselfish action and meditation of essential altogether become the cause of an acquirement of salvation. The path of salvation is very difficult. But the state of salvation itself is the constant source of happiness. Therefore extremely wise person should neglect the sufferings coming in the path of salvation.

Then Bhīṣma again says Yudhiṣṭhira if he wants to ask something else. Yudhiṣṭhira with folded hands and bent head asks for his good blessings. Thus Bhīṣma gives blessings to Yudhiṣṭhira and orders to return on the first day of Uttarāyana to perform funeral rites of his body. He pays homage to Lord Kṛṣṇa and requests him to remain present on the first day of Uttarāyana as he wishes to die with the sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa in his eyes. Thereafter, five Pāṇḍavas along with Lord Kṛṣṇa and all the people, with the permission of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, and by bowing down to him went away from there.

## SUMMARY OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CANTO

The twentieth canto is named as *Mahāprayāṇa-varṇana* (the description of *Mahāprayāṇa*). It starts with the giving up of food by Yudhiṣṭhira and his command of accumulating all the necessary goods for the concluding ceremony of Devavrata Bhīṣma. As soon as the sun migrates from

Dakṣiṇāyaṇa to Uttarāyaṇa, Devavrata Bhīṣma gets ready to give up his life by abandoning food. The next day, having completed regular rites, the king Yudhiṣṭhira reaches to Bhīṣma Pitāmaha along with his purohita, relatives, fire and the necessary goods for pyre. He informs about his presence to Bhīṣma Pitāmaha who is then prepared to give up his life. At that moment tranquil minded Bhīṣma Pitāmaha slowly opens his eyes. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha gets extremely happy and satisfied by looking at the king Yudhiṣṭhira standing in front of him only. Devavrata declares Yudhiṣṭhira as the king of Hastināpura and orders him to rule the kingdom after him and asks him not to lament after his death. He advises him to protect and nurture all his subjects and relatives righteously, so that the happiness can lie in the family and in the kingdom who suffers in war in every way.

By saying so to the king Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, the son of Gaṅgā, asks Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, to give up lamenting after the death of his hundred sons and convinces him to accept five Pāṇḍavas. Further he says that those who do not control their children; who spoil their children and make them rebellious by caressing (fondling) them; suffer everywhere like people sitting on the seat of gone astray horses. In return the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra with bent head agrees to the advice of Devavrata and asks him to forgive him for the mistakes done by his sons. With Lord's permission, he, controlling the mental-inclinations like a Yogī in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa only, raises upside his vital-breath serially from *Mūlādhiṣṭhāna* and establishes it in *Brahmarandhra* (the suture on the top of the skull). As soon as vital-breath reaches to his suture on the top of the skull crossing the six places viz., *Mūlādhāra*, *Adhiṣṭhāna*, *Maṇipūra*, *Anāhata*, *Viśuddha* and *Ājñā*, his entire body becomes absolutely free from all the arrows and wounds as they all disappear from the different parts of his body. All assembled people start looking at him so seriously. At that time, the nine passages of his body meaning mouth, a pair of ears, a pair of eyes, a pair of nostrils, the anus and

the genitals; which are restrained by the vital-breath of Bhīṣma suddenly breaking his suture on the top of the skull and sparkling within a moment enters into the sky. At that time, there starts being heard the auspicious speeches of humans on the earth and that of gods in the sky for Bhīṣma. And there slowly spreads quietude. Thereafter, remembering the qualities of Bhīṣma having become his devotee, having become patient; all the brothers, all the relatives and all the kinsmen along with the king Yudhiṣṭhira faithfully and traditionally perform his concluding ceremony in a royal pomp. And this way the life of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha gets to an end.