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Moksha Dharma Parva  
**Bhishma teaches  
Dharma, Moksha &  
Freedom from Desire**

Shānti Parva  
Chapters 265, 268

Swami Tadatmananda  
Arsha Bodha Center

युधिष्ठिर उवाच  
Yudhishtira said,  
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

कथं भवति पापात्मा  
How does a sinner behave?  
katham bhavati pāpātmā

कथं धर्मं करोति वा |  
How can one follow dharma?  
katham dharmam karoti vā

केन निर्वेदमादत्ते  
How can one gain dispassion?  
kena nirvedam ādatte

मोक्षं वा केन गच्छति ||  
How can one gain moksha?  
mokṣam vā kena gacchati (265.1)

भीष्म उवाच  
Bhishma said,  
bhīṣma uvāca

विज्ञानार्थं हि पञ्चानाम्

Perceiving anything made of five elements,  
vijñānārthaṁ hi pañcānām

इच्छा पूर्वं प्रवर्तते ।

desire arises first.

icchā pūrvam pravartate

प्राप्य ताञ्जायते कामो

Having perceived it, attachment  
prāpya tāñ jāyate kāmo

द्वेषो वा भरतर्षभ ॥

or aversion arises, O Yudhishthira.

dveṣo vā bharatarṣabha (265.3)

लोभमोहाभिभूतस्य

When overcome by greed and infatuation,  
lobha-mohābhibhūtasya

रागद्वेषान्वितस्य च ।

and when filled with raga and dvesha,  
rāga-dveṣānvitasya ca

न धर्मे जायते बुद्धिर्

the intellect is not inclined towards dharma,  
na dharme jāyate buddhir

व्याजाद्धर्मं करोति च ॥

but merely pretends to follow dharma.  
vyājād dharmam karoti ca (265.6)

ततो रागः प्रभवति

Then, raga arises,  
tato rāgaḥ prabhavati

द्वेषश्च तदनन्तरम् ।

and after that, dvesha.

dveṣaś ca tad-anantaram

ततो लोभः प्रभवति

Then greed arises,  
tato lobhaḥ prabhavati

मोहश्च तदनन्तरम् ॥

and after that, infatuation.

mohaś ca tad-anantaram (265.5)

तत्रैव कुरुते बुद्धिं

He directs his intellect towards that (object of desire).  
tatraiva kurute buddhiṁ

ततः पापं चिकीर्षति ।

Then, he is prepared to commit sin,  
tataḥ pāpaṁ cikīrṣati

सुहृद्भिर्वार्यमाणोऽपि

even when dissuaded by friends  
suhṛdbhir vāryamāṇo 'pi

पण्डितैश्चापि भारत ॥

and the wise, O Yudhishthira.  
paṇḍitaiś cāpi bhārata (265.8)

उत्तरं न्यायसम्बद्धं

A reasonable excuse,  
uttaram nyāya-sambaddham

ब्रवीति विधियोजितम् ।

in keeping with dharma, he tells them.  
bravīti vidhi-yojitam

पापं चिन्तयते चैव

Thus, he sinfully thinks,  
pāpaṁ cintayate caiva

प्रब्रवीति करोति च ॥

speaks, and acts.  
prabravīti karoti ca (265.9,10)

यथा कुशलधर्मा स

Like others skilled in dharma, he  
yathā kuśala-dharmā sa

कुशलं प्रतिपद्यते ।

gains skill (in discerning dharma).  
kuśalam pratipadyate

य एतान्प्रज्ञया दोषान्

With wisdom, the faults (of sinners)  
ya etān prajñayā doṣān

पूर्वमेवानुपश्यति ॥

he always observes.  
pūrvam evānupaśyati (265.12,13)

स नेह सुखमाप्नोति

He gains no happiness in this life,  
sa neha sukham āpnoti

कुत एव परत्र वै ।

what to speak of later lives.  
kuta eva paratra vai

एवं भवति पापात्मा

Thus is a sinner.  
evam bhavati pāpātmā

धर्मात्मानं तु मे शृणु ॥

Now, hear from me about the righteous.  
dharmātmānaṁ tu me śṛṇu (265.11,12)

कुशलः सुखदुःखानां

Being skillful in discerning right from wrong,  
kuśalaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām

साधूंश्चाप्युपसेवते ।

and associating with good people,  
sādhūṁś cāpy upasevate

तस्य साधुसमाचाराद्

due to his good deeds  
tasya sādhu-samācārād

अभ्यासाच्चैव वर्धते ॥

and practice, he will gain spiritual growth.  
abhyāsāc caiva vardhate (265.13,14)

स धर्मस्य फलं लब्ध्वा

Getting the fruits of his good deeds,  
sa dharmasya phalaṁ labdhvā

न तृप्यति युधिष्ठिर ।

he rejoices not, O Yudhishtira.  
na tṛpyati yudhiṣṭhira

अतृप्यमाणो निर्वेदम्

Instead of rejoicing, dispassion  
atṛpyamāṇo nirvedam

आदत्ते ज्ञानचक्षुषा ॥

he gains, due to wisdom.  
ādatte jñāna-cakṣuṣā (265.18)

