

Mahabaratha Tatparya Nirnaya
- Introduction by Prof.K.T.Pandurangi

Chapter-II

In the second chapter, designated as suvAkyoddhAra, the purport of the sacred scripture delineated in the first chapter is demonstrated by the verses in the Mahabharata:

uktaH pUrvAdhyAye shAstrANAM nirNayaH paro divyaH |
atha khalu bhArataVakyAnyetairevAdhyavasyante || [MBTN II.2]

Before this task is executed, two points have to be clarified:

1) Whether the text of the Mahabharata that is handed down is authentic. 2) What the grounds to select the Mahabharata especially for this purpose are.

Sri Madhvacharya concedes that attempts are made to contaminate and mutilate the text of the Mahabharata. This has happened not only in the case of the Mahabharata, but in several other texts also. Therefore, he assures that he has collected the manuscripts of the Mahabharata from different parts of the country and has ascertained the authentic version of it. In doing so, he has not merely relied on manuscripts as the modern scholars do but also taken into consideration the entire tradition of the scriptural literature. The latter criteria is very important. Every text is a part of a tradition. Therefore, anything that is contrary to or contradicts the text is not likely to be the authentic portion of that text. Internal contradiction within the text or contradiction with the tradition is likely to be the result of the interpolation or mutilation. In modern textual criticism, this vital point is ignored. The second criteria is stated by Sri Madhvacharya as:

shAstrAntarANi saJNjAnan.h vedAmshchAsya prasAdataH

This is how the contamination and the mutilation of the texts and his efforts to ascertain the authentic text of the Mahabharata is regarded. His observations set very scientific guidelines of textual criticism.

a. kvachidganthAn.h praxipanti kvachidantaritAnapi |
kuryuH kvachichcha vyatyAsaM pramAdAt.h kvachidanyathA ||

anutsannA api granthAH vyAkulA iti sarvashaH |
utsannAH prAyashaH sarve koTyaMsho.api na vartate ||

grantho.apyevaM vilulitaH kimvartho devadurgamaH | (MBTN II-3,4,5)

b. deshe deshe tathA granthAn.h dR^ishhTvA chaiva pR^ithagvidhAn.h |
yathA cha bhagavAn.h vyAsaH sAxAnnArAyaNaH prabhuH ||
jagAda bhAratAdyeshhu tathA vaxye tadIxayA |
saN^xepAt.h sarvashAstrAryaM bhAratAryAnusArataH || (MBTN II-7,8)

After assuring that, the purport of the Mahabharata will be explained by a reference to the authentic text ascertaining it as stated above. Sri Madhvacharya states the special grounds because of which this work is especially selected for shAstratAtparyanirNaya | The treatment of this topic is quite elaborate in this chapter. We mention the most striking grounds, which will be stated in the postings that follow

1) The most important ground is that the Mahabharata declares the supremacy of Narayana emphatically, unconditionally, and as the total purport of the entire scripture.

vAsudevastu bhagavAn.h kIrtyate.atra sanAtanaH |
pratibimbamivAdarshe yaM pashyantyaAtmani sthitam.h || (II-68)

nAsti nArAyaNasamaM na bhUtaM na bhavishhyati |
etena satyavAkyena sarvArthAn.h sAdhayAmyaham.h || (II-68,69)

AloDya sarvashAstrANi vichArya cha punaH punaH |
idamekaM sunisshhpannaM dhyeyo nArAyaNaH sadA || (II-72)

vAsudevasya mahimA bhArate nirNayoditaH |
tadarthAstu kathAH sarvAH nAnyArthaM vaishhNavaM vachaH || (II-123)

2) The second important ground is that the Mahabharata declares the importance of Vayu. It clearly states that Vayu played the role of the chief assistant of Lord Narayana in His three incarnations of Rama, Krishna, and Vedavyasa, assuming the incarnation of Hanuman, Bhima, and Madhva. The fact that Bhimasena plays a major role in the Mahabharata is fully brought out:

a. tasmAd.h balapravR^ittasya rAmakR^ishhNAtmano hareH |
antaraN^ga hanUmAmshcha bhImastatkAryamAdhakau || (II-34,35)

b. priyashcha vishhNoH sarvebhyaH iti bhImanidarshanAt.h |
bhUbhAraharaNe vishhNoH pradhAnAN^gaM hi mArutiH ||
mAgadhAdivadhAdeva duryodhanavadhAdapi ||
yo ya eva balajyeshhTaH xatriyeshhu ma uttamaH |
aN^gaM ched.h vishhNukaAryepu tadbhaktyaiva na chAnyathA || (II-15,16,17)

c. tasyAN^gaM prathamaM vAyuH prAdurbhAvatrayAnvitaH |
prathamO hanumannAma dvitIyo bhIma eva cha ||
pUrNapraj~nastR^itIyastu bhagavatKaryasAdhakaH | (II-128,129)

d. j~nAne virAge haribhaktibhAve
dhR^itisthitiprANabaleshhu yoge |
budhhau cha nAnyo hanumatsamAnaH
pumAn.h kadAchit.h kka cha kashchanaiva || (II-155)

e. vAyurbhImo bhImanAdo mahaujAH
sarveshhAM cha prANinAM prANabhUtaH |
AnAvR^ittirdehinAM dehapAte
tasmAd.h vAyuH devadevo vishishhTaH || (II-163)

f. tattvaj~nAne vishhNubhakto dhairye sthairye parAkrame |
vege cha lAghave chaiva pralApasya cha varjane |
bhImasenasamo nAsti senayorubhayorapi || (II-164,165)

g. asmin.h yuddhe bhImasena tvayi bhAraH samAhitaH |
dhUrarjunena voDhavya itaro janaH | (II-174)

In verses II-156-160, mantras from baLitthAsUkta that highlight the glory of Mukhyaprana in his three incarnations are quoted.

Several events in Mahabharata clearly show that Bhimasena plays the most important role in Mahabharata guided by Lord Sri Krishna. The killing of Jarasandha and Duryodhana are two major instances. The purpose of God's incarnation is to remove the burden of the evil persons on the earth. In achieving this purpose, Maruti, i.e. Mukhyaprana, plays an important role as Bhimasena. The depiction of his has made the Mahabharata a great epic.

3) The third important ground is that the Mahabharata narrates the glory of Sri Rama also:

uktA rAmakathA hyasmin.h mArkANDeyasamAkhyayA |
tasmAd.h yad.h bhAratenoktaM taddhi naivAsti kutrachit.h ||

The story of Sri Rama narrated here is culled out from the Mularamayana. Sri Madhvacharya has elaborated it in this Mahabharata Tatparyanirnaya bringing out the ethical and philosophical implications of various events of the Ramayana. It is further elaborated by Sri Narayana Panditacharya in the Sanraha Ramayana.

Thus, the Mahabharata is an epic that contains the glory of the two incarnations of the Supreme God viz., Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. Its greatness is enhanced by the further fact that it is composed by Sri Vedavyasa who himself is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

kR^ishhNadvaipAyanaM vyAsaM viddhi nArAyaNaM prabhum.h |
kohyanyaH puNDarIkAxAt.h mahAbhAratakR^idbhavet.h ||

4) Another important feature of the Mahabharata is that it is in three languages viz., darshana, guhya, and samAdhi |

bhAshhAstu trividhAstatra mayA vai sampradarshitAH |
ukto yo mahimA vishhNoH sa tUkto hi samAdhinA || II-114

samAdhibhAshhayoktaM yattatsarvaM grAhyameva hi | II-115

aviruddhaM samAdhestu darshanoktaM chan gR^ihyate |
AdyantayorviruddhaM yaddharshanaM tadudAhR^itam.h || II-116

darshanAntarasiddhaM cha guhyabhAshhAnyathA bhavet.h |
tasmAd.h vishhNorhi mahimA bhAratokto yathArthataH || (II-128)

a) The glory fo the Supreme God is conveyed by samadhi bhasha. This naturally has to be accepted as it is.

b) Darshana bhasha is of two types: i) Whatever conflicts with what is stated before and after that is darshana bhasha. This naturally has to be interpreted in tune with what is stated before and after or else it has to be rejected. ii) Whatever is merely a restatement of some other darshana quoted for refutatino or to show the hollowness of it.

c) Guhyabhasha is that which is different from samadhi and darshana bhasha. In the case of the Guhyabhasha, its deeper meaning has to be taken, rejecting the apparent meaning.

5) One more important feature of the Mahabharata is that it has three layers of meaning viz., manvAdi, AstikAdi, and uparicharAdi |

manvAdi kechid.h bruvate hyAstikAdi tathApare |
tathoparicharAdanye bhArataM parichaxate || (II-142)

a. sakR^ishhNAn.h pANDavAn.h gR^ihya yo.ayamarthaH pravartate |
prAtilomyAdi vaichitryAt.h tamAstIkaM prachaxate ||

b. dharmo bhaktyAdidashakaH shrutAdiH shIlavainayau |
sabrahmakAstu te yatra manvAdiM te vidurbudhAH |

c. nArAyaNasya nAmAni sarvANi vachanAni tu |
tatsAmarthyAbhidhAyIni tamauparicharaM viduH || (II-142,145)

The story of the Mahabharata, centering around the personalities of Sri Krishna, the Pandavas, etc., is the Astikadi layer of the meaning. This layer is designated as Astika because the Pandavas whose story is narrated have been great Astiks, that is to say, they had great faith in Sri Krishna.

The Manvadi layer of the meaning is that meaning which conveys the virtues represented by Yuddhishtira, Bhima, etc. Yuddhishtira represents dharma, Bhimasena represents bhakti, jnana, prajna, medha, etc. The ten virtues are as follows:

bhaktirj~nAnaM savairAgyaM praj~nA bhedhA dhR^itiH sthitiH |
yogaH prANo balaM chaiva vR^ikodara iti smR^itaH || (II-146)

Arjuna represents shravaNa, manana, and nididhyAsana. Nakula and sahadewa represent shIla and vinaya. Draupadi represents the Vedas. These virtues of these personalities are demonstrated in the events connected with them in the story of the Mahabharata. This layer of meaning is the manvAdi meaning. The expression manvAdi refers to dharma and other virtues listed here:

mIyate pramIyate ebhiH paramAtmA iti manavo dharmah bhaktyAdidashakaM
shrutAdiH shIlavainayA vedAshcheti manupadavAchyaM paJNchakam.h |

The third layer of meaning viz., uparichara is the meaning that brings out Narayana as the meaning of each and every word of the Mahabharata.

nArAyaNasya nAmAni sarvANi vachanAni tu |
tatsAmarthyAbhidhAyIni tamauparicharaM viduH ||

The expression uparichara (II-145) itself refers to Narayana and brings out his sarvottamatva |

upari - sarveshhAmupari charatIti uparicharaH sarvottamo nArAyaNaH |
tasyaiva svaravarNapadavAkyAtmakasakalabhAratagranthena paramamukhyayA
vR^ittyA pratipAdanamuchitam.h |

>From the above explanation of the three layers of meaning and the terms referring to these three layers viz., AstikAdi, manvAdi, and uparichara, it is clear that these expressions do not refer to the three beginnings of the Mahabharata as contended by some modern Indologists. These do not refer to the episodes of Astika, Manu, and Uparichara as contended by them. This is made emphatically clear by Sri Vadiraja long before the Indologists thought of a reference to these episodes:

manvAdi kechit.h bruvate iti shlokasya ApAtataH pratIyamAnA manavaH
AstikAkhyo xashhiH uparicharAkhyo vasuH nArthaH |
manUnAM prasaN^gasyaiva bhArate abhAvAt.h |
Astikoparicharava svoshcha sarpayAgavighnakaraNAya satyavatyutpattaye cha
AdiparvaNi AdibhAge ekauAdhyAyamAtreNa prasaJNjanepi AdiparvaNi ante
prasaJNjanAbhAvena sakalabhAratapatipAdyatvasya sutarAmayogAt.h |

The three layers of meaning as explained above are much richer than a mere reference to certain episodes. These bring out the very indepth meaning of the Mahabharata.