प्रज्ञाचक्षुर्यदा कामे

With wisdom, when he  
prajñā-cakṣur yadā kāme

दोषमेवानुपश्यति ।

understands the problem of desire,  
doṣam evānupaśyati

सर्वत्यागे च यतते

he gives up everything,  
sarva-tyāge ca yatate

दृष्ट्वा लोकं क्षयात्मकम् ॥

seeing the transience of the world.  
dṛṣṭvā lokaṁ kṣayātmakam (265.19,20)

ततो मोक्षाय यतते

Then, he strives for moksha,  
tato mokṣāya yatate

नानुपायादुपायतः ।

not casually, but by following proper methods.  
nānupāyād upāyataḥ

धर्मात्मा चैव भवति

Thus a righteous person  
dharmātmā caiva bhavati

मोक्षं च लभते परम् ॥

gains moksha, supreme liberation.  
mokṣaṁ ca labhate param (265.20,21)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,  
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

येयमर्थोद्भवा तृष्णा

This thirst for wealth,  
yeyam arthodbhavā tṛṣṇā

कथमेतां पितामह ।

O Bhisma, how  
katham etāṁ pitāmaha

निवर्तयेम पापं हि

can we avoid. Indeed, much sin  
nivartayema pāpaṁ hi

तृष्णया कारिता वयम् ॥

we have committed due to thirst.  
tṛṣṇayā kāritā vayam (268.2)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhisma said,  
bhīṣma uvāca

अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीमम

With regard to that, there is an example  
atrāpy udāharantīmam

इतिहासं पुरातनम् ।

in an old story  
itihāsaṁ purātanam

गीतं विदेहराजेन

told by Janaka, king of Videha,  
gītaṁ videha-rājena

माण्डव्यायानुपृच्छते ॥

to Mandavya, when he was asked.  
māṇḍavyāyanupṛcchate (265.3)

राजोवाच

King Janaka said,  
rājovāca

सुसुखं बत जीवामि

Dear one, I live happily.

susukhaṁ bata jīvāmi

यस्य मे नास्ति किञ्चन |

Nothing is mine.

yasya me nāsti kiñcana

मिथिलायां प्रदीप्तायां

If the kingdom of Mithila burns down,

mithilāyāṁ pradīptāyāṁ

न मे दह्यति किञ्चन ||

nothing of mine would be burnt.

na me dahyati kiñcana (265.4)

यथैव शृङ्गं गोः काले

Just as a cow's horns gradually

yathaiva śṛṅgaṁ goḥ kāle

वर्धमानस्य वर्धते |

grow as the cow grows,

vardhamānasya vardhate

तथैव तृष्णा वित्तेन

so too, thirst gradually

tathaiva tṛṣṇā vittena

वर्धमानेन वर्धते ||

grows with the growth of wealth.

vardhamānena vardhate (265.7)

यच्च कामसुखं लोके

Worldly happiness from fulfilling desires,

yac ca kāma-sukhaṁ loke

यच्च दिव्यं महत्सुखम् |

and the great heavenly happiness,

yac ca divyaṁ mahat-sukham

तृष्णाक्षयसुखस्यैते

compared to the happiness from being free from thirst,

tṛṣṇākṣaya-sukhasyaite

नार्हतः षोडशीं कलाम् ||

they amount to not even a sixteenth part.

nārhataḥ ṣoḍaśīṁ kalām (265.6)

किञ्चिदेव ममत्वेन

Whatever is considered mine,

kiñcid eva mamatvena

यदा भवति कल्पितम् |

due to that conclusion,

yadā bhavati kalpitam

तदेव परितापाय

it leads to suffering

tad eva paritāpāya

नाशे सम्पद्यते पुनः ||

when it is later destroyed.

nāśe sampadyate punaḥ (265.8)

या दुस्त्यजा दुर्मतिभिर्

Thirst is hard to avoid by the foolish.

yā dustyajā durmatibhir

या न जीर्यति जीर्यतः ।

It weakens not when one grows old and weak.

yā na jīryati jīryataḥ

योऽसौ प्राणान्तिको रोगस्

Thirst is the deadly illness.

yo 'sau prāṇāntiko rogas

तां तृष्णां त्यजतः सुखम् ॥

By giving up that thirst, one gains happiness.

tām tṛṣṇāṃ tyajataḥ sukham (265.12)

राज्ञस्तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा

Hearing those words of the king,

rājñas tad-vacanaṃ śrutvā

प्रीतिमानभवद्विजः ।

Mandavya became pleased.

prītimān abhavad dvijaḥ

पूजयित्वा च तद्वाक्यं

Praising the king's words,

pūjayitvā ca tad-vākyaṃ

माण्डव्यो मोक्षमाश्रितः ॥

Mandavya pursued moksha.

māṇḍavyo mokṣam āśritaḥ (265.14